

Sermon Summary 03/29/15

Matthew 27:27-54 – “The Cross: What God is *Really* Like” by Drew Hunter

In Short: The cross reveals surprising details of God’s nature through the ways Jesus rules, saves, and renews.

Sunday’s Outline (Thematic)

1. How Jesus Rules – the nature of Christ’s kingship is one of service and sacrifice, not an outward display of majesty and power (though Jesus is the King of all Kings).
2. How Jesus Saves – the cross is not the moment that disqualifies Jesus from being a savior. Instead, it is the supreme example of how Jesus saves.
3. How Jesus Renews – Jesus addressed the problem of sin by dying on the cross. When He returns again, He will fully restore all things.

Help for Understanding & Application

- 1) What kind of a Messiah were the Jews expecting? How do texts like Jeremiah 23:5 and Isaiah 11:2-5 help give us a better understanding regarding why some of the Jews and religious leaders in Israel had trouble believing Jesus was the Messiah? In the same way, how is our image of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew challenged in light of reading Revelation 19:11-16?
- 2) Why does Matthew focus the attention of this narrative not directly on Jesus but on all that is going on around Him? What do we learn about God from reading Matthew’s recordings of the actions and words of those who watched Jesus die?
- 3) How would you answer an unbeliever who asked, “Why didn’t Jesus save himself from the cross? Or, why didn’t the Father stop that from happening?” What does the fact that Jesus was *able but unwilling* to save Himself from the cross reveal to us about God’s great love for His people?
- 4) Explain what Paul means when he wrote these words in 1 Corinthians 1:18 – “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”?
- 5) When considering the cross this Holy Week, we tend to fall into one of three categories:
 - a) Disinterested interest – this is interest primarily in the physical details of the cross.
 - b) Confusion – clearly something important happened because the earth shook, the tombs split open, and dead people were resurrected along with Jesus, but the significance of it all is either unclear or it fails to make a significant impact on our hearts and lives.
 - c) Awe – like the Roman centurions, we look at the cross with utter astonishment. We recognize the cross as the greatest act of grace, mercy, love, power, and humility. Our response is one of astonishment and endless thanksgiving.

In which of these categories do you fall? How do you plan to make time to reflect on the cross and all of its significance this week? What would it mean to lead your family and small group in this reflection?

- 6) How would you respond to an unbeliever who asked about the significance of Easter and the cross to Christians?