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The Crucifixion of Jesus

John 19.16-27

Series: Signs of Life

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I. Introduction

A. Text – Crucifixion of Christ

B. **John 19:16–27** (ESV) —

1. 16 So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.
2. 17 So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.
3. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.
4. 19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”
5. 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.
6. 21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’ ”
7. 22 Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”
8. 23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, 24 so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.”
9. This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”
10. So the soldiers did these things, 25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
11. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”
12. 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

C. I remember watching the movie The Passion of the Christ

1. Mel Gibson’s magnum opus
 - a. His testament to his faith in the death of Jesus Christ
2. And the thing that stuck out to me in that movie was its violence
 - a. There seemed to be blood everywhere
3. Gibson was charged with anti-Semitism

- a. For how he portrayed the Jewish leaders
- b. And their role in sending Jesus, an innocent man, to the cross
- c. To the cruelest of all forms of execution
- 4. I don't think that charge was valid
 - a. If anything, I think Gibson was anti-Roman
 - b. For the Romans were portrayed as the most vicious of perpetrators of the greatest crime in all of history
 - c. Ruthless they were in their beatings of Jesus
 - d. In their carrying out of means of execution
 - e. They were responsible for all of the blood that was spilt
- 5. But no one charged Gibson of anti-Romanism
 - a. There are no Roman soldiers left to be offended
- D. Interesting – this account of John's does not dwell on the violence of the crucifixion
 - 1. The violence was, no doubt, real enough
 - a. John's audience knew well the awful realities of Roman crucifixion
 - 2. But John instead gives us a glimpse into different elements of the crucifixion
 - a. Vignettes of the crucifixion, which do not portray the bloody realities
 - b. But which give us a sense of the meaning of the crucifixion
 - 3. Each of those vignettes in their own right teach us something about the significance of the death of Jesus
 - a. And His saving work on the cross
 - 4. Jesus Christ is the savior
 - a. First of the sinner
 - b. Then of the nations
 - c. Also of the prophets
 - d. Finally, of the church

II. **The Sinner's Savior**

- A. The first vignette concerns those who were crucified with Jesus
 - 1. As you know, there were two others who were crucified with Jesus
 - a. Three crosses
 - b. One on the right, one on the left, and Jesus in the middle
 - 2. **John 19:18** (ESV) — 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.
- B. John does not elaborate on the stories that each of these two other represented
 - 1. Though it is an interesting one
 - a. One for which we must consult the other gospels to fill in the details
- C. First, both men are described in the other gospels in the same way Barabbas is described
 - 1. As a robber, or an insurrectionist

- a. Even as a murderer
 2. Whatever their crime, it was serious enough to command the death penalty
 - a. And not just the death penalty
 - b. The cruelest form of execution was warranted
- D. Second, both men, in the midst of their excruciating pain, appeared to have cried out in anguish and despair
 1. One would not have been surprised to see these two men calling out curses
 - a. On the Romans
 - b. On the Jews
 - c. Even on the day of their birth
 2. And according to the others gospels, they joined the cries of the Jews and the soldiers and the crowd as they mocked Jesus
 - a. **Matthew 27:40** (ESV) — 40 ... “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”
 - b. **Luke 23:35** (ESV) — 35 And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!”
 - c. **Mark 15:32** (ESV) — 32 “Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.
 - d. **Matthew 27:44** (ESV) — 44 And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.
 - e. **Luke 23:39** (ESV) — 39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!”
- E. But then something happened
 1. God began to work in the heart of one of the insurrectionists
 - a. His cries quieted
 - b. He no longer joined in the invective mockery of his fellow crucified One
 2. **Luke 23:40–42** (ESV) —
 - a. 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?”
 - b. 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.”
 - c. 42 And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”
 3. You know what that’s called?
 - a. That’s called a miracle
 - b. That kind of transformation from a vindictive, hateful, criminal into one who confesses his sin and casts himself on the mercy of the crucified Son of God
 - c. Can only come through a work of God
 4. So what did Jesus say?

- a. “Too late for that! Should have thought of that when you decided to join the revolution!”
 - b. Or “I’ll see what I can do for you if we get through this.”
 - c. Or “Hang in their my friend. Grit your teeth and bear it; we’re all in the same boat”
5. **Luke 23:43** (ESV) —
- a. 43 And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”
- F. Jesus not only saved this sinner
1. He gave this sinner – a great sinner! – the assurance of his salvation
- G. Donald Grey Barnhouse was one of the great preaching pastors of the 20th Century
1. Many years pastor of the historic 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia
 - a. Had a national radio program called The Bible Study hour broadcast through many stations
 2. One day he was working in this study
 - a. Janitor came to him and said, “There’s a gentleman out here who wants to see you.”
 - b. He gave him the man’s card
 - c. He was the British sea captain of the Mauretania – the largest ocean liner crossing the Atlantic at that time
 3. Captain: “I’m captain of the Mauretania... and I go back and forth across the Atlantic about twenty-three times a year. Every other Sunday on the way down the coast of Newfoundland I get your radio broadcast out of Boston. Last Sunday, when I listened to you, I said to myself, ‘I’ve got twenty-four hours when I land in New York. I’m going over to Philadelphia to see that preacher.’ So I took the train this morning from New York and I just came down on the chance that I might see you.”
 4. Barnhouse: “Sir, have you been born again?”
 - a. Gets right to the point – the man only has so much time!
 5. Captain: “That’s why I came down to see you.”
- H. Barnhouse took the man to a meeting room where there was a blackboard
1. Took a piece of chalk and drew **three crosses**
 2. Barnhouse: “Let me put it very simply for you... You know that when Jesus Christ died on the cross there was a thief on either side?”
 3. Captain: “Yes.”
 4. Barnhouse: “And each was a sinner. He had sin *in* him.”
 5. He wrote **“in” under both of the side crosses**
 6. Under **the center cross he wrote “not in!”**
 7. Barnhouse: “This man did not have sin in him. Christ was the spotless Lamb of God. Now, in addition these men had sin *on* them.”
 8. He **wrote “on” over both crosses**
- I. The captain gave a puzzled expression
1. Barnhouse: “Let me show you the difference between sin on you and sin in you. Do you drive a car?”
 2. Captain: “Yes.”

3. Barnhouse: "Have you ever gone through a red light?"
 4. Captain: "Yes, I have."
 5. Barnhouse: "You were guilty, weren't you?"
 6. Captain: "Yes."
 7. Barnhouse: "Did the police catch you?"
 8. Captain: "Well, no, they didn't?"
 9. Barnhouse: "But you had that sin in you, didn't you? And if the police had been there and had given you a ticket, then you would have had that sin on you as well. That's the difference between having sin in you and having sin on you. All of us have sin in us. We are all guilty. All of us also have sin on us. We are under God's judgment. This first thief had sin in him and sin on him. This second thief had sin in him and sin on him. They were exactly alike."
 10. Barnhouse then wrote the word "on" over the cross of Christ.
 11. Barnhouse: "Christ also had sin *on* him. But he did not have sin *in* him. That sin which is on him is not his sin; it is my sin – and that of this thief."
 12. He then turned the chalk sideways and rubbed it through the word "on" over the cross of the believing thief and drew a big arrow pointing to the cross of Christ.
 13. Barnhouse: "God justified this thief by putting all the guilt of his sin over here on Jesus Christ."
 14. Barnhouse: "Now, Christianity is simply this. Here is the perfect Christ who came and died on the cross. And here are two types of people, represented by these two thieves. Both are alike. Both have sin in them. Both have had sin on them. But in the one case, the sin that was on him is now one Christ. Sir, I am like this thief. My sin was on me, but now it is on Christ. You are either like this first thief or like this second thief. Sin is in you, in me, and it is either on yourself or it is on Christ. God says that Christ came to take away your sins. Which are you like?"
 15. The captain was moved to tears; at last his hand came forward and he pointed to the cross of the repentant thief
 16. Captain: "By the grace of God, I am like this thief."
 17. Barnhouse: "Your sin is on Christ. God says so."
 18. The captain took Barnhouse's hand to say good-bye: "That's all I want. I can go back now."
 19. Then they went back to the study and spent an hour or so discussing where the new Christian life would take him.
- J. So, which sinner are you?
1. The believing sinner
 - a. Or the unrepentant sinner
- K. The believing sinner did three things
1. He recognized his spiritual need
 - a. Not just his physical needs – which, of course, he had many; he was, indeed, about to die!
 - b. But his real need was spiritual

- c. He knew he needed a Savior; one who would save him from his sin
- d. No more excuses
- e. No more pity-party – in despair over his desperate condition
- 2. He recognized that Jesus was his Savior
 - a. He did not know much theology
 - b. He could not explain the doctrine of justification by faith
 - c. But he knew that Jesus was innocent
 - d. He had said, “This man has done nothing wrong”
 - e. And he knew that only Jesus could grant him access into the coming Kingdom of God
- 3. Then he committed himself personally to Jesus
 - a. “Remember me when you come into your kingdom”
- 4. And Jesus remembered him on the spot
 - a. Accepted him right then and there
 - b. And assured him that they would be together that day in paradise
- L. Have you responded to Jesus in the same way as the believing robber?

III. **The Nation’s Savior**

- A. The second crucifixion vignette concerns the sign Pilate had placed over Jesus’ cross
- B. **John 19:19–22** (ESV) —
 - 1. 19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross.
 - 2. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”
 - 3. 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.
 - 4. 21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’ ”
 - 5. 22 Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”
- C. John is not the only one to have recorded the placement of this placard
 - 1. **Matthew 27:37** (ESV) — 37 And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”
 - 2. **Mark 15:26** (ESV) — 26 And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.”
 - 3. **Luke 23:38** (ESV) — 38 There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”
- D. It was not uncommon to have the charge placed above the cross of a Roman execution
 - 1. As a public event, the Romans wanted everyone to be aware of what kinds of transgressions would yield the ultimate penalty
 - 2. And so all the gospel writers testified to the designation of the charge above the cross
- E. But what John adds to the description – and John was, by all accounts, the only gospel writer to have directly witnessed the crucifixion
 - 1. Was that the charge was written in three languages

- F. Why did John include this detail?
1. Because while Jesus died as the Jewish King, dying as it were for the nation of Israel
 - a. His death had significance in the world well beyond Israel
 2. John is declaring that Jesus is King for the nations
 - a. Indeed, He is the Savior of the nations
 3. Jesus is the savior of the Jews – Aramaic
 - a. Jesus is the Savior of the Greeks – Greek
 - b. Jesus is the Savior of the Romans – Latin
- G. We have seen this theme all the way through the Gospel of John
1. **John 1:9–12** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.
 - b. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.
 - c. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.
 - d. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...
 2. John the Baptist’s testimony: **John 1:29** (ESV) —
 - a. 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
 3. Jesus to Nicodemus: **John 3:16–17** (ESV) —
 - a. 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - b. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”
 4. **John 3:19–21** (ESV) —
 - a. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
 - b. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.
 - c. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”
 5. John 4 – Samaria – beyond Judaism
 - a. **John 4:42** (ESV) — 42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”
 6. John 6 – the Bread of Life – **John 6:32–35** (ESV) —
 - a. 32 Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.
 - b. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

- c. 34 They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”
 - d. 35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”
- 7. **John 6:48–51** (ESV) —
 - a. 48 I am the bread of life.
 - b. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.
 - c. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.
 - d. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”
- 8. **John 8 and 9** – “light of the world”
- 9. **John 10** – shepherd who gathers His sheep, not just out of Judaism, but out of other folds, bringing all into one new sheepfold, which is the church
- 10. John 11 – the prophecy of Caiaphas – **John 11:49–50** (ESV) —
 - a. 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all.
 - b. 50 Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”
 - c. **John 11:51–52** (ESV) — 51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,
 - d. 52 and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.
- 11. John 12 – Greeks had come to Jesus – **John 12:46** (ESV) —
 - a. 46 “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.”
- H. Jesus is the **Savior of the Nations!**
 - 1. That’s why we are an international ministry
 - a. That’s why we support Janice Quinlan in Thailand
 - b. That’s why we support Freddy and Raquel in their island ministry
 - c. That’s why we support Marty and Gloria Banzhaf in Italy
 - d. That’s why we support the Westergren’s in Spain
 - 2. That’s why we support the Great Commission Fund of they C&MA – supporting international workers in more than 80 nations
 - 3. Jesus is the Savior of sinners
 - a. And He is the Savior of the nations
- I. And that’s why we look forward to that time when we will gather around the throne of God, worshipping
 - 1. **Revelation 5:9–10** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

- b. 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

J. One final point

1. Jesus is the Savior of the nations – expressed in the three languages John describes
 - a. But the title give says, not “Savior” but “**King**”
 - b. He is the sovereign over the nations, over the world
2. In fact, there is significance in each of the languages
3. **Hebrew is the language of religion and morality**
 - a. Jesus is the king, the sovereign over religion and morality
 - b. We might take that for granted; of course Jesus would be the king of religion and morality
4. **Greek is the language of science, culture and philosophy**
 - a. Jesus is lord of the culture, lord of the arts, lord of the intellectual world
5. **Latin**, the language of the Romans, **is the language of law and government**
 - a. Jesus is the supreme law-giver
 - b. Jesus is the ultimate judge of all
6. There is no nation, no culture, no domain of human existence where Jesus is not king and Lord!
 - a. He is the Savior of all
 - b. And He is the Lord of all

IV. **The Prophet’s Savior**

- A. The third vignette the John describes is about the soldiers dividing up the clothing of Jesus
- B. **John 19:23–24** (ESV) — 23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic.
 1. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, 24 so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.”
 2. This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”
 3. So the soldiers did these things...
- C. The significance of this text points to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy
 1. He is the prophet’s Savior
 - a. Not in the sense that Jesus died for the believing prophets – though that is certainly true
 - b. But that He is the Savior about whom the prophets spoke
- D. John alludes to four prophecies that are fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus
 1. Division of Christ’s clothing among the soldiers – Psalm 22
 2. Offering of sour wine – Psalm 69
 3. Breaking of legs of the robbers, but not Jesus – Psalm 34
 4. Piercing of Christ’s side with spear – Zechariah 12

- E. **Psalm 22:18** (ESV) —
 - 1. 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.
- F. Some commentators suggest that Jesus normally wore five articles of clothing
 - 1. Sandals, turban, girdle, tunic, robe
 - 2. There were four soldiers – each one could have one article, with one left over
 - 3. Tunic could not be divided – cast lots for the fifth
 - 4. “Divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots”
 - 5. Remarkable detail in which prophecy about Christ is fulfilled
- G. The more significant observation to be gained by this particular prophecy is the degree to which Jesus Himself had Psalm 22 on His mind
 - 1. This was a man who was living out the scriptures
 - a. In a sense all of the OT – since the OT always points to Christ
 - b. But in the messianic portions of scripture He became the embodiment of prophecy
- H. Psalm begins “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (**Psalm 22.1**)
 - 1. Rejection by the Father, who turned His back on His Son, who experienced the wrath of God for the sin of humanity – crucial to our understanding of what Jesus went through
 - 2. “I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people” (**Psalm 22.6**)
 - a. While not exclaimed by Jesus from the cross, certainly a reality of the kind of mockery and scorn experienced by Jesus
 - b. Use of the term “worm” is significant as well
 - c. “Worm” came to refer to a special kind of worm from which crimson dyes were produced
 - d. Dye was produced by its blood when the worm was crushed
 - e. Incredible picture of the sacrificial offering of our Savior, whose blood covers our sin
 - 3. **Psalm 22:21** (ESV) — 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!
 - a. The death of Jesus reflected the sacrifice of justification vested in the oxen
 - 4. **John 19.30**: “It is finished”
 - a. Quotation of the last verse of Psalm 22 (**Psalm 22.31**)
 - 5. In other words, during the hours of Jesus hanging on the cross, His mind covered the entire scope of Psalm 22
 - a. His alienation from the Father for the sin of humanity
 - b. The task of taking upon Himself the just punishment for all of the sins of all those who would ever believe in Him
 - c. The rejection of the very people He came to save
 - d. The shedding of His own blood for our sins
 - e. The completion of the grand task of redemption
 - 6. All these and more were consciously applied by the incarnate Son of God

- a. And all for our salvation

V. **The Church's Savior**

- A. Finally – the last vignette concerns Jesus' continuing concern for His own people
- B. **John 19:25–27** (ESV) —
 - 1. 25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
 - 2. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"
 - 3. 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.
- C. What a tender moment this must have been as our suffering Savior looked beyond His own incredible suffering to love and care for His own people
 - 1. His mother
 - a. And the other believing women, brave enough to witness the passion of the Christ
 - b. And the disciple whom Jesus loved – whom we take to mean John himself – the only disciple appearing to be in attendance
- D. I've decided to call this vignette "**The Church's Savior**"
 - 1. These vignettes have represented the crucifixion as depicting Jesus as the Savior of sinners
 - a. The savior of the nations
 - b. The savior of prophets
 - c. And now, the Savior of the Church
 - 2. Why the Church? Why is Jesus the Church's Savior?
- E. Well, Jesus saves sinners – this much we have seen
 - 1. But in this vignette He connects them to one another
 - a. He puts believers together in a loving, caring relationship
 - b. In true fellowship – koinonia
 - c. In which believers belong to one another as a body
 - 2. Yes, this particular episode depicts the special bond of Jesus' own mother and a key apostle
 - a. But it exemplifies what it means to belong to the community of saved people, of forgiven people, of people of hope
- F. Much has been debated about when Christ established the Church
 - 1. Was it at Pentecost – when the Holy Spirit was poured out on all believers in that place?
 - 2. Or was it when Jesus give of His Spirit in the upper room as He instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper
 - 3. Good arguments for either of those and even for some other options
- G. But clearly, this vignette captures what it means for the church to be the church
 - 1. Loving one another
 - a. Caring for one another
 - b. Looking at brothers and sisters in Christ at least as united as we would be with our own flesh and blood

- H. **Better Together**
 - 1. Grateful for the technology we have here
 - a. SPTV
 - b. Internet
 - c. Programming on Channel 13
 - 2. Wonderful during Covid
 - 3. No substitute for being together
 - a. Jesus, tenderly, lovingly, put His people together
 - b. You can't hug a TV
 - c. You can't really have a relationship with an image on a screen
 - 4. I know many can't come in our community due to physical limitations
 - a. Praise God for our technology
 - 5. But many have gotten used to connecting through the TV
 - a. While I know there still may be immuno-compromised and need to still stay away from crowds
 - b. We're not longer in a position where we need to be separated
 - 6. Jesus put people together
 - a. He put you in this local body of Christ
 - b. I know it's an effort
 - c. But it's time to make the effort
 - d. We miss you!
- I. Christ is the Savior of the Church
 - 1. Just as He is the Savior of Sinners
 - 2. And Savior of the Nations
 - 3. And Savior of the Prophets
- VI. Is this Jesus your Savior?