

Guest Preacher - Rev Roddy John Campbell

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Date: 15 October 2023

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[0 : 0 0] Let us return now to the chapter that we read in the Gospel of John and chapter 19. And we'll read again at verse 31.

John 19 and verse 31. Since it was the day of preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with them. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was actually dead already, they did not break his legs.

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness, his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth, that you also may believe.

For these things to place that the scripture might be fulfilled, not one of his bones will be broken. And again another scripture says, Among the many events that took place at Golgotha on the day that Jesus died, we are going to look at two events that took place after he died, to which the apostle John draws to our attention, namely the unbroken bones and the pierced sides.

[1 : 5 0] For he says, For these things took place, that the scripture might be fulfilled, not one of his bones will be broken. And again another scripture says, They will look on him whom they have pierced.

The timing of the death of Jesus was no coincidence. The Jews did not want to arrest him at the Passover in case there would be an uproar among the people.

However, their desire was overruled by a higher authority, by God's counsel and purpose.

As Peter tells us in Acts chapter 2, men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you know yourselves.

This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

[3 : 0 6] The death of the Lord Jesus was in accordance with the plan, the redemptive plan of God. Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation before the feast of unleavened bread.

As the day drew on at sundown, the Sabbath would begin. And this Sabbath would begin a holy week of feasting.

It was the time of Passover. And John writes for us, since it was the day of preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

That's the legs of Jesus and the two thieves that were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left. The reason for this request was that the Lord declared that if an executed man was hung on a tree, his body was not to remain all night on the tree, but he was to be buried the same day, because a hanged man was cursed by God.

So the priest asked Pilate to hasten the deaths of these two, those crucified, especially since it was going to be a very special Sabbath the following day.

[4 : 38] And Pilate granted them their request. The Romans' method for hastening the end of a crucifixion was to smash the shin bones with a mallet or an iron bar.

As a result, the victim would experience a shock and would no longer be able to push up and relieve the pressure on his body.

And within a short time, death would come about because of choking. John Calvert in his commentary says, According to John, this was carried out upon the two thieves that was crucified with Jesus.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with them. Having carried out the deed upon the two thieves, the soldiers approached the cross of Jesus.

And this is what John, being an eyewitness, records for us. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

[6 : 13] So the soldiers went to the thief who was on the right-hand side of Christ and broke his legs. And then they passed the middle cross and went to the other side and broke the legs of the thief that was on the other side.

And then they came back to the middle cross. And they saw that Jesus was already dead. So they did not break his legs.

In all this, we see the sovereignty of God. And that is to be brought out before us in the scriptures that we are going to see in a moment that was fulfilled in what the events that took place after Jesus had died.

Of course, Jesus gave himself up. Jesus gave himself to death. It was his own act.

In fact, it was a priestly act when he gave himself up to death. We notice here that John, through the inspiration of the Spirit, is very careful in telling us that when Jesus died, that he bowed his head.

[7 : 33] And gave up his spirit. His head didn't fall on. No, he bowed his head. After he said, It is finished, and into thy hands I commend my spirit, he bowed his head.

And gave up his spirit. He was still in control. And this information that we have here given to us by John proves to us that Jesus truly died on the cross.

And those soldiers were so convinced that Jesus was dead, that they simply ignored an order that was given to them and concluded that there was no point whatsoever in breaking the legs of a dead man.

However, to make sure that he was dead, we are told that one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. And at once there came out blood and water.

It is only in the gospel of John that we have this information. And his purpose of bringing this information to us was that we might believe on Jesus in saving faith.

[8 : 51] For he says, He who saw it has borne witness. His testimony is true. And he knows that he is telling the truth that you also may believe.

Jesus, or rather John, was well aware that the law required that at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, that the matter would be established.

So John asserts that he is not alone in citing these events that he had witnessed at Golgotha, but that his witness is joined by the witness of the Old Testament prophets in their writings.

We cannot but be amazed at how true and complete the prophetic preview of the sufferings and death of Christ was.

His betrayal by a friend and the disciples forsaking him. The false accusations and his silence before the judges. He has been numbered with a transgressor.

[10 : 05] His crucifixion. The mocking of the onlookers. The taunt about his failure to save himself. The soldiers gambling for his clothes. His prayer for his enemies.

His being forsaken by God. His yielding up of his spirit into the Father's hand. His burial in a rich man's tomb. All foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament points forwards, towards the cross, by promises and by types. After being raised from the dead, Jesus appeared to his disciples in Jerusalem.

And there he explained his crucifixion and resurrection in these terms. They are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Therefore, Jesus insisted that each portion of the Old Testament had to be fulfilled and had to do with him.

[11 : 24] They were part of his approach approach to the cross. They foretold it through both promises and types.

The most famous types, of course, are the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Now, regarding the unbroken bones, then, John obviously saw a great significance in this fact.

That the bones of Jesus was not broken like that of the two thieves. So, John writes for us and says, for these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, not one of his bones will be broken.

Now, this could be a reference to a psalm that we sung this evening, Psalm 34, verse 20. There we read, He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.

However, I think because of the timing that John is probably thinking of the Passover lamb and the observance that not a bone of food was to be broken.

[12 : 50] In the book of Exodus, it is said, regarding the Passover lamb, it shall be eaten in one house. You shall not take away any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.

That were the instructions given to the children of Israel as they observed the Passover, that they were to break not any one of the bones that pertained to the Passover lamb.

John was not here merely recording for us a historical fact, but also tying it in with its theological meaning and providing for us that Jesus is the lamb for our salvation.

As Paul says, for even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. Truly, Jesus was the lamb of God.

You remember back away in the Old Testament that Abraham's faith was tested and he was told to take his only son and to offer him upon, as a burnt sacrifice upon one of the mountains that the Lord would show him.

[14 : 20] and he took his son, Isaac, and they travelled along the dusty road and then Isaac asked his father a question.

He says, we have the fire, we have everything for the burnt offering, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

And you'll recall what Abraham replied, son, the Lord will provide a lamb for himself. And that question posed by Isaac comes down through the centuries.

Where is the lamb? Where is the lamb? And John the Baptist answers that question. Where is the lamb? Question posed by Isaac is answered in the New Testament by John the Baptist when he lifted his finger and pointed to the man who was coming towards him and said, behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Jesus is the lamb of God. He is the Passover lamb. And you'll see here that despite man's action which God allowed, they could bind Jesus, they could scourge him, they could spit on him, they could crucify him.

[15 : 52] But God was in control, looking after the lamb of his Passover so that not a bone of him was to be broken.

at the time of the first Passover that we have in Exodus, the Israelites deserved judgment just like the Egyptians.

But unlike the Egyptians, they would be saved by grace through faith. What Israel needed in order to be saved was an atonement.

and God provided such in the form of his son as the lamb of God. God required an atonement and he provided that atonement not outside of himself but within himself.

He gave his son. we all deserve divine judgment and we all need atonement and God in his mercy and his love and in his grace has provided such for us in the form of his own son.

[17 : 23] As we've already noted, John the Baptist proclaims Jesus as the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

But let us for a moment think of the Passover lamb. There were certain characteristics that belonged to the Passover lamb that was also true of Jesus Christ as the lamb of God.

the Passover lamb had to be pure and spotless. It had to be physically flawless. So he was set apart on the tenth day and killed on the fourteenth day.

We may ask, well, why three days? Well, during those three days he would be inspected, the lamb would be inspected to make sure that there was no defect, no spot, no blemish on the lamb.

And Jesus, as our Passover lamb, of whom not one of his bones were to be broken, Jesus, as our Passover lamb, was inspected for thirty-three years and found to be morally spotless, perfect, and without blemish.

[18 : 47] By virtue of his virgin birth, his nature was free from the corruption of original sin. Jesus never committed any actual transgression.

Peter testifies of him, he committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. Even his enemies testify to that fact.

Pilate said, take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. Judas cried out after he had betrayed the Lord Jesus, he cried out that he had betrayed innocent blood.

The writer to the Hebrew testifies that Jesus offered himself without spot to God. The man on the cross, the Son of God, our Passover lamb, was there without spot and without blemish.

Again, the Passover lamb had to be killed, and its blood had to be shed. The Passover lamb helps us to understand a crucial text in the letter to the Hebrews.

[20 : 07] For in the letter to the Hebrews, we read there, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. forgiveness. The emphasis there is not on the blood flowing in its veins, the symbol of life being lived, but on the blood being shed.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. The emphasis is on the blood being shed, the symbol of life ended, usually by violent means.

The Bible makes it clear that it is the shed blood that makes atonement. That it is the shed blood that satisfies the justice of God.

That it is through the shed blood that we have salvation, that we have forgiveness of sin. That it is through the shed blood that we can be reconciled to God, that we can have peace with God.

The Passover lamb was a sacrifice for the people. We're told that to their children, when their children would inquire, what is the meaning of all this?

- [21 : 28] They were to reply and say to them, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians, but spared our houses.

The Lord Jesus, when he died, he died a sacrificial death. The Passover lamb was a substitute for the firstborn in Israel.

As we already noted, everyone in the land of Egypt, was under the judgment of God. Not merely the Egyptians, so were the Israelites under the judgment of God.

This was a plague that not only was for the Egyptians, it was also for the Israelites, it was for the whole of Egypt, that the firstborn should die.

But provision was made for Israel by the grace, love, and mercy of God regarding the shed blood of the Passover lamb.

- [22 : 42] So that the Passover lamb was a substitute for the firstborn in Israel. So that the death of Jesus was not only a sacrificial death, but it was a substitutionary death.

He did not die for himself, but for his people. death. It was a covenant death.

He died for all those given to him by the Father in the covenant of redemption before the world was. A sacrificial death, a substitutionary death, a covenant death.

He took out place. He bore our sin. He became our curse. He endured our penalty.

He died our death. However, for Israel to be saved, it was not enough for the lamb to be killed, and the blood poured out.

- [23 : 54] It had to be sprinkled or applied. They were told, take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin.

None of you shall go out of the door of the house until the morning. You see, it is not enough to know that Jesus died, that Jesus shed his blood.

It is not enough to know that he was a substitutionary sacrifice. In order for you to receive the benefits of his death personally, then you have to apply.

You have to receive the benefits of his death personally. The sprinkling of the blood is a vivid picture of receiving Christ as our crucified saviour into our hearts by faith.

For Jesus to give his body and blood in death was one thing. For us to make the blessings of his death our own is another.

- [25 : 13] It was one thing for the Passover lamb to be killed and the blood poured out. But it was another thing in order for them to be secure, in order for them to be saved, in order for them to receive the benefits that belong to the Passover lamb being killed and his blood poured out.

it had to be applied, they had to sprinkle. And the same for me and you. In order to make the blessings of the death of Christ to be of benefit to us, we have to receive it personally.

Jesus was crucified right at the time of the Passover feast. the day that he made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem was the day that the Passover lambs were driven into the city.

And into the city that day also came the Lamb of God. And when Jesus celebrated the last Passover with his disciples in the upper room, he instituted the law of supper saying, this is my body, this is my blood.

In other words, he was saying, all this is about me. The Passover is about me. I am the sacrificial lamb of the Passover, for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin.

- [26 : 50] What the blood of the Passover lamb signified for the firstborn of Israel was that a substitute had died in their place. What we read in Exodus, for the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

What saved the firstborn of Israel was that they took refuge under the blood of the slain lamb. King. The judgment that they deserved had been executed upon the lamb.

King Josiah, when he celebrated the Passover, we are told that he sacrificed 37,000 sheep. Just imagine all those sheep and the amount of blood that was shed, and yet it was not sufficient to take away sin.

It required another sacrifice, a more precious blood to which Peter testifies, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb, without blemish or spot.

There was only one sacrifice that could take away sin. And as the writer to the Hebrew tells us, if we despise or reject that one sacrifice, if we do not receive the benefits of that sacrifice personally, ourselves through faith, then there is no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for the judgment of God.

- [29 : 05] John notes also, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. This would have been a deep wound, for the Lord invited Thomas to thrust his hand into his side.

But again, John saw great significance in what took place, what he says, and again another scripture says, they will look on him whom they have pierced. And where is that scripture to be found?

It is to be found in the book of Zechariah and chapter 12, verse 10, which reads, And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and please for mercy, so that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a first.

What is here promised is the spirit of grace and please for mercy. what is here promised is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of grace.

The Holy Spirit comes bringing the Lord's free favor and producing within a person the inner realization of one's spiritual rebellion and blindness, which leaves a person convinced of their sin.

- [30 : 37] The Holy Spirit comes and convinces a person of his sin. Jesus said to his disciples that when the comforter or the helper, which is the Holy Spirit, comes that he will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

But the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of grace, works within that same person as seeking for forgiveness. forgiveness. It is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit that plants that in our hearts as seeking for forgiveness, convicts us of our sin, convinces us of our sin, and at the same time plants in our hearts a desire and a seeking for forgiveness and mercy.

Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner, that can only be produced through the work of the Holy Spirit, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit here is brought before us as the spirit of grace and pleas for mercy. mercy. Then the prophet writes, they look on me, on him whom they have pierced.

Now, that's interesting, is it not? A very interesting phrase there. They look on me, on him, whom they have pierced. This look was not to be a mere passing look, but a look of faith and contemplation.

[32 : 22] But what is interesting in this verse is a sudden transition from the first person, me, to the third person, him, the look on me, on him whom they pierced.

It reminds us, no doubt, of the Trinity, one God, three persons. But it also reminds us of what was happening at Golgotha.

You know, you may ask the question, where is God at Golgotha? His son has been crucified. Where is God?

At Golgotha. Is God absent at Golgotha? No, he's not. The triune God is at Golgotha, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Where is God? Well, Paul answers that question, does he not? That God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

[33 : 26] God was not absent. He was in Christ. And the Holy Spirit upholding the Son, our Golgotha.

No wonder the apostle, if, or whoever wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, generally believed to be the apostle Paul. But it is no wonder that the writer cries out, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

A salvation provided for me and you as sinners by a triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here we are told, they will look for on him whom they have pierced.

Now, this mourning is deep and intense mourning. As I brought before us here in this prophecy of Zechariah, it refers to the beating of the breast in deep distress.

Although John does not cite what took place among the crowd at the cross, Luke records for us and he says, and all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home, beating their breasts.

[34 : 49] Whether this mourning is to be associated with what happened then, it certainly has to be associated with what took place with the people's response to Peter's sermon, as given to us on the day of Pentecost and recorded for us in Acts chapter 2.

For we are told that when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, brothers, what shall we do? But, you know, this mourning is shared by all who see what their sin has done to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God without spot, without blemish, crucified as the substitutionary sacrifice, not for himself, but for his people.

for all those who will put their faith and their trust in Jesus Christ. But a mourning for sin and a mourning for what took place there at Golgotha will not happen unless the Holy Spirit is poured out.

True repentance goes hand in hand with a correct understanding and appreciation of what took place at the cross of Golgotha.

Should we not moan over what made Jesus sink so low? Jesus Christ hangs on the cross, pierced for my sins, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and through the effectual work of the Holy Spirit, a person comes to acknowledge his or her personal part in what happened to Christ on the cross.

[36 : 52] There in my place he was. There in my place he suffered. It was my sins and what my sins deserved that was reckoned to him on the cross of Golgotha.

If I hate sin only because of the punishment, then I have not truly repented of sin. I just regret that God is a just God who punishes sin.

But if I see sin as an offense against God, and if I loathe myself because of it, and understand that only God in the person of his son, by suffering and dying, could bring me salvation, then that is through repentance.

Through repentance is seen sin as an offense against God, loathing oneself for it, and understanding that only God in the person of his son, by suffering and dying on the cross of Golgotha, could bring salvation, and mourning over it.

The verse that follows the prophet in Zechariah brings forward to us the intensity of that mourning. The first is the grief of a family or the death of an only child.

[38 : 26] They shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep over him as one weeps over a firstborn. Then the second comparison in the prophecy of Zechariah with one of the most tragic instances of public mourning in the history of Israel was the death of King Josiah.

On that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning of Haddon Rummen and the plain of Midgiddo. The land shall mourn each family by itself, the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves, the family of the Shamanites by themselves and their wives by themselves.

And all the families are left, each by itself and their wives by themselves. You see, what that brings before us is this mourning is so deep that they separate themselves, the piercing is in reference to what took place at the cross after Christ had yielded up his spirit the mourning is the action of those who have identified themselves by faith as those whose sins were placed, reckoned, imputed to Christ the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, God again being present laying upon his son, the iniquity of us all he was pushed and the mourning is personal the mourning is personal salvation is personal repentance is personal

John records that from the soldier's wound and at once there came out blood and water now there are various explanations given for the blood and water John in his first letter writes this is he who came by blood and water Jesus Christ not only by water only but by water and the blood so John attaches some significance to the water and blood this is what Matthew Henry says guilt contracted must be expiated by blood stains contracted must be done away by the water of purification these two must always go together you are satisfied, you are justified Christ has joined them together and we must not think of putting them asunder they both flowed from the pure side of our Redeemer you see Sechariah 12 but if we go to Sechariah 13 there we read on that day the day of looking upon him whom they have pierced and mourning for him it says on that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness blood for atonement and the water for cleansing you see justification and sanctification can never be separated they're always together when a person is justified the work of sanctification immediately begins in the life of that person blood poured shed to deal with the guilt of sin and water to deal with the power of sin washed judicially by the blood once and for all in our justification but we need the washing of sanctification each day in order to be made perfect the washing of the blood is complete and perfect but the washing with water in the work of sanctification is progressive and one day it shall be perfected but they all come from the one sacrifice the need of blood and water was always kept before the eye of Israel in the tabernacle we have the altar and the laver both were required remember the words of Jesus to the disciples after he had washed their feet in the upper room the one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet but is completely clean justified once and for all but then begins the work of sanctification which is progressive blood and water blood to atone water to cleanse well my friend it is not enough to know that Jesus died and shed his blood to know that he was a substitutionary sacrifice you have to receive the benefits of his death personally yourself and as we already noted the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover lamb was a vivid picture of receiving Christ as our crucified saviour into our hearts by faith for Jesus to give his body and blood and death was one thing for us to make the blessings of his death our own is another to have the knowledge that Jesus died to have the knowledge that Jesus was buried that he rose again that he ascended to the right hand of God that he is coming back

and he is coming back to know all that is not sufficient to save you you need to apply the benefits of his death to your heart by faith what is that by trusting in him and in him alone and dear friend I hope that that is your portion tonight and that you can look at the cross of Golgotha and that you can have that assurance in your heart that he was there in your place that your sins and what your sins desired was reckoned to him that he was there as your lamb who took away your sin may the Lord bless our thoughts upon his word we shall conclude by singing to the Lord's praise from Psalm 130 on page 421

[45 : 22] Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear and to my supplications voice give an attentive ear Lord who shall stand if thou O Lord shouldst mark iniquity but get with thee forgivenesses that feared thou mayest be Psalm 130 we shall sing the whole psalm to the Lord's praise Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear hear unto my soul make his just voice give unattentive ear

Lord who shall stand with thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity but yet with thee forgivenesses that fear that fear thou mayest be I wait for God my soul doth wait my hope is in his word Lord more than they that are born in what my soul waits for the Lord

I say more than they have to watch the morning lie to see let Israel open the Lord for with him mercy mercy be atlantia's redemption is ever found with him and from all his all his iniquities the

Israel shall redeem the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and for evermore amen amen