

## Hail to our glorious, suffering King.

Text: Matthew 27:27-31 for November 26, 2017 by Pastor Bolwerk

Picture the president of the United States coming to Benton Harbor to speak before a large group of people. As the president gets up to speak several people in the crowd pelt him with rotten eggs which splatter all over the new suit that he is wearing. It does not matter whether you like the president or not, there is one thing that all of us as Christians could certainly say: The president did not receive the respect and honor that someone in that office deserves.

How much more does that apply to Jesus. Here in God's Word we see the King of heaven and earth receiving treatment that is the exact opposite of what he should be receiving. Yet there is something quite astonishing going on here. Something that leads us to say ...

Theme: Hail to our glorious, suffering King.

I. He does not receive what he deserves.

II. He does not give what we deserve.

Throughout his life here on earth Jesus' words and actions made it clear that he is God. He gave sight to the blind, healed the sick, raised the dead, and most importantly, proclaimed the good news of the forgiveness of sins. Even when it came to predicting his own death Jesus displayed his all-knowing power as God. He described details that only God could know; right down to people spitting on him. Jesus told his disciples, **"the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him"** (Mark 10:33-34). This is exactly what happened. Jesus was arrested by the Jews, tried, falsely accused, and condemned to die. Then the Jews handed Jesus over to Pontius Pilate to be executed. Pilate had Jesus flogged and, as we just read, Pilate allowed Jesus to be mocked and abused. Every one of Jesus words came true, right down to the spit.

Jesus, our great King, creator and ruler of all things, does not get what he deserves. Instead he got the exact opposite. I realize with digital photography you do not see these much anymore, but it's like looking at the film negative of a picture. It does not look like what we would expect to see. We know Jesus is a king. We would expect to see him looking like a king. Jesus deserves a royal purple robe. Instead he gets a red cape, most likely the worn out red cape of a roman soldier. Jesus deserves a crown of gold to show he should be given honor and respect. Instead he received a crown of thorns. Our King deserves a royal scepter: A gold covered staff that represented a king's authority over the people he rules. Jesus certainly has authority over everyone and everything, but instead of a scepter he gets a stick which the soldiers use to beat him over the head with. Instead of being given praise and glory Jesus received mocking. Jesus, our sinless King, deserved freedom and life. Instead he received crucifixion and death.

Jesus did not get what he deserved. Do we give him what he deserves? Do we always recognize Jesus as the King and ruler of our lives? In this world we live in there are so many things that scream for our attention and want to rule our lives. Our schedules, filled with work and school and meals and meetings, are often packed to the point of bursting! We often work so hard at controlling our time that it ends up controls us, and then we forget to recognize the one who created time. And think of all our stuff. It needs to be used, played with, fueled, or recharged. Our stuff needs to be maintained and cared for. The cry of our "stuff" can seem so urgent that we find ourselves listening to our "stuff" instead of listening to our King.

When we do not give Jesus the recognition and honor he deserves as our King then we need to go back and look again at this picture. Do you see what Jesus is doing in this picture? This is not just the negative of a photograph. This is not just the reversal of glory and shame. No, this is a substitution. If I examine that negative closely using the magnifying glass of God's word I can see something that makes me shudder. That should be me standing there. God's Law says that I am the

## Hail to our glorious, suffering King.

Text: Matthew 27:27-31 for November 26, 2017 by Pastor Bolwerk

one who deserves God's scourging. I am the one who deserves to be mocked and beaten for my sin of not recognizing my God and King. I should face God's eternal wrath with an eternal crown of fire burning on my head in the torments of hell. That should be me. That should be you standing there with me.

Yet look at what Jesus did. He plucked you out of that picture of torment and death. He took your place. He suffered your hell on the cross. He paid for your sins. He paid for all of the times you did not recognize and honor him as King; for all of the times you treated him as something less than a King. He wiped those sins away when he said, "It is finished." The photographic film of your life which was once full of sin, is now just an empty negative. The sin is gone. Jesus was willing to suffer all of that for you. He certainly did not receive what he deserved.

The picture of God's word shows us what appears to be the negative of a photograph: Jesus suffered, died, and his body was put in a tomb, just like any other dead body. Yet, God's Word develops that negative and soon shows us a full color picture of our King. Three days later Jesus got up and walked out of that tomb. By his power as God Jesus came back to life so there would be no doubt that his payment for sins is complete. Rising from the dead Jesus reclaimed the power and glory that are rightfully his as King. The soldiers may have crowned him with thorns and put him to death, **"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death [...]"** (Hebrews 2:9).

Jesus now receives the honor and praise he deserves, as the Apostle John tells us in the book of Revelation: **Then I heard every creature [...] singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever"** (Revelation 5:13)! But what is truly incredible about Jesus reigning again as King is what we see him giving to us. Hail to our glorious, suffering King. He does not give what we deserve.

We deserve the rags of our sin. Jesus gives us his robe of perfection. **"[...] for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ"** (Galatians 3:27). Jesus is perfect. When you are clothed with him, then you are perfect in the eyes of God.

But there is nothing you did to deserve that. What we deserve is the fire of hell upon our heads. Instead Jesus places on our heads crowns of glory. The Apostle Peter says, **"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away"** (1 Peter 5:4). You are royalty, crowned sons and daughters of the Great King.

Yet a crown is not something we deserved either. We deserve God's mocking and scorn. Instead, in Christ, God now calls us holy. **But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, [...]"** (1 Peter 2:9).

This all seems almost too good to be true. We know that because of our sins we deserve eternal death. Yet our King gives us freedom and life. Speaking of believers Jesus says, **"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish"** (John 10:27-28). You will not only live forever, but you have freedom right now. **It is for freedom that Christ has set us free** (Galatians 5:1). Set us free for what? **In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence** (Ephesians 3:12). Because you are covered with Christ's perfection, the perfection God demands, you can walk right up to God with your prayers and requests, with whatever is on your heart or mind.

Don't miss the important point here about what Jesus gives you. Most of the gifts he gives you are gifts you can use right now. So why not take advantage of those gifts. Imagine if someone came along and set a million dollars in your lap as a gift. Would you just sit there and say, "Oh, this sure is a nice gift"? I don't think so. You would use that gift. You would take advantage of the gift you were given.

Our glorious King has set some incredible gifts in your lap. Take advantage of them. Jesus has

## **Hail to our glorious, suffering King.**

Text: Matthew 27:27-31 for November 26, 2017 by Pastor Bolwerk

given you freedom. Freedom to approach your all-powerful God in prayer. Jesus has made you royal children of God. Don't hide your royalty under the worldly clothes of a spiritual pauper. Let that royal robe of Christ's righteousness be clearly seen in your life; in how you live your life. Let people see you thanking your heavenly Father with your words and actions. When people see you loving your neighbor as yourself they too will give glory to God. You have the ability to do things that are pleasing to God because your King has given you the power to do them. Use that power to encourage one another. Use your talents and skills to thank your King by serving others.

Now if all of this, freedom, royalty, and power, is not reason enough to take advantage of the King's gifts, then just stop and look at what you are because of your King: You are saved. You have been rescued from sin and death. You are royal children who are members of God's household! You are rich, you are blessed, you are saints, sons and daughters of the light, brothers and sisters of Christ, a royal priesthood, a holy nation! You are righteous, and you are free. Free in a way that this unbelieving world just cannot comprehend. Live that freedom to honor your glorious, suffering King, because he has not given us what we deserve.

It is almost unbearable to see Jesus just standing there, accepting the punishment we know he does not deserve. He just accepts the mocking and the spitting and the blows. He accepted all of that, and finally even his own crucifixion and death. He took all of that on himself because he knew that it would save us from an eternity in hell. Jesus did not get what he deserved. Instead Jesus takes what he deserves, and he gives it to you. Freedom and eternal life in heaven are yours all because of what your glorious, suffering King has done for you. Amen.