

# My Shame on His Shoulders

New Castle Bible Church  
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Text: Mathew 27:32-44

## TRANSITION AND TEXTUAL READING

\*Thank musicians.

The text before us takes us to Jesus' crucifixion, and the focus of this entire passage is shame. We're looking at the shame of the cross. We worship Jesus, a man who knew shame.

Jesus chose His own lineage, and it's filled shamed men and women.  
Jesus chose His own birthplace, a shameful little stable.  
Who did He minister to the most? Shamed people.  
And how did Jesus die? A shameful death.

This passage tells us that Jesus carried our shame that we would share in His glory.

Please stand for the reading of God's Word...

**Matthew 27:32-44** — “As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “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.” So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

You may be seated. Let's seek the Lord before we delve into His Word this morning.

[PRAY]

## SERMON INTRODUCTION

The Roman statesman, Cicero said, “This very word ‘cross’ should be removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen, but from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears.” Rome routinely crucified its criminals, and though Cicero didn’t disagree with the practice, he had seen enough of it. History had sealed the horror of this invention with hundreds of thousands, if not millions of men, having been crucified.

The cross was historic by the first century, and it was designed not primarily for torture but as an instrument of submission and shame. It was a punishment reserved for revolutionaries and assassins. Men who stood against Rome’s authority in a region, men like Spartacus or men like Barabbas—these received a cross. It was as if Rome was saying...

*Rebel against us as you may, but in the end, you will be forced into submission. We will humiliate you in front of all ever who loved you until your body finally gives out and you die disgraced and rejected.*

Depraved masses enjoyed the bloodlust, but the cross was absolutely horrific. To Cicero, honorable men and women shouldn’t speak of the cross, shouldn’t even think of it. So, it should be no surprise that when we come to Matthew’s Gospel, we don’t read much about it here, either. All we get from Matthew is verse 35, “And when they had crucified Him.”

They crucified Him. It happened. No description necessary. Friends, none of the Gospels describe Jesus’ torture. Mel Gibson’s “Passion of the Christ” may have captured audiences with all the gore but Gibson missed the gospel.

Our Lord was crucified. It happened. The point of this passage isn’t to reflect upon Jesus’ physical torment so we might leave here shocked and feeling guilty.

Matthew doesn’t want us to dwell upon the pain that Jesus felt but the shame that He bore. As I said, this is a passage about shame.

The main point: **Jesus carried your shame that you might share in His glory.**

Shame is a sense that you aren’t acceptable, that you are broken, that you are worthless, that you don’t belong.

Shame may be the result of something you did or something that was done against you. Whether it was something you did or something awful done against you, shame often clings like tar and nothing seems to get rid of it.

You try to hide it, making sure no one knows about this *thing* in your past.  
You feel like running anytime someone gets too close.

The way out of shame isn't by hiding or running but in being known. Learning to let others in and then finding you're actually accepted and loved. The church hasn't been but should be a place that welcomes shamed people with open arms.

What binds all of God's people together isn't their wealth or influence but their union to Jesus Christ. And who is Jesus? The One who welcomes shamed people like the orphan, the alien, or the widow.

This past year has been hard for many people, and you may be here today feeling broken, believing you're worthless or don't belong. None of it's true, because in Christ, you are accepted and loved. Jesus never recoiled from shamed people, like lepers, tax collectors, or prostitutes. **Rather, He desired to carry their shame that they would share in His glory.** The first kind of shame Matthew shows us is the shame of weakness. Jesus carried your weakness.

### I. Jesus Carried Your Weakness (v. 32-34)

Looking ahead 700 years, Isaiah 53:4 says, "Surely he [the Messiah] has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." The NAS reads it was our "sicknesses that He Himself bore, and our pains that He carried." Griefs, sorrow, sicknesses, pains—the idea is weakness. The messiah would carry the weakness of His people.

This doesn't mean that Christians should never be weak. Quite the opposite! We are weak, but we have a Savior who understands and is strong.

When God took on flesh He made Himself weak—and not just a little weak. He pursued weakness to the n<sup>th</sup> degree. To see this, let's look at verse 32, which introduces us to a man named Simon.

Simon of Cyrene, that is North Africa. This man had walked with his family to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He's near one of the entrances, on a stone walkway. Narrow streets, lots of yelling... Simon sees there's this man, badly beaten, who has his arms stretched outward, tied to a beam. A crucifixion is about to take place.

Don't get too close! Anyone who makes contact or gets anything on them becomes defiled/impure. Doesn't matter how far you traveled—you're impure now. You can't celebrate the Passover.

Suddenly, to his horror, a Roman soldier calls Simon out of the crowd.

*You! Carry it!*

Simon had no choice but to get over there and carry some criminal's crossbeam. He's now defiled. He's now impure.

We don't know all the details, but Mark 15:21 says Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. The Gospel writers don't always use names, but here they mention Simon and his sons by name. It's as if Matthew and Mark are saying to their readers: *Remember Simon? Remember Rufus and Alexander, his sons? This is when they first believed!*

No idea what Jesus said to him as they walked to Golgotha, but Simon came to believe in Jesus. Though Simon was ceremonially defiled, he had never been so pure.

The fact that Simon had to carry Jesus' crossbeam tells us how weak our Lord had made Himself. He had survived a Roman flogging and was then beaten by several soldiers. Jesus could barely walk, likely stumbling with each step. Extreme weakness.

**Hebrews 4:15** — “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

We're often ashamed of weakness, but Jesus sympathizes with weak people. No one understands weakness better than He does, and no one is more willing and able to help.

When Jesus arrived at Golgotha, verse 34 says...

**Matthew 27:34** — “they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.”

This drink was a mild narcotic, extremely bitter, but meant to numb the pain. The soldiers weren't being nice here. They were just trying to calm the condemned, just enough as they drove the nails.

Jesus deliberately tasted the drink and then deliberately spit it out. This means He refused what could have helped Him. Why would He do that? Because He wasn't a man resigned to his fate but fully in control.

Hardly able to walk, Jesus ministered to Simon.

Racked with pain, He refused what might dull His senses.

When He was lifted up to die, at the utmost state of weakness, John says that Jesus cared for Mary. Luke tells us He saved one of the men who hung next to Him. Amazing!

On the day that Christ seemed most weak, He proved He was no less powerful to save. The cross shows God's power in weakness. So, if you are weak, Jesus invites you saying, “Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Don't hide in your shame but run to Jesus with your weakness, and if we as a church are anything like our Lord, may we be a people who offer rest to the weak and the weary.

## II. Jesus Carried Your Disgrace (v. 35-37)

Jesus carried the shame of our weakness, but He also carried the shame of our disgrace. Jesus carried your disgrace. Disgrace means to be discredited or brought low. Everything about this scene is disgraceful.

The actions are disgraceful, and the charge is disgraceful. But what makes the scene supremely disgraceful is that it's being done against Jesus Christ. This isn't some mere man being brought low but the true King of Israel, the righteous judge, the great creator. This is God Himself being brought low.

Having driven the nails, the soldiers affixed the crossbeam to the upright and raised the cross. Their job was mostly complete. They stayed only to keep order while the men died and then take the bodies down. In the meantime, verse 35 says the soldiers, "divided His garments among themselves by casting lots."

Anything the crucified owned was forfeit, even his actual clothing. The soldiers disgraced the men further by removing their clothes and distributing them. They would cast lots for the clothes and other belongings to see what each would take home that evening.

The men who hung from crosses were helpless and unclothed. All they could do was look down watch as the soldiers laughed and played games. It was heartless. Utterly disgraceful. Such a shameful way to die.

Looking ahead nearly a thousand years to this day, **Psalm 22:16-18** says...

A band of evildoers has encompassed me;  
They pierced my hands and my feet.  
I can count all my bones.  
They look, they stare at me;  
They divide my garments among them,  
And they cast lots for my clothing.

And that's exactly what happened when Jesus was crucified. Encompassed by evil men, hands and feet pierced, people staring, garments divided. It's sickening in so many ways, but the disgrace runs even deeper.

Passover was one of Israel's great feasts. Hundreds of thousands of families streamed into the city, many of whom had traveled on foot for days. It would have been exciting to see the temple—absolutely beautiful as it reflected rays of sunlight outward for miles away.

You and your family are excited to finally arrive... but as you approach the city walls, you and your children must walk by three crosses. You notice that one of crosses has a sign which says, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (v. 37).

The sign mocked the Jews even as they came to worship. Rome was reminding them that they are a conquered people. *Caesar is King, and he has power! Your king hangs from a cross!* The sign was a jab at the Jews, though incredibly ironic, because Jesus is the true King of the Jews.

**Philippians 2:8** – The King “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

A shameful, thoroughly disgraceful death... though one ordained by God.

I have wondered why Jesus had to die like this. We understand that the penalty for sin is death, and that Christ died in our place... but why so shameful a death? Why not something more honorable? Because sin isn't honorable. Sin is inherently disgraceful.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** — “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Christ “became sin.” He took the whole cesspool of your sin upon Himself. If that's true, then He couldn't possibly die an honorable death. He had to die a dishonorable, disgraceful death. It had to be a death in which Christ's sacrifice for sinners matched God's hatred for their sin. Thus, no death could be more fitting than death by crucifixion.

You want to know what God thinks of your sin? Look at the cross. The mocking, the beatings, the nakedness, the shame—all of it shows how disgraceful your sin is to God.

AND in all of these things, the cross shows Jesus' willingness to receive you.

I wish we had time to turn to Luke 23. Matthew tells us that Jesus hung between two wicked men who hurled insults at Him. Luke says that one of those men stopped insulting Jesus.

One man confessed that he was “receiving the due reward for [all his] deeds, but this man [Jesus] has done nothing wrong... Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

This man was a high-profile criminal, a co-conspirator with Barabbas. He was a wicked man whose life was full of disgrace. Gasping for breath with minutes to spare, he had no time to make amends. His soul was so close to being forever lost in hell when he looked to a beaten,

bloody, and weak messiah. He looked to Jesus just hoping for salvation... and Jesus gave it. Jesus received this man promising even as He died, "Today you will be with Me in paradise."

Your past doesn't matter at the cross. The Savior doesn't recoil at disgraced people. The cross in all its disgrace shows that God is eager to receive the disgraced. He is willing to receive you, if you will come.

### III. Jesus Carried Your Rejection (v. 38-44)

Jesus carried the shame of our weakness, and the shame of our disgrace. Finally, He carried the shame of our rejection. Everyone experiences rejection in life. The cross reminds us how deep was our rejection of God. Jesus wasn't just rejected by some random crowd 2,000 years ago. I rejected Him. In fact, had I been in the crowd that day, there's no reason to think I would've acted differently.

**Isaiah 53:3** — "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Despised and rejected by men. Matthew says the chief priests, scribes, and elders mocked Jesus. Those who passed by derided Him. Even the robbers who hung next to Jesus, cast insults. Interestingly, these are all Jewish people. Verses 38-44 show how Israel—from the highest to the lowest of low rejected Jesus.

Matthew gives us a sampling of the insults hurled at Jesus. These insults are directed at Jesus' identity: King of the Jews, Son of God, King of Israel. *Jesus, you deserve none of these titles!*

Jesus had entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, five days prior to the cross. The people were energized, ready to stand beside Him... but nothing happened. Incredible opportunity for Jesus to perform greater miracles, to capitalize on the energy, and usher in a new age... but nothing.

Five days later, as thousands of Jews entered Jerusalem that Friday, they saw the man they thought might be messiah now hanging on a cross. As the crowds passed by, they mocked Jesus.

False messiahs come and go. They gin up a crowd, the Romans get involved, and everyone ends up dead. *If you're truly our messiah, what are you doing on a cross?*

"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" (v. 38). Jesus made this claim in John 2, referring to His body as a temple. He said His body would be destroyed and raised in three days. But never mind that. *If you have any power at all, come down from the cross!*

The religious leaders heaped the shame as well. *Save others? You can't even save Yourself!! Come down Jesus! Come down, and we'll believe!*

Friends, if Jesus came off the cross, belief in Him wouldn't matter one bit. If He saved Himself, He couldn't save you or anyone else.

This presents a problem, because kings have kingdoms, and kingdoms have people. What's a kingdom without anyone in it? Nothing. But Jesus is King, right? Only if He dies to save His people from their sins. Without His death, He would have no people, there would be no kingdom, and Jesus would not be a King.

The religious leaders didn't understand any of this. They went one step further when said that Jesus "trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" The Son of God had enjoyed fellowship with the Father throughout eternity past. On the cross, some little men that He had created began to question whether the Father actually desires His Son.

*Jesus, you can't save yourself because you aren't the Messiah, and God isn't coming to save you, because He doesn't love You.*

**Psalm 42:9-10** — "I say to God, my rock: 'Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?' As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?'"

The taunt that the Father doesn't love the Son felt like a "deadly wound" to Jesus.

Those who mocked represent all humanity. Sin hates righteousness, and sinners naturally hate God. This is you. This is me. This is all of us mocking Jesus. We rejected Him... and He carried that rejection in order to save us.

He was deadest upon accomplishing the will of the Father, determination to reconcile sinners to God. Had Jesus' death been humane, quick and easy, it would mean that God wanted to avoid temptation, that He wanted to avoid our shame, avoid becoming too much like us. It would indicate that sin isn't heinous in His sight, but something quickly and easily dealt with.

The cross tells a much different story about God, sin, and each of us. God took on flesh to identify with us in every way, and His death by crucifixion shows us the extent of His determination to save His people.

God determined before you ever were that you would be His. The cross shows how far He would go to make you His own.

**Romans 5:8** — "But God shows His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Christ carried your shame upon the cross. Your weakness became His, your disgrace became His, your rejection became His. All that you and I should have received fell upon Jesus. He was brought



low that you and I would be brought on high to reign with Him in future glory.

## **SERMON CONCLUSION**

As we prepare to close, I'm reminded of an old hymn that was written and sung by slaves. In their shame and torment they would sing how "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen. Nobody knows my sorrow. Nobody knows the trouble I've seen. Nobody but... Jesus."

Jesus, the One who welcomes shamed people.

## **POST-SERMON EXHORTATIONS**

Friends, before we leave today, we are going to take the next few minutes to fill out a survey. This is the same survey we took as a church 20 months ago, and I would love to see how our church has changed since that time.

If you would be willing, go ahead and start on the paper survey. If you need a copy or a pen, just raise your hand and the men will come to you. If you're watching from online, you can click the appropriate link to fill it out. Paper or electronic, your answers are completely anonymous, though there's always someone who writes their name at the top.

Please take a moment to fill this out, not missing the box on the front side. And, in a minute, I will invite you to pray our benediction with me. Thereafter, please drop your surveys into one of the boxes at the exits.

## **BENEDICTION**

Thank you for filling out the surveys. Our Lord who made Himself weak, disgraced, and rejected will return in power and glory. And so, Revelation 15:3-4 exclaims...

**Revelation 15:3-4** — "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name! For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."