

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • TV132A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH, 1980

By
HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
FEBRUARY 12TH, 2015

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY
Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Matthew 27:33-36

“And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there.”

I want you to open your Bible with me to the book of **Matthew chapter 27**. I am going to read part of three verses beginning with **verses 33 through 36**. The title of the message is: “AND SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE.”

The Scripture says: *“When they were come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of the skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he tasted thereof, he would not drink. They crucified him and parted his garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet and sitting down they watched him there.”*

Now, God the Father delivered His beloved Son over into the hands of wicked men and wicked, religious leaders. This religious crowd turned the beloved Son of God over to

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Herod and Herod sent Him to Pilate and Pilate put Him into the hands of the Roman soldiers.

And you have read the Scriptures how that they mocked Him, how they ridiculed Him, and how they took His own robe off from Him and put a scarlet robe over His shoulders, mocking Him (the shoulders and back that they had beaten and scourged).

Then, one of them platted a crown of thorns and pressed it down into His brow. Then they put a reed in His hand and sat Him on a mock throne and they began to bow the knee crying: "*Hail Jesus King of the Jews.*"

One of them said: "He's a prophet," and then he walked up and slapped Him. And he said, "Prophecy; if you are a prophet, tell us, what's the name of the man who slapped you?" They plucked out His beard and they just spent a long time mocking and ridiculing and causing the Son of God to suffer at their hands.

Finally, the soldiers brought Him out into Pilate's hall and there they had a trial of a sort and the crowd insisted that He be crucified. They took him to this place called "Golgotha." They stripped Him of His clothes and nailed Him to a cross to die between two thieves.

For a long time the people walked around the cross and they taunted the Son of God and they spat upon Him. One of them cried: "*He trusted in God; let's see if God will help him now.*" Another one said: "*If you be the Son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe on you.*"

Others said: "*He saved others; himself he cannot save.*" Even the thieves who were crucified with Him mocked Him and said: "*If you are the Son of God; save yourself and save us.*"

Our Lord cried: "*I thirst.*" The Scripture says they took a reed and they put vinegar and gall on it, evidently on some sort of sponge, and they held it up to His mouth and he would not drink. They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall and He would not drink, "*and sitting down they watched him there.*"

Now, I challenge you; I challenge you this morning in your heart and in your mind and in your imagination; I challenge you to sit down with me before the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and let's consider some things.

Now, these people who had so cruelly nailed Jesus Christ to the cross; they had been witnesses of some of the things that He had done. They certainly had been witnesses of the things He said while hanging on that cross.

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

One of the first things He said as He looked over this crowd of mocking people, this crowd of wicked people that had nailed Him to the tree, He said, *“Father; forgive them, they know not what they do.”*

Then He noticed Mary, the woman who God used to bring Him into the world standing near His cross and the disciple whom He loved, (which was John) He said: *“woman; behold thy Son.”* And He said to John, *“Behold thy mother.”*

Then the Lord Jesus Christ cried: *“I thirst.”* Then, one of the thieves said: *“Lord; remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”* The Master said: *“Today; shalt thou be with me in paradise.”*

Then, bearing the awful burden and weight, guilt, shame and filth of our sins He cried out: *“my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* They heard all of this; they witnessed all of this.

This question had to go through their mind, no matter how blinded they were with hatred, no matter how blinded they were by their religious tradition, no matter how blinded they were by their superstitions and ceremony, no matter how much they despised it, it had to go through their minds while they were sitting there on the ground watching Him on that cross; it had to go through their minds this question: *“who is this man, who is this man?”*

Now, the angels said when they announced His birth: *“he’s Jesus the Son of God.”* That’s right! They told Mary: *“You shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.”*

Then, these same angels told the shepherds on the Judean hillside that He’s Christ the Lord. The Heavenly Father said of Him: *“This is my beloved Son in whom I’m well pleased.”* They had heard Him say on many occasions: *“I and my Father are one. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father:*

“The works that I do are not my works but the works of Him that sent me. The words that I speak are not my words but the words of him that sent me.” Who is this man?

Another question that we just have to consider as we sit and watch Him there, sitting down, after they had spent their time jeering and mocking and railing upon Him, they got really weary of it and they sat down and just watched Him.

This had to go through their minds: *“why did He come into this world? If He is who He says He is, why did He come into this world?”* We know He came. The Scripture says: *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

Paul says: *“He came to save sinners of whom I am the chief.”* He said Himself: *“He came to seek and to save the lost,”* but why? As we sit and watch Him there; why did He

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

come into this world and why, even if He came into this world to save sinners, why did He have to die on a cross? Why did He have to die?

He could have prevented it. He said: *“No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down. I lay it down that I might take it up again.”* Isaiah said: *“It pleased the Lord to bruise him.”* If there had been some other way of salvation, Christ would have never died on that cross. This is the way that God decreed to save sinners.

This is the way God’s justice demands that sinners be saved, that there be a sacrifice and a substitute and a sin-offering; there has to be. The law has to be honored and justice must be satisfied. Why did He die on that cross? He died that He might redeem His own from their sin.

Now; in **Lamentations Chapter 1:12**; this is the Lord speaking through the prophet: *“Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? (They pass by and shoot out their lips and they laugh and they mock and they say: he trusted in God; let’s see if God will have him. If you be the Son of God come down from the cross and we will believe on you)*

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see. Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow? Is any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger (fierce judgment)?”

Sit down if you have time, if you are not in too big of a hurry; sit down and watch Him there and answer some questions:

Who is this man?
Why did He come into this world?
Why did He die on that cross?

The Centurion came to this conclusion when it was all over: *“Surely this man was the Son of God.”* That’s the conclusion that he came to.

I hope that you will come to that delightful conclusion when I finish the message today. Sit down and watch him there. *“What is it to you? What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?”* What relationship do you have with Him? What does His death mean to you? What has it accomplished for you, if anything?

I will tell you this; I can give you this clue, I can give you this clue, as the most important clue: Everything in the Bible, everything in the Bible before Calvary, before Golgotha, points to that man on that cross.

Everything, everything in the Bible from **Genesis 1:1 to Malachi chapter 4**, (the last book in the Old Testament), everything in the Old Testament, points to that man on the cross.

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Everything in the New Testament Scriptures, everything after Calvary, points back to that man on the cross. Who is that man? Why did that man die on the tree? Where is that man now? What interest, if any, do I have in Him or in this event or in that blood that was shed? He's no ordinary man.

Now, this is too important for you to leave it up to some preacher to settle the matter for you. This is too important for you to leave it up to some denomination or affiliation or association. This is too important for you to leave it up to some indifferent, careless, professional decision which you made a long time ago.

The apostle Paul summed it all up in this statement in **Galatians chapter 6**: "*God forbid that I should glory (or find any delight or any joy) God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ: By whom the world was crucified unto me and I unto the world.*"

And the great bishop J.C. Ryle, one of the greatest preachers and writers who ever lived made this statement in summing up his own person testimony; he said, "I venture the whole of my salvation and the whole of my relationship with God almighty on Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I cast loose entirely and completely from any other person, any other refuge, or any other hope. I do not rest partly on Christ crucified and partly on my works. In the matter of my soul's salvation, Christ Jesus is all and in all from beginning to end. He is the author and finisher of my faith. With heaven before me, Christ my door, with hell beneath me, Christ my deliverer, with the law against me, Christ my righteousness, justices' claim on me, Christ Jesus my satisfaction, with death awaiting me, but Christ to remove the sting, the grave is my destiny but Christ my victory, eternity my long home, until Jesus Christ, my glory."

This is where it is all decided. It's not decided at an altar; it's decided at God's altar, Golgotha's Hill. It's not decided at a mourner's bench. It's not decided at the front of a church in a baptismal pool or before a sacramental table; it's all decided at the cross.

A man's attitude toward the Christ of the cross determines his eternal destiny whether it is to wrath or to life. I insist, my friend, I insist that you sit down and watch Him there. I insist that you determine in your heart, your attitude toward Jesus Christ the Lord.

"*What think ye of him?*" I'm not asking what you think of me or what you think of my doctrine or what you think of my personality or what you think of this program. I'm asking you: "*what think ye of Jesus Christ?*"

What do you see in the cross? I'm going to give you seven things that I see in the cross. I'm going to join that crowd and sitting down I'm going to watch Him there. I'm going to come to seven conclusions that I believe are Spirit-led and Spirit-taught.

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

First of all: As I sit and watch Him there I see this and I know this beyond a shadow of a doubt: I see the Father's hand is in it all, God the Father's hand is in it all.

This is quite clear from the Scriptures that His death was no accident: *"It pleased the Lord to bruise him."* That is what it says: *"It pleased the Lord to bruise him."*

In **Acts 2:23** the apostle Peter describing this death on Calvary says: *"Him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God; you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."* "You have crucified Him. You slew Him on a tree but you did what God determined before to be done, in His eternal council and in His foreordination and in His eternal purpose."

In **Acts 4: 27 and 28** the Scripture says: *"Of a truth; (it's a fact, it's the record) against the holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate."* These men weren't friends until they had a common enemy, Jesus Christ, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, and they certainly were not friends until they had a common enemy.

"But, Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel gathered together to do (what they wanted to do, what they planned to do, what their wicked hearts devised to do) but they did what God determined before to be done."

Christ said: *"I'm come not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me. This is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me; I will lose nothing."*

Yes, God gave the Son a people and appointed the Son their surety and gave over into His hands their full redemption and Christ came down here and paid the price. Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, just as his elect were chosen in him before the world began. I see that the Father planned it all.

Second: As I sit and watch Him there I see the Scriptures fulfilled!

Did you ever read in **1 Corinthians 15: 1 through 3:** *"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures? He was buried and rose again according to the scriptures?"*

What Scriptures? We are talking about the Old Testament Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and all of these Scriptures, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

That's the Scriptures we are talking about: *"Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, and ascended to the right hand of God, according to the scriptures."*

You see; the Old Testament Scriptures are Christ, Christ in picture, Christ in promise, and Christ in prophecy. The New Testament Scriptures are Christ revealed in His person.

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

When you go to the Mount of Transfiguration and you see the Lord Jesus Christ there surrounded by the awesome glory of God, and on either side of Him are Moses and Elijah. Moses represented the law and Elijah the prophets, the law and the prophets.

They were talking to Christ about what? What did they talk about? Luke tells us; He said, *“They talked with him about his death in Jerusalem.”*

That’s what they talked about and that’s what Moses wrote about. *“Moses wrote of me,”* Christ said. That’s what Elijah preached about. That’s what Abraham saw when he saw Christ’s day.

Do you understand Abel’s offering? As you see Abel bringing the blood, the lamb, and putting it on the altar, roasting it with fire, shedding its blood and *“God had respect to his offering.”*

Here’s his brother over here with the fruit of the field and the fruit of his own hands. *“God had respect to Abel’s lamb;”* that’s Christ, the Lamb of God. That’s a picture of Christ.

Do you understand the Passover Lamb in Egypt when God said: *“the first born son would die in every home, even of the cattle on the hillside, except where the blood was put on the door.”* He said: *“When I see the blood I will pass over you.”*

Our Lord told the people of Israel to observe that Passover Feast every year until Christ came. Who is our Passover and who died for our sins and shed His blood?

Do you understand the rock that was smitten in the wilderness, when the people were thirsty and dying of thirst and Moses smote the rock, smitten of God and from the rock flowed the living, thirst-quenching, cool, and clear, stream of water? That rock is Christ.

Do you understand the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness, the people bitten by the fiery serpents, and Moses made a serpent of brass just like the one that had bitten the people?

Christ came down here in the likeness of sinful flesh. That’s our problem, sinful flesh. Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh and was lifted up on a cross, and there He died, and all who looked to Him shall live, just like all who look to Moses’ brazen serpent lived.

Do you understand the tabernacle in the wilderness that was divided into two parts, the “Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, separated by a veil?

And when the high priest once a year would go under that veil into the Holy of Holies he would take the blood of a lamb and put it on the mercy seat which covered the broken law of God, and that blood covered their sins and covered their iniquities.

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And how the blood of Christ who is our great high priest, who entered not the Holy Place made with hands, but into heaven itself in the presence of God, on the mercy seat of glory? He put not the blood of a lamb but his own precious blood and cleansed our sins.

Third: I see the Scriptures fulfilled in His death. I see something else; I see the everlasting covenant fulfilled; God's a covenant God.

He made a covenant with Adam and Adam broke it. He made a covenant with Abraham, a covenant with Moses, a covenant with Noah, and a covenant with David.

God's a covenant God. He keeps His covenants. The cry to all covenants; there's an everlasting covenant. This everlasting covenant is with His Son Jesus Christ, for Christ, according to **Hebrews 7:22** "*is the surety of an everlasting covenant.*"

In **Hebrews 13:20**, "*his blood is the blood of an everlasting covenant.*" In **Hebrews 8:6**, "*he's the mediator of an everlasting covenant.*"

This everlasting covenant of grace; (call it what you will, that's what the Scripture calls it) is an eternal covenant. The Father purposed to save a people and the Son assumed the responsibility of purchasing those people with His own blood and the Holy Spirit of applying that blessing.

I see it fulfilled on that cross. I see the purchase made. I cry with Job: "*Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom.*" The ransom is found at Calvary.

Fourthly: I see the Saviour's great love!

I know that "*God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son.*" Somebody said: "Christ came down here to get God in the notion of saving sinners." I beg your pardon; Christ came because God was in the notion to save sinners.

He came not to enable God to love men but because God did love men. Our Lord Jesus Christ was a willing substitute. He said: "*No man takes my life from me. Having loved his own he loved them to the end, even the death on the cross.*"

He said: "*I'm the good shepherd; I know my sheep, (I love my sheep) I lay down my life for my sheep.*"

**“Love sent my Saviour to die in my stead
Why should He love me so?
Weakly to Calvary's cross He was lead
Why should he love me so?**

Nails pierced His hands and His feet in my place

**Nothing withholding my sins to erase
Why should he love me so?"**

Fifthly: I see something else in that cross; I see not only the Saviour's great love but I see God's great wrath against sin!

Now, you take a good look at the cross and you answer a question: who's on that cross? That's God's Son. And you ask yourself this question, will God punish sin?

Who did you say was on the cross? God's Son; being punished for sin, not His own; "*he knew no sin*" but the sins of those whom He represented.

Our Lord was punished on that cross. He suffered and died on that cross under the weight of my sins. "*He was wounded for my transgressions. He was bruised for my iniquities. The chastisement of my peace was upon him. By his stripes I'm healed.*"

Do you want to answer those questions? Will God punish sin? I will take you to Calvary. I won't just take you to the days of the flood or the days outside the Garden of Eden, or the days of Sodom and Gomorrah; I will take you to Calvary.

I say, if God spared not His own Son (who was bearing sins in the place of others, whose sins were imputed unto Him, who were never committed by Him, but imputed unto Him, for somebody else's sake) I say this to you, there shouldn't be any doubt in your mind that God will settle the score with all men. God will punish sin: "*The soul that sinneth shall surely die.*" That's what the Scripture says. "*Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.*"

Sixthly: But, I see something else as I sit there and watch him; I see His love for sinners!

I see the wrath of God against sin. But, I see something else; I see that the debts have been fully paid and fully satisfied. What a sufficient payment that was made.

The apostle Paul came to this conclusion: "*if God can be for us (in substitution, in satisfaction, if God be for me in everlasting mercies) who can be against me?*"

Can you find any sufficient enemy, can you find any conquering enemy, and can you find any powerful enemy that can overcome God; if He is for me, who can be against me, if He's for me? Then Paul says: "*Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect; it's God that justifieth.*"

You know, sometimes people will commit a crime or at least having been accused of committing a crime, will go to court and find him guilty and they will appeal; they will appeal to the next court.

SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE

MATTHEW 27:33-36 • HENRY T. MAHAN

They will find him guilty and then they will appeal to the state Supreme Court. They will find him guilty and they will say: "I will take it all the way to the Supreme Court." Let me tell you: if the Supreme Court overrules it, he's not guilty.

My case has been taken all the way to the highest court of the universe. God almighty has justified me. God almighty acquitted me, God almighty has pardoned me, and if God almighty has justified me "*who can lay anything to my charge?*"

Go on down the line, all these smaller courts have nothing more to say; I've been cleared in the court of law. That's where the business is transacted and that's the final say.

I see the ransom paid: "*Who can lay anything to our charge? Who can condemn us? Christ died; yea rather, is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who intercedes for us.*"

Well, let's stick around there a little while longer; let's not leave yet. Let's watch him there and I tell you I learned some things. I learned how to. Don't buy a book and try to learn how to love or how to give or how to forgive or how to show mercy. Come to Calvary; you will learn it better there.

I've sat down and watched Him there and I learned how to love: "*greater love hath no man than this to lay down his life for his friend or his enemies. We were enemies and Christ died for us.*"

He said, "*Love one another, as I love you.*" So, you learn to love at Calvary.

I will tell you something else: you know how to forgive at Calvary. If you sit there long enough and hear Him praying through His parched, broken, lips, and you hear Him praying through the blood streaming down His face, and you hear Him looking at that crowd through the eyes that were just slit from having been beaten by their own fist and said: "*Father; forgive them for they know not what they do,*" you will learn how to forgive.

You will learn how to give too; Christ gave Himself, He gave Himself. You give a few trinkets but He gave Himself.

So, you learn all the graces and all the fruit and the blessings of humility. "*He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God became of no reputation, died even the death of the cross.*" You will find it all at Calvary.

Sit down awhile and watch Him!