

## Unit II: Christ's All-sufficient Sacrifice

# They Couldn't Keep Him Down

DEVOTIONAL READING: Hebrews 2:1-13

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Matthew 27:24–28:10

PRINT PASSAGES: Matthew 27:39-40, 45-54; 28:1-10

### Key Verse

As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. (Matthew 28:9, KJV)

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Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Matthew 28:9, NIV)

### Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Examine how the death and resurrection of Jesus borrow meanings from the Temple and Hebrew Bible's sacrificial system.
- Rejoice in Jesus' resurrection.
- Go and tell others how they can know the risen Christ.

### \*Key Terms

**Centurion (27:54)**—Greek: *hekatontarchés* or *hekatontarchos* (**hek-at-on-tar'-khace**): a captain of one hundred men (used in discussing the Roman army).

**Countenance (28:3)**—Greek: *idea* (**id-eh'-ah**): form; outward "appearance" (NIV).

**Raiment (28:3)**—Greek: *endyma* (**en'-doo-mah**): clothing; an outer garment; vestment; cloak; "clothes" (NIV).

**Reviled (27:39)**—Greek: *blasphēmeō* (**blas-fay-meh'-o**): spoke evil of; railed on; vilified; defamed; used insulting words to demoralize (humiliate); "hurled insults" (NIV).

**Sepulchre (28:1)**—Greek: *taphos* (**taf'-os**): a burial, grave; a burial place, monument, memorial; the resting place of a deceased individual; "tomb" (NIV).

\*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

### Life Happens

One chilly winter evening, after Bible study, Emma noticed an elderly man sitting alone on a bench outside the church, looking cold and weary. Emma felt a strong urge to help him. Remembering Jesus'



### Overview

Matthew primarily wrote his gospel for a Jewish audience to present Jesus as the Messiah and Israel's eternal King. Matthew's use of fulfillment citations demonstrates this. This refers to how Old Testament Scriptures are fulfilled in Jesus' words and actions throughout the gospel. In this way, Matthew's presentation of Jesus in his book follows Old Testament prophecies that a Jewish audience would be able to understand.

Matthew starts his gospel with Jesus' genealogy, birth, early life, and preparation for ministry (see Matthew 1–4:11). He organizes Jesus' teachings into five significant sermons: the Sermon on the Mount (see chapters 5–7), instructions to the twelve disciples (see chapter 10), parables about the kingdom (see chapters 13 and 18), and the Olivet Discourse (see chapters 24–25). Matthew concludes with a detailed account of Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection (see chapters 26–28).

These final chapters are crucial for two reasons. First, they highlight the central theme of salvation: Jesus took the world's sin upon Himself on the Cross, making salvation possible through His death, burial, and resurrection for those separated from God by sin. Second, these chapters show the completion of Jesus' mission and His commission to His disciples.

teachings about loving others, she approached him with a friendly smile.

"Hi there, sir. I'm Emma. Are you doing all right?" she asked gently.

The man, Mr. Thompson, explained that he had lost his way and couldn't find his home. Living alone since his wife passed away, he often struggled with his memory. Emma decided to help him find his way back. And as they walked, she learned about his life and his deep love for his late wife.

When they reached his house, Emma noticed that it was in disrepair and that he struggled with daily tasks. Rather than just saying goodbye, she rallied her friends from Bible study and organized a plan to clean and repair Mr. Thompson's home. They brought meals, spent time with him, and ensured that he had what he needed.

One evening, as they gathered around Mr. Thompson's dining table, he smiled and said, "I haven't felt this much love and care in years. You all are God's angels."

Emma and her friends felt a profound sense of fulfillment. They hadn't just helped a neighbor; they had truly lived out their faith, spreading kindness and compassion throughout their community.

### Questions

1. How did Emma and her friends exhibit God's love through their actions?
2. Why is it important to translate our faith into concrete acts of love and service?
3. Can you think of a time when someone showed you God's love through their actions? How did it impact you?
4. What are some ways in which we can demonstrate God's love to those in need in our own community?

## COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT

### Misguided Mockery (*Matthew 27:39-40*)

#### KJV

**39** And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

**40** And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

## NIV

**39** Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads

**40** and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

Matthew 27 describes Jesus’ trial, mockery, crucifixion, and death. While on the cross, Jesus faced continuous public mockery and verbal abuse, fulfilling Psalm 22:7, which reads, “All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads” (NIV). People mocked Him by recalling His statement about destroying the Temple and raising it in three days, challenging Him to save Himself if He was indeed God’s Son (**verses 39-40**). Their spiritual blindness prevented them from understanding that Jesus was predicting His death and resurrection. By staying on the cross, Jesus proved that He was God’s Son. He patiently endured their insults. His mission was to bridge the gap between humanity and God, enduring the humiliation from the crowd at His crucifixion.

Jesus didn’t come to save His own life but to give it as a ransom for sinners. Jesus’ patient endurance of the Cross shows the depth of God’s love and grace toward sinners. Believers facing opposition to their faith should follow His example.

 **What Do You Think?** Which spiritual practices help the faith community stay strong and resilient when facing mockery, ridicule, and humiliation for their beliefs?

## Rejection by the Father (*Matthew 27:45-54*)

### KJV

**45** Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

**46** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

**47** Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.

**48** And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

**49** The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

**50** Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

**51** And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

**52** And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

**53** And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

**54** Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

### NIV

**45** From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.

**46** About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

**47** When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

**48** Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink.

**49** The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

**50** And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

**51** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split


**52** and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.

**53** They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

**54** When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

Jesus’ crucifixion began at 9:00 a.m. (the “third hour”). From noon until 3:00 p.m., a supernatural darkness covered the land (**verse 45**). During this time, Jesus became the world’s sin offering and was forsaken by the Father. This separation caused Jesus to cry out, asking why He had been abandoned—quoting Psalm 22:1 (**verse 46**). Some people misunderstood and thought He was calling for Elijah. One person offered Him sour wine to drink, hoping to help Him speak more clearly (**verses 47-48**). Others mocked and waited to see if Elijah would come to save Him (**verse 49**). Jesus, knowing His purpose, gave up His spirit with a loud cry, committing it to God (**verse 50**). His death was perfectly timed according to God’s plan. Three significant events followed His death (**verses 51-53**): the Temple veil was torn in two, an earthquake occurred, and deceased saints were resurrected.

These events impressed a Roman centurion and other guards so much that they acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God (**verse 54**). This was likely an acknowledgment of something extraordinary about Him rather than a confession of faith.

 **What Do You Think?** In what ways can you see God working in your life through the events described in this passage?

**“Come See; Go Tell!”** (*Matthew 28:1-10*)

**KJV**

**IN THE** end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

**2** And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

**3** His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

**4** And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

**5** And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

**6** He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

**7** And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

**8** And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

**9** And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

**10** Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

## NIV

**AFTER THE Sabbath**, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

**2** There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

**3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

**4** The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

**5** The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.

**6** “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

**7** “Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

**8** So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

**9** Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him.

**10** Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

In Matthew 28, we read about the early morning visit to Jesus’ tomb by the women who had stayed at the cross after His death. This group included Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (**verse 1**). An angel of the Lord descended with an earthquake, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. The angel’s dazzling appearance terrified the soldiers guarding the tomb (**verses 2-4**). When the women arrived, the angel told them not to be afraid and invited them to see where Jesus’ body had been (**verses 5-6**). They saw only His grave clothes and the cloth that had been wrapped around His head. The angel then instructed them to go quickly and tell Jesus’ disciples about the Resurrection and that He would meet them in Galilee (**verse 7**). The women hurried away from the tomb, filled with fear and joy, to deliver the Good News (**verse 8**). Jesus met and greeted them on their way, and they worshipped Him (**verse 9**). Jesus told them not to be afraid and to inform the disciples that they would see Him in Galilee (**verse 10**).

These verses highlight the victorious climax of Christ’s death, showcasing God’s ultimate expression of love for humanity and affirming the Resurrection as Christ’s triumph over sin and death. The angel’s invitation to “come see the place where He lay” was followed by the command to go and tell the good news of the Resurrection to the disciples, who should have been expecting it. Believers should rejoice in the Resurrection enthusiastically and share the news with others, helping them know the risen Savior.

The death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ are inseparable and spiritually crucial events. Without His atoning sacrifice on the Cross we would all remain in sin and eternally separated from God. Jesus died for sinners and rose from the dead. The Resurrection confirms His victory over sin and death. Without the Cross, there is no forgiveness of sin. Without the Resurrection, we have no salvation or hope of eternal life.

 **What Do You Think?** How can you live out the message of the Resurrection in your daily interactions with others?

## Your Life

Many churches proclaim that “every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday.” Every single day should be significant for believers because Christ’s resurrection guarantees eternal life. How often do you celebrate Jesus’ resurrection? Consider making its celebration a part of your daily meditation to express gratitude for being justified before God through salvation.

## Your World!

As you celebrate Resurrection Sunday, take a moment to think about the many people who do not know Jesus as their Savior. The angel told the women to “come and see” and “go and tell.” Similarly, make it your mission to “go and tell” others about the Resurrection so that they may come to know Jesus.

## Closing Prayer

Dear God, today we rejoice in Jesus’ resurrection. As we celebrate, we realize and accept our responsibility to go and tell others how they can know the victorious, risen Savior. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

### Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, April 21	“Here Is the Lamb of God!”	(John 1:29-36)
TUESDAY, April 22	“The Lord Has Become My Salvation”	(Psalm 118:1-14)
WEDNESDAY, April 23	“Live and Not Die”	(Psalm 118:15-29)
THURSDAY, April 24	“Worthy Ransom”	(1 Peter 1:13-25)
FRIDAY, April 25	“Celebrate God”	(Psalm 99)
SATURDAY, April 26	“Live in the Light”	(Revelation 21:9-16, 21-27)
SUNDAY, April 27	“The Slaughtered, Conquering Lamb”	(Revelation 5:1-10)

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