

*Surprises and Lessons from Jesus' Trial,  
Crucifixion and Resurrection*

Acts 2:22-36

Sermon

*Hobart, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013*

*Launceston, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013*

**Micah 6:6-8**

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What kind of offerings should we give him?  
Should we bow before God  
with offerings of yearling calves?

<sup>7</sup> Should we offer him thousands of rams  
and ten thousand rivers of olive oil?  
Should we sacrifice our firstborn children  
to pay for our sins?

<sup>8</sup> No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good,  
and this is what he requires of you:  
to do what is right, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with your God. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Mic 6:8). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

## **Acts 2:22-36**

<sup>22</sup> “People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. <sup>23</sup> But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. <sup>24</sup> But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip. <sup>25</sup> King David said this about him:

‘I see that the LORD is always with me.

I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

<sup>26</sup> No wonder my heart is glad,  
and my tongue shouts his praises!

My body rests in hope.

<sup>27</sup> For you will not leave my soul among the dead  
or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.

<sup>28</sup> You have shown me the way of life,  
and you will fill me with the joy of your presence.’

<sup>29</sup> “Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the patriarch David wasn’t referring to himself, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us. <sup>30</sup> But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David’s own descendants would sit on his throne. <sup>31</sup> David was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah’s resurrection. He was saying that God would not leave him among the dead or allow his body to rot in the grave.

<sup>32</sup> “God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. <sup>33</sup> Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. <sup>34</sup> For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said,

‘The LORD said to my Lord,

“Sit in the place of honor at my right hand

<sup>35</sup> until I humble your enemies,  
making them a footstool under your feet.”’

<sup>36</sup> “So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”<sup>2</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION:

### I. THE YEAR IS SPEEDING ON

#### A. AND THIS YEAR, EASTER COMES EARLY

1. So it is good that we start to get our minds focused on that central event of Jesus saving work on our behalf

## S.P.S:

#### A. WE ARE GOING TO EXPLORE SEVERAL OF THE TRAVESTIES JESUS SUBJECTED TO HIMSELF TO ALONG WITH HIS CRUCIFIXION

1. And see what lessons we can learn from them, both about God, our salvation, and the life Jesus' calls us to share with him

#### B. PRAYER

## BODY:

### II. SURPRISES

#### A. AS CHRISTMAS REMINDS US, JESUS' BIRTH WAS AN INCREDIBLE SURPRISE TO EVERYONE.

1. A shock to Mary, a great stress and trauma initially to Joseph, an amazing spectacle to the shepherds, an unfolded puzzle and mystery to the wise men, but a great threat and alarm to Herod

#### B. WHEN JESUS BEGAN TO TEACH AND MINISTER, PEOPLE WERE IN FOR EVEN MORE SURPRISES

1. Many gathered around to hear and see him, in wide eyed wonder and amazement.

2. But Jesus' teaching and ministry was a great disappointment and offense to most of the religious people of his time.
3. He was not the Messiah they had been expecting
  - a) Their expectation was a mighty king and warrior who would bring spectacular victory through power and might, vanquishing the Roman occupiers, and restoring the glory and prominence of Israel
  - b) They thought he would reinforce and strengthen the law and their teachings and traditions
4. But Jesus was in most cases the opposite of what they expected
  - a) So as Easter reminds us, they had him crucified as a false messiah, a heretic and a fraud

**C. AT PENTECOST, PETER GAVE A SUMMARY OF THESE EVENTS**

**Acts 2:22-36**

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<sup>36</sup> “So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”

**D. SO LET’S LOOK AT THREE PARTS OF WHAT HE WENT THROUGH**

1. And consider some of the lessons we learn from each aspect, about our Saviour and the life he calls us to share with him

### **III. JESUS' SURRENDER TO THE ROMANS**

#### **A. FIRST, LET US CONSIDER JESUS' ARREST. HIS BEING TAKEN IN MEEK SURRENDER BY THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES AND LATER BY THE ROMANS**

1. This was the opposite of what was expected, which was the Jews crowning him and following him as King and Messiah, and the Romans surrendering to the Messiah, and being led by him as captives to their destruction
  - a) Even the disciples had asked Jesus when he was going to bring in his kingdom in triumph
2. Jesus did not come and take authority through force or miraculous power—though Satan had earlier tempted him to do just that.
  - a) Jesus rule and victory and messiahship would come in a surprisingly different way—through love, sacrifice, surrender and suffering—with and as one of his people.

#### **B. THERE IS AN OLD STORY THAT SHOWS THE OPPOSITE TO JESUS WAY OF LIVING**

1. Culpepper (Luke, New Interpreter's Bible) quotes a Jewish story

A Jewish story tells of the good fortune of a hardworking farmer. The Lord appeared to this farmer and granted him three wishes, but with the condition that whatever the Lord did for the farmer would be given double to his neighbor.

The farmer, scarcely believing his good fortune, wished for a hundred cattle. Immediately he received a hundred cattle, and he was overjoyed until he saw that his neighbor had two hundred. So he wished for a hundred acres of land, and again he was filled with joy until he saw that his neighbor had two hundred acres of land.

Rather than celebrating God's goodness, the farmer could not escape feeling jealous and slighted because his neighbor had received more than he.

Finally, he stated his third wish: that God would strike him blind in one eye. And God wept. [p. 298]

#### **C. LESSON:**

1. Winning isn't always about beating or defeating others and neither is justice.
2. The life of God Jesus came to reveal and invite us to share in, is not about a them and us mentality
  - a) It is about "at-one-ment"
3. It is about restoring and building relationships
  - a) About loving our neighbor as ourselves
  - b) Putting others interests above our own
4. It is about seeking to enhance lives and relationships, and be a blessing to others
  - a) To share who we are, and what we have
  - b) We can't really fulfill our potential, and be the best we can be if we don't use our gifts to serve others and the community

**D. JESUS DIDN'T SEEK TO TAKE POWER OR GAIN POPULARITY OR ENHANCE AND PROTECT HIS OWN LIFE**

1. He was prepared to give and sacrifice himself, and to give up his rights and his safety
  - a) To surrender to the forces of evil, in order to enter into the suffering and abuse that the downtrodden people of his creation have suffered
2. He voluntarily and willingly surrendered to the abuse and mistreatment of the Jewish and Roman authorities in order to be with us in our mistreatment, in the midst our suffering, so as to be right there with us
  - a) To demonstrate that he is willing and able to support and comfort us
  - b) To reassure us that he will never leave or forsake us
  - c) To demonstrate that he understands and is fully aware of what we are going through, because he has suffered the same sort of thing, and is right there with us, full of understanding, empathy and compassion



**E. AND THAT IS WHAT HE CALLS ON US TO DO FOR OTHERS**

1. To be there for them when they are being mistreated, or suffering any sort of abuse
2. He seeks to be with them through us
3. As James wrote; James 1:27

<sup>27</sup> Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

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**IV. JESUS' UNJUST TRIAL**

**A. AFTER JESUS WAS ARRESTED, HE WAS TRIED AND CONDEMNED BY THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

1. He was falsely accused, and lies were used to try and convict him
2. He was accused of blasphemy and of speaking against the Jewish religion
3. It was even illegal to try him at that time of night
4. It was a setup, like a kangaroo court

**B. JUSTICE IS AT THE HEART OF GOD'S NATURE**

1. But God brings about justice based on his love and mercy—not by condemnation and punishment

**C. GOD'S JUSTICE IS NOT MATHEMATICAL**

1. Normally, if you have incurred a debt of 100 units of value
  - a) Then to be free of your debt you must pay back 100 units
2. If someone has taken something from us, such as our time, effort, money or particularly our pride or reputation
  - a) It is likely that most of us will become quite obsessed not only by the injustice of what we have experienced,

- b) But also in spending much time and mental energy figuring out ways to, as it is put, "get even"/ To get back what is ours and be commensurately compensated
- c) In other words, to get our kind of justice. To put the other person in their place, and make us feel vindicated and placated.
- d) Much of this attitude is an underlying desire to punish and exact vengeance on the other person

**D. THERE WAS AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW ON ABC LATELINE**

1. on Feb 18<sup>th</sup>, with a Dr. Diamond who has spent his life studying the various lifestyles of different cultures.
2. He spoke about how different cultures deal with things like theft;
  - a) In the west, we go straight to the police and insurance companies.
  - b) We don't care about who the perpetrator is as an individual because we usually don't know them at all. We just want what is ours back, and the perpetrator caught and punished.
3. But in tribal communities, if you find one of your animals has been stolen, you almost always know who the person is who stole it.
  - a) In New Guinea, and other places, you send an emissary to talk to your neighbour. They attempt to negotiate a settlement.
  - b) Dr. Diamond explained that they do this, because they want to maintain their relationship with their fellow tribe member, because they will be living as neighbours for the rest of their lives, and they don't want to have ongoing relationship problems.
  - c) The only downside in those cultures, is if the negotiations fail, as in that case the parties often resort to violence, taking the law into their own hands, because they don't have the system of law, police, courts etc. that we do.

4. God didn't cause the evil events or injustices of Jesus' trial
  - a) But just as he did with Joseph thrown by his brothers into a pit and left to die, God used evil circumstances to bring about good
  - b) Because God is able to overcome and transform evil into good, to work all things together for good for the benefit even of the perpetrators of the evil involved
5. Even those who falsely accused and condemned Jesus to death, are benefited by what God accomplished in the end through his vindication of Jesus in the resurrection and placing him at his right hand
  - a) As a result he will sit as the King of the earth, the righteous judge who will return to right all wrongs, all mistrials and false accusations and injustices

#### **E. LESSON: SO WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM JESUS' TRIAL?**

1. We are partners with Christ today
  - a) And we will suffer injustices, just as he did, and be falsely accused
  - b) But also, through Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, God has vindicated us and freed us from the power others have over us, and given us true freedom
2. He is our loving judge and vindicator
  - a) He leads us to share in his just and merciful ways
  - b) Being quick to forgive those who treat us unjustly, because we know that in the resurrection all injustice will be righted
3. We don't have to spend all our time trying to get even with others, and get our just deserts
  - a) We can let go and let God deal with it all
4. Our calling is to partner with Jesus in continuing his work of helping those who have been unjustly treated or condemned

- a) To be “paracletes”, seeking to be “alongside” the mistreated, the abused, the poor and defenseless
- b) Giving them a foretaste of the justice and mercy of God’s kingdom in advance

**Micah 6:6-8** speaks about this

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Should we bow before God  
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and this is what he requires of you:  
to do what is right, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with your God.

**F. GOD, HIS LOVE JUSTICE AND MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT**

- 1. And we are called to live out that love, justice and mercy and humility in our lives, walking humbly and closely with our God in our world as God’s people

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**V. THIRDLY; LET’S BRIEFLY LOOK AT JESUS’ CRUCIFIXION**

**A. THE LAST THING PEOPLE EXPECTED WAS FOR MESSIAH TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF HIS OWN PEOPLE AND THAT OF THEIR GENTILE CAPTORS**

- 1. They would have been even more shocked if they realised Jesus was God in the flesh

2. The creator dying at the hands of the creation he gave life to

**B. OFTEN WE SEE THE CROSS AS PURELY AN ISSUE AND ACT OF PAYING FOR OUR SINS, OR OF ASSUAGING GOD'S ANGER**

1. But Jesus and the Scriptures show that centrally and most importantly, it was a concrete expression of God's love.

2. John 3:16 tells us that God's love consists of sending his son to save the world, not condemn it

a) If God exacted justice on an evil for evil equation, instead of dying at our hands, Jesus would have come and put us all to death

**C. BUT THAT IS NOT GOD'S JUSTICE**

1. As Jesus said, "greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for a friend."

a) Some may lay down their lives for friends, but Jesus gave himself in love for his enemies as well, even those who crucified him

b) As Paul added, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

**D. IN SHARING OUR HUMAN LIFE, JESUS SHARED OUR DEATH AS WELL**

1. And as he did with injustice and all other evils, he took on our death, and conquered it, on our behalf, as one of us

2. In his resurrection all humans have the opportunity to enter into his new and eternal life with God

**E. JESUS' DEATH WAS ALSO,**

1. A sacrifice that put the end to religious, ritual sacrifice. An end to the need for humans to make religious efforts at trying to become right with God

2. It was the death that put death to death. That conquered and overcame death.

a) Jesus' death and resurrection opens the way out of our human mortality.

b) It turns our end into a new and wonderful beginning

**F. SO, JESUS' DEATH ALSO BROUGHT AN END TO ENDINGS**

1. He is the man who took on all the bad and destructive and death causing tragedies and travesties of our human existence

a) He took on all the injustices and evil forces and won, not by repaying them in kind, but by accepting their consequences

2. And God responded, not by punishing and repaying those who judged and executed his Son, but by forgiving us all, and giving us the opportunity for atonement—for forgiveness and new life in the resurrection of his Son

a) By forgiving us all, and in the man Jesus' resurrection, giving us the promise of a new start.

b) A new life free of the consequences of sin, injustice, suffering and death.

**G. SO MANY LESSONS TO BE FOUND HERE:**

1. Don't seek to get even and get justice in everything

2. Trust God to remedy the problems of our lives, and to bring his justice through forgiveness and the restoration of life, and proper loving relationships

**H. PAUL SPEAKS PROFOUNDLY ABOUT THIS IN PHILLIPPIANS 2**

1. This is why Paul Preached Christ and him crucified

2. And admonished us to take up our own cross, and die daily to our own desires and versions of justice

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## CONCLUSION:

### **I. AS PAUL TOLD THE CORINTHIANS**

1. God's plan and his way of life is a huge surprise to the wise and powerful of this world
  - a) They see it as ridiculous and out of step with reality
2. But Jesus, particularly in the last events of his time on earth, demonstrated the only way to overcome the suffering, evil and injustices of the world,
  - a) Not by asserting our rights and demanding to get even, or forcefully taking power and control
  - b) But through giving and self-sacrifice, through unconditional love and being there with and for his people, even to death

### **I Corinthians 1:18-25**

<sup>18</sup> The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. <sup>19</sup> As the Scriptures say,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>20</sup> So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. <sup>21</sup> Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom.

<sup>23</sup> So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense.

<sup>24</sup> But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles,<sup>\*</sup> Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

### **J. PRAYER**

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<sup>\*</sup> Isa 29:14.

<sup>\*</sup> Greek *and Greeks*.