

Matthew 27:26-37
The Government Shall Be
Upon His Shoulders
(The King and His Kingdom)

26 Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. (600 men) 28 And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.

29 When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “**Hail, King of the Jews!**” 30 Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

32 Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. 33 And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34 they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.

35 Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

“They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.”

36 Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS

Approximately 750 years before Jesus was born as the Babe of Bethlehem, the prophet Isaiah wrote these words, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

History of Jewish oppression leading up to Christ

Shortly after Isaiah gave this prophecy, the Assyrians, swooped into Israel and conquered the ten northern tribes.

A)They were a **Blood thirsty people**, who carried their captives back to Assyria, with extreme cruelty.

B)They led the Jews across the desert **with fishhooks in their mouths.**

1)Along the way, the Assyrians would skin many of the Jews alive.

C)They would cut off the heads of those who complained and stack the heads in large pyramids

1)to be left in the desert as a warning to any would-be rebels.

D)The people of Israel wondered “When would the One come of whom Isaiah wrote?” – **The GOVT would be upon his Shoulders**

About 100 years after the Assyrian aggression, another invasion was launched against Israel.

A)This time it was the Babylonians.

B)Beginning in 605 B.C., the Babylonians launched a series of attacks against the southern part of the country. – Judah

C)These attacks climaxed in the year 586 B.C., when the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar, led by Sennacherib,

1)marched into the Holy City of Jerusalem, raped the women, tortured the children, and destroyed the temple.

D)Once again The people of Israel were terrified.

1)Their hearts cried for the day when He might come of whom Isaiah spoke:

the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace who would carry the government on His shoulders. **But the time was not yet.**

The Babylonians were followed by the Greeks.

A)On his deathbed, **Alexander the Great** turned over control of Israel to the Seleucid family.

B)From that dynasty came a man named Antiochus Epiphanes, a picture of the coming Antichrist.

1)His hatred for the Jews was so great that one day he went into the temple, sacrificed a pig on the altar,

C)He made the priests drink the blood, and smeared the remainder on the temple walls.

D)Once again the people of Israel found themselves longing for the coming of Messiah – and the day the Government would be borne upon his shoulders

Well The Greeks were followed by the Romans.

A)When the Romans descended upon that region of the world and beat it into bloody submission,

B)The Romans were cruel oppressors – and the people of Israel must have surely wondered if Messiah would ever come.

C)But then it happened - The news began to circulate throughout the country about an itinerant Rabbi from Nazareth

1)whose words were so gracious that the common people hear Him gladly (Mark 12:37).

The People of Israel began to wonder is He the Wonderful Counselor Isaiah Spoke of

A)The Stories began to circulate throughout the land “Did you hear what He did? He spoke a word and the storm ceased.

B)He calls the dead from their graves. He heals those afflicted with leprosy. **Truly, He’s the Mighty God.”**

C)Others might have said, “Did you see the way He took the little children on His lap, laid His hands on them, and pronounced blessing upon them?

1)Truly, He must be the Everlasting Father.”

D)Others might have said, “Did you hear that when His disciples were out at sea, struggling against the storm, He was asleep in the hold of the boat?

E)They woke him up..... Peace be still !!!

1)Such peace we’ve never seen, never heard of, never known. Truly, **He must be the Prince of Peace.”**

Time went on and people still wondered.

A)Then, after three years of working miracles, giving wonderful teachings {**Hope was ... all time High**

B)The day came when Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem

1)He was greeted by the cries of hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the city to celebrate Passover.

C)They waved palm branches and cried, “Hosanna. Save Now.

1)**Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.**

D)This is it – this is the time – he is going to take the Govt upon his shoulders

But that is not what happened – as the week went on – the tide turned

A)He was arrested one night – Mock trial – he was stripped naked and made to look weak

B)The crowds cried out – We will not have this man rule over us –

1)We will not allow the government to rest upon His shoulders. Crucify Him.”

C)Pilate examined him and declared – I find no fault in this man,

1)but he had Jesus Brutally beaten to pacify the people. It didn’t work.

D)Beaten – Mocked – Crown of thorns on his head –

1)They took a wooden cross and made him carry it

Now picture Jesus walking down the via Dolorosa

A)He was preceded by a man carrying a sign reading “King of the Jews” and by two soldiers in full armor.

B) Two additional soldiers followed Him.

C)What is on his shoulders? **THE CROSS**

D)It was Cisero who declared the cross was an instrument of torture not even fit for the worst of slaves.

1)But the cross for Jesus was a symbol of His Kingdom!

Although no one realized it at the time –

A)When that wooden Cross beam on his Shoulders - was a Fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6

B)The Govt was put upon His shoulders – His Govt – His message and way of life of His Kingdom.

1)Was on display in living color – symbolized by a cross

Putting the Gospel accounts together, we get the scene in totality Along the way, Jesus collapsed.

A)Not wanting Jesus to die on the street, but wanting to see Him make it to Calvary where He could be tortured further and crucified,

B)One of the soldiers stopped and rested the point of his spear upon the shoulder of a man named Simon.

1)Simon the Cyrene was now compelled by Roman law to carry the Cross the rest of the way to Calvary.

C)Simon was from Cyrene—From Northern Africa.

1)We know he was a proselyte, one who had converted to Judaism.

Simon of Cyrene, desiring as all Jews did, to celebrate at least one of the feasts in the Holy City,

A)So he Saved all of his money and made all of the necessary plans and preparations.

B)At last the day arrived when he crossed the Mediterranean to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem!

1)But when he arrived, he realized it was an unusual festival. Controversy abounded.

C)He watched At the beginning of the week when Jesus rode into Jerusalem and the people cried, “Hosanna.”

1)But At the end, the people cried, “Crucify.” And Simon didn’t know what to make of it.

Lined up along the street with hundreds of thousands of others, Simon watched this Man carrying a Cross to Calvary.

A)On the way, Jesus stumbled right in front of him.

B)Simon then felt the unmistakable sensation of iron pressed upon his shoulder—

1)the spear of a Roman soldier— **Compelling him to carry the cross.**

C)Simon probably wondered, *Why me? Of all the hundreds of thousands of people here, why do I have to carry this criminal’s cross up the hill?*

D)But he had no choice. So he put the Cross on his shoulder.

1)The procession continued on to Calvary and Jesus was crucified—with Simon probably watching and wondering. **What was this all about?**

What happened to Simon?

A)He became a believer – a follower of Christ!
How do I know?

B)The gospel writer Mark writing his gospel account about 37 yrs after the crucifixion

1)Writing from Rome – Wrote these words

Mark writes, “And they compelled one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross”Mk 15:21)

C)Do you see the significance of that statement: Mark writing 37 yrs later from Rome

1)identified Simon as the father of Rufus and Alexander—

D)The implication being that Rufus and Alexander were known by name in the Christian community in Rome.

E)Forty or fifty years later, in Romans 16:13, Paul once again mentions Rufus by name - Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother

The implication and significance of this is very meaningful to me.

A)Simon of Cyrene, who carried the Cross that represented **the government of Christ—became governed by Christ.**

B)He and his whole family – His wife and his two sons – became followers of Christ!

1)They were known intimately by the believers in Rome

C)There in lies a Key: See - Jesus said, “All who are weary, come to Me and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and you’ll find rest in your souls” (Matthew 11:28, 29).

D)What is the yoke Jesus places upon our shoulders? 1) Surprise. It's the Cross.

“Wait a minute,” you say. “That’s contradictory.

A)How could a cross be easy? How could a cross give rest to my soul?”

B)Jesus knew and demonstrated as no one else could that the key to life truly lies in death.

1)This was at the forefront of his message. – A Criteria for Discipleship

C)He said: In Luke 9:23 ²³ Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

D)Now just so you know that was not a common phrase:

1)We understand what that means now on this side of Calvary – but 1st century listeners – no idea

E)Just another confusing radical statement by Jesus

We have our common phrases for sacrifice.

A)No pain no gain OR You need to suck it up

B)If Jesus were talking today: And he said- If anyone desires to come after me he needs to understand that where there is no pain – no gain.

C)Ok I have heard that before – I know what means – I have heard that before –

1)I get it – he means this is going to involve hardship and sacrifice.

But no one spoke of the Cross in that way in the First century

A)A Cross was a form of death reserved for the worst criminals of the day!

B)The Cross was for insurrectionist who dared to defy Rome – Entry way to a City

C)We have commercialized the cross – wear it as Jewelry or on t-shirts

D)It would be like saying today: If anyone desires to come after me – he must pick up his electric chair daily and follow me - CONFUSION

E)Electric Chair – necklace – songs – at the electric chair where I first saw the light

Now Jesus did sort of clarify what he meant when he said that – He continued there is Luke 9 by saying: ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. ²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?

Listen: At the center of life in his Kingdom is a Cross!

A)This is His central message about everything – Living comes by dying to self!

B)Calling to die to self/ live for Him/ Serve others

C)Paul the Apostle put it this way: Philippians 2

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, **2** fulfill my joy by **being like-minded**, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. **3** **Let** nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. **4** **Let** each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

A Calling to be more others centered than self-centered – Why?

5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus**, **6** who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, **7** but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus put our need above His Comfort and left heaven and came to this earth to take up a Cross – Die in our Place.

A)That is the message of the Kingdom – the way of the Gospel/ Die to self and live for Him / Serve others

B)The Upside down Kingdom: Our King is one who conquerors not by FORCE – but by love.

C)Gospel message: Jesus the King humbled himself Give us Hope and Life.

Jesus invites His followers into this Lifestyle

A) Jesus said: You want to find – Life and rest – Take up my Yoke

B) You want to be my Disciple – take up your cross daily

C) Paul said: Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus

D) A mindset that says: I am going to die to myself in order to bless others

What would happen in our marriages if we did that?

A) Instead of always thinking – what is in it for me?

B) How can my needs get met? OR How come my needs are not being met?

C) We said: Lord show me how to be a blessing to him/her – to them

1) Show me where I need to die to myself – to bless my spouse. { **I DARE YOU – PRAY THAT!**

D) Jesus says You will find life – you will find Rest – You will experience Joy

1) But we do not believe that.

E) We have been fed a FALSE gospel that is not the gospel at all – gospel of our own making

The gospel we have latched onto is all about – my needs – my comfort – my life.

A) What can God do to make my life better and make me more happy – healthy – feel more special

B) Jesus says: If you are willing to lose your life for another – you will find the key to really living!

C) That is His Govt! – that is His way!

1) That day – when the Cross was placed upon his shoulders – PICTURE PAINTED – his Govt

This week – I was at a Pastor Prayer summit with about 20 Pastors from around the country.

A) A few of them came from the East Coast.

B) They were African American guys – doing ministry in the inner city

1) We got to talking about the whole racial tension issue in our country.

C) We wanted to hear their perspective

D) We started talking about how the only solution for this problem is the message of the Gospel.

E) The reality that all lives matter to God!

1) Jesus died for all men – all race – all color.

See here is the problem that many of us who are White & middle Class who get influenced by Media

A) We hear of a shooting somewhere involving a minority – Then we start hearing of the persons background – priors etc

B) Whether we will admit it or not we think – He deserved that – that shooting was justified! –

C) But listen as followers of Jesus Christ – that should not be what concerns us

1) **What should concern us** – is that a person – a living human being – someone that the Bible says was uniquely created in the image of God

D) Was just killed and is going to now spend an eternity in Hell

1) And Church that should break our hearts – Justified or not it should break our hearts

E) Why? Because it breaks God's heart!

How can I say that: Here is how

A) First century there was a guy who if he were living today we would have classified him as a Terrorist – a Religious Zealot

B) His name was Saul of Tarsus – and Saul spent his days trying to figure out how he could hurt, imprison And Kill Christians

C) And he did it every chance he got – In the name of his religion – He hated Christians

D) And while on a mission to the city of Damascus – his goal being to Hurt, imprison and Kill Christians

E) The Resurrected Jesus tracked Him down –

NOT TO Destroy Saul –

1)but to save him – to transform Him

F)And that is Exactly what Happened – Saul became Paul the apostle – writer of 2/3 of the NT

Paul learned – Jesus Kingdom is about Dying to self so that others would live

A)Imagine how Our society would change – racial tension would cease if – we embraced the gospel

B)If people on both sides started to value others as people created in the image of God –

1)looked **for ways to bless each other - Rather then trying to take from each other.**

Ephesians 2:14 ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. NIV

Imagine how our country would change if we realized this and embraced this.

A)Imagine how our community would change if we embraced the message of His Kingdom?

B)Might seem impossible undertaking – **but what if it started here in this church family**

1)We started praying: Lord show me where and how to die to myself to bless someone else.

C)Imagine the Impact that might have in each and every sphere of influence represented here?

D)Lives transformed, Families transformed, Church Community

Simon was compelled to Carry the Cross and it transformed His life.

A)We **are invited to carry the cross – because Jesus knows it will transform our lives**

B)Paul said it was the Love of Christ that compelled him – His ever growing understanding of Jesus' love for him

C)May we have that same understanding – Compels us

D)Idealistic? – Just Crazy enough to believe that God's word is true.