

Read: Matthew 27:27-31

Our King Suffered and Died for Us

Matthew 27:31

After they [the soldiers] had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his [Jesus'] own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Imagine your best friend's birthday is next week. You spend hours shopping for the perfect gift to give them on their birthday. When you finally find that perfect item, you spend some of your own money to buy that gift and wrap it in beautifully colored wrapping paper.

Now, imagine your friend's birthday has arrived. You can't wait to give the present you picked out. You hand your friend the gift and watch eagerly. After unwrapping the present, your friend unexpectedly says, "Ugh! I hate it!" If that wasn't bad enough, your friend begins to make fun of the present you chose and say unkind things to you. How would you feel?

You might be hurt and devastated, maybe even a little mad at your friend. Humiliated, you might even be thinking, "How can we stay friends after all I did to pick out a special gift?"

In today's Bible verse, Roman soldiers make fun of Jesus before he was sent to be crucified. They spit on Jesus, put a crown of thorns on his head, and hit him over and over. Little did they know, they were making fun of and hurting the one who was about to give them the best gift they would ever be given. Little did they know, they were ridiculing the very Savior who was about to give his life for them to forgive them of all their sins.

We must admit that we, too, daily show ourselves to be ungrateful towards our Savior and all that he has done for us. Each day we must admit that we often ignore God's commandments and choose to sin. Rather than treasuring Jesus and putting his Word first in our lives, we often put ourselves and our wants ahead of God.

Yet, despite the actions of the soldiers and despite our own daily sins against Jesus, we see the amazing love of Jesus. Humiliated, he still chose to die for those soldiers, for us, and for all people who have ever lived. At any moment during his suffering, Jesus could have put a stop to it. He could have used his awesome power or commanded his angels to defend him. Yet Jesus had you in mind when he selflessly chose the way of suffering and the cross. He laid down his life for his friends. Because of the forgiveness Jesus won for us, through faith we are right with God and fully forgiven! Heaven is our home!

We thank God for this amazing gift of grace. It's truly the greatest gift of love that we will ever receive!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- What is the most loving thing someone has ever done for you? Why did they do it?
- What are some ways you can thank Jesus for his great gift of love for you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What do you think of when you hear the word *grace*? Why is this a great word to describe what Jesus did for us?
- To prevent us from being ungrateful for the gift of Jesus, name at least one way you can express your heartfelt thanks and love for Jesus.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Recall a moment you were made fun of or ridiculed. How did that make you feel? How did you respond to the people who gave you a hard time?
- In light of today's devotion, discuss how you would respond the next time someone is rude or unkind to you.

Closing Prayer:

Gracious Savior, your love for us is amazing! Even though we daily fall short of your commandments and expectations for us, you still choose to love us with a deep and undeserved love. Thank you for dying on the cross to take away our sins and earn us heaven! Amen.

Hymn: CW 379:1,3 – Amazing Grace

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.