



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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March 21, 2012

Midweek Lenten Worship

Pastor Randy Ott

Hymn: *O Sacred Heart, Now Wounded*

Sermon Text: [Matthew 27:27-31](#)

Sacred Heart, Now Wounded: The Wound of Mockery

It kind of sounds like these guys thought this was pretty funny. Some guy from the backwoods of Galilee, some peasant, claiming to be the king of the Jews. They had to just kind of laugh at it I suppose as they saw it written there in four different languages. It evidently must have really struck one of them as especially funny and thought it was worthy of some activity, so to heighten their hysteria and crack themselves up, they strip him naked. They make a scarlet robe and put it on him to make him look like a king. If you want to be a king, we'll dress you up like a king. But as they look at the picture, something is missing. A king needs a crown. Someone takes the time to weave together a vine of thorns and jam it on his head. As the blood trickles down his face, it sounds like they are kind of laughing and mocking him. Then they realize he is still missing a staff. A king has to have his ruling scepter, so they find a reed and give him a reed. They keep doing this over and over.

As Isaiah told us some 700 years earlier, "as a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." ([Isaiah 53:7](#).) It kind of sounds like he started getting under their skin, doesn't it? They are mocking him and getting no reaction from him. So then they grab the staff out of his hands and hit him again and again. They had thrown themselves in front of him and said "Hail, king of the Jews," and he didn't react. They probably wanted some kind of reaction, but there was nothing. They spit on him. They beat him. They do all these things and in return, they get nothing out of this guy. No rise. No retaliation. No lashing out. That had to be a little eery for them, don't you think? But it doesn't make them stop and think. It just makes them angrier and more violent.

I can't fathom this. I can't understand this. I don't think you can either, right? What do you do when someone mocks you, makes fun of you, or says something that hurts you? Don't you just lash back out at them? Don't you just retaliate? If someone bumps into a kid in school by accident, they shove him or knock him down or whatever. Then they say "they started it," as though that makes it okay. We do stuff like this all the time. When we are hurt, we hurt back.

Not Christ. Christ looks back at these people and his eyes are full of nothing but love and mercy and pity. Didn't we just sing that? "What language shall I borrow to thank you, dearest friend, for this your dying sorrow, your pity without end?" I can't fathom that. I know I need it. I know you need it. You and I need this because we need our Savior to be perfect where we have failed. Where you and I retaliate in kind, Jesus just looks with love and pity and mercy. I can't fully understand that. I know when Christ

says to you and to me “Love as I have loved you,” ([John 15:12](#)) he wants us to love other people and see in other people what Jesus sees in other people. We talked about that yesterday in Bible Study in the afternoon. Isn't that hard?

It's easy to show pity and show love and show mercy to the people that we like, but the people that annoy us? The people that make our life miserable? The people that attack us? To love them and show pity and mercy to them like Jesus loved us? We don't do it. So we need a Savior to do it in our place. But we who want to thank our Savior who has done this for us, that's this high goal that our God puts in front of us. The only way we can do it is to more fully understand the depth of his love for us. The only way we can do it is by keeping our eyes more firmly fixed on him.

Limitless pity. No end to his pity. No end to his love. It didn't matter what they did to him, he just continued to love. He even said, “Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.” ([Luke 23:34.](#)) The amazing depth of his love.

He knows the truth that lies behind their mocking words. The truth behind their mocking words is that he IS the Promised King. He IS the King who is going to come and is going to rule over an eternal kingdom. He doesn't rule over it like an earthly king. He doesn't establish it with a chariot, with the strongest weapons or the best trained army. He establishes his kingdom by being perfect in our place and loving perfectly and pitying perfectly in our place and then by taking all of our sins on his back, to the cross, and giving himself as the sacrifice for our sins. That's how his kingdom is established. That's how his kingdom is expanded as you and I share that message with other people.

This is what is amazing...Jesus stands there, stripped naked, clothed in a scarlet robe. Scarlet...wasn't Isaiah also talking about scarlet 700 years earlier? “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” ([Isaiah 1:18.](#)) He's stripped naked. They put a scarlet robe on him because they want to mock him as a king. But when you and I look at that, what you and I can see is that our sins are there on Jesus' back, and our sins are there to take him to the cross. What do we see when we look at him? We see him looking back at us in love. The beating, the being spit upon, the thorns piercing his skin, he did all of it for you and for me.

As you and I look at him, there's only really one response, isn't there? We are just moved by his Spirit to love him in return. Isn't that kind of what we just sang? “Oh, make me yours forever, and keep me strong and true; Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for you.” Our King, a king like no other king, a king who has a perfect love, who was stripped naked and covered in our sins so that you and I, whose sins deserve to endure that punishment, might be covered with his righteousness. That's the depth of our Savior's love.

So when you look at him tonight and you see him like that in your mind's eyes, beaten, bloodied, spittle running down his face, just make sure you see his eyes looking back at you in love and saying, “For you. I did this for you.”