

Leader's Guide: The Dishonoring Of The King

Matthew 27:27-31

Unedited AI-generated document from a sermon preached by Rev. John Vermeer

Opening Reflection

1. Read Matthew 27:27-31 together. What details in this passage stand out to you that you may not have noticed before?

(Possible answers: The involvement of an entire battalion, not just a few soldiers; the elaborate mockery including all the symbols of kingship—robe, crown, scepter; the fact that they put His own clothes back on Him before crucifixion; the contrast between the soldiers kneeling in mock worship while also spitting and striking Him.)

Appearances Can Be Deceiving

2. The sermon emphasized that "we are called to live by faith, not by sight." What are some situations in your life where appearances have been deceiving, and faith in God's Word provided a different perspective?

(Possible answers: Times of suffering that later revealed God's purpose; relationships that seemed broken but God restored; prayers that seemed unanswered but God was working in unseen ways; situations that appeared hopeless but God provided deliverance; career or ministry setbacks that God used for growth.)

3. How might focusing too much on what we see with our eyes, rather than what we understand through faith, cause us to "lose inspiration" or "despair of life"?

(Possible answers: We might see only our problems rather than God's promises; we might focus on our weaknesses rather than God's strength; we might see only our failures rather than God's faithfulness; we might become overwhelmed by current circumstances rather than trusting God's sovereign plan; we might be discouraged by worldly opposition rather than encouraged by eternal perspective.)

4. In what ways do you find yourself tempted to judge situations only by what you can see rather than by what God's Word reveals?

(Possible answers: Making decisions based on immediate outcomes rather than biblical principles; evaluating success by worldly standards rather than faithfulness to God; becoming discouraged when godly living doesn't produce immediate visible rewards; doubting God's presence in suffering; judging others by outward appearance rather than heart issues.)

The World's Hatred for Christ's Kingship

5. The soldiers mocked Jesus because they couldn't recognize His true kingship. What aspects of Christ's authority do people in our culture find most difficult to accept today?

(Possible answers: His exclusive claim to be the only way to God; His authority over human sexuality and relationships; His call to self-denial rather than self-fulfillment; His definition of sin and righteousness; His call to surrender complete control of our lives; His claim that all people need salvation.)

6. The sermon stated: "It is never time to hate Christ, mock Christ, or undervalue Christ... it is always time to rely on Christ, trust Christ, and submit to Christ." How does this challenge you personally?

(Possible answers: It challenges me to prioritize Christ in all circumstances; to trust Him even when it's difficult; to recognize where I've been placing my trust elsewhere; to evaluate where I

might be subtly "mocking" Christ by how I live; to consider where I need to more fully submit to His lordship in specific areas of my life.)

7. Why is it significant that Christ "won't share the throne with anyone else"? How does this exclusive claim impact how we understand salvation and authority?

(Possible answers: It establishes that salvation is found in Christ alone, not through our own merit or other religions; it challenges syncretism and pluralism; it removes our ability to serve "two masters"; it emphasizes complete surrender to Christ rather than partial commitment; it reminds us that all other authorities are subject to Him.)

Worldly Glory vs. True Glory

8. Contrast the "worldly glory" portrayed by the soldiers with the true glory revealed in Christ. How do these different understandings of glory manifest in today's culture?

(Possible answers: Worldly glory emphasizes fame, wealth, power, and appearance while Christ's glory is seen in humble service and sacrifice; society celebrates achievement and status while God values faithfulness and obedience; culture prizes self-promotion while Christ demonstrated self-denial; the world values external beauty while God looks at the heart.)

9. The sermon suggested that worldly glory focuses on "image without substance." Where do you see this emphasis on outward appearance rather than inward reality in your own life or in society?

(Possible answers: Social media personas that don't reflect reality; emphasis on credentials rather than character; concern with reputation over integrity; religious practices done for show rather than from the heart; consumer culture focused on appearances; pursuing accomplishments that impress others rather than please God.)

10. How does Christ's example challenge the world's definition of power, authority, and glory?

(Possible answers: Christ showed that true power lies in self-sacrifice not self-assertion; He demonstrated servant leadership rather than domination; He revealed that true glory comes through suffering for others; He showed that true authority comes from God not from position or force; He demonstrated that the "first shall be last and the last first.")

The Self-Portrait of Fallen Humanity

11. The preacher suggested that the soldiers unwittingly painted a portrait of fallen humanity. In what ways do you see your own sinful nature reflected in their actions toward Jesus?

(Possible answers: The tendency to mock what we don't understand; elevating ourselves by putting others down; assuming we know better than God; preferring our own kings/idols over Christ; refusing to acknowledge legitimate authority; using power to hurt rather than help; being deceived by appearances; judging without understanding.)

12. The sermon states: "We're the ones who deserve to have our heads beaten, not the one who came to crush the serpent's head." How does this perspective deepen your appreciation of Christ's sacrifice?

(Possible answers: It highlights the injustice Christ willingly endured; it emphasizes the substitutionary nature of His suffering; it reminds us of the depth of our sin and need for a savior; it reveals the tremendous love required for Christ to take our place; it heightens the wonder of grace—that He would suffer what we deserve.)

13. What does it mean that Christ was "willing to identify and suffer for a cursed humanity"? How should this shape our response to Him?

(Possible answers: It means He didn't remain distant but entered fully into our broken condition; it shows the depth of His love that He willingly took our curse; it demonstrates that salvation required His active participation in suffering; it should inspire gratitude, worship, and willing service; it should motivate us to identify with others in their suffering as Christ did with us.)

The Opportunity of a Lifetime

14. The sermon concludes by describing knowing Christ as "the ultimate opportunity of a lifetime." What makes this relationship so significant compared to other opportunities we might pursue?

(Possible answers: It's the only opportunity with eternal significance; it addresses our deepest need for reconciliation with God; it provides what we could never achieve ourselves; it offers true purpose and meaning; it is available to anyone regardless of status or ability; it transforms us from the inside out; it restores us to our original purpose.)

15. What specific areas of your life need to be reoriented around honoring "the King of Glory" rather than pursuing worldly glory?

(Possible answers: Career ambitions and how success is measured; relationships and how we treat others; use of money and resources; use of time and priorities; personal disciplines and habits; motivations behind service or ministry; how we respond to criticism or praise; how we handle power or authority.)

16. How might remembering Christ's willingness to be mocked and humiliated change how you approach difficult or humbling circumstances in your own life?

(Possible answers: It provides perspective that suffering may be part of God's plan; it reminds us that identifying with Christ means sharing in His sufferings; it gives dignity to humbling experiences; it helps us see that God may be using difficulties to

accomplish greater purposes; it encourages patient endurance knowing that glory follows suffering.)

Closing Application

17. What is one concrete way you can live this week that demonstrates you are living by faith rather than by sight?

(Possible answers: Choosing to trust God in a difficult situation rather than trying to control the outcome; serving someone who cannot repay you; continuing in obedience even when you don't see immediate results; responding with grace to someone who has wronged you; taking a step of faith God has been calling you to; practicing thanksgiving even in challenging circumstances.)

BONUS: Explain the irony of the mocking soldiers mentioned by Rev. John Vermeer.

The preacher points out a profound irony in the mocking soldiers' behavior toward Jesus. The irony has several dimensions:

First, the soldiers thought they were mocking a phony king, but they were actually dishonoring the legitimate King of Glory. While they believed they were exercising power over someone pretending to be royal, they were unwittingly participating in God's plan for the true King's redemptive work.

Second, and most significantly, the preacher explains that when the soldiers created this mocking portrait of Jesus as a cursed, false king, they were actually creating "an ironic self-portrait of humanity." As the preacher states: "Unwittingly, the soldiers are painting a picture of the spiritual state of sinful humanity." This is deeply ironic because:

- 1. Humans were created to be "viceroys" or "regents" representing God's authority on earth*

2. *Through Adam's sin, humanity fell from that dignified position*
3. *We became the "phony kings and queens" deserving mockery*
4. *The crown of thorns (symbol of the curse from Genesis) rightfully belonged on our heads, not Christ's*

The ultimate irony is that Christ, the only one who didn't deserve this humiliation, willingly accepted it. As the preacher emphasizes: "We're the ones that should be mocked. We're the ones who should be spit upon. Beaten. And have phony royal clothes put on us like Jesus does."

This reversal shows the depth of Christ's sacrificial love - the sinless one taking the place of the sinful, the blessed one bearing the curse. What appeared to be Christ's humiliation was actually revealing both humanity's true fallen condition and God's redemptive plan. The scene that seemed to reveal Christ's weakness actually demonstrated his ultimate strength and love.