

The Crucifixion of Christ
John 19:16-30
Part 3

Love is a wonderful thing, whether the love of a certain individual for a best friend, for a spouse, for a child, for a parent, for a neighbor; love is a wonderful and beautiful thing.

And, of course, when love is present it can lead individuals to be incredibly selfless in respect to their desire to make sure that the person, who is the object of their affection, is served.

But even though what I have shared with you is true, the love that originates in us as humans has its limitations. In other words, if our love is placed under enough stress, our love, the love that originates within us, will fail.

But the love of Christ is not like ours. His love is infinite, boundless and ever present. And we will see this illustrated for us this morning as we continue our study in the Gospel of John and more specifically as we continue our study of the crucifixion of Christ in **John 19:16-30**.

In this particular section of Scripture I have pointed out to you that John was seeking, as he has throughout his gospel, to highlight for us the deity of Christ.

How was the deity of Christ in John's account of Christ's crucifixion highlighted? Christ's deity was highlighted in a number of different ways.

And what have we discovered so far in our study of John's account of Christ's crucifixion? We have discovered that the deity of Christ was highlighted by fulfilled prophecy (John 19:16-18, 23-24). Let me read for you **John 19:16-18** and then let me read for you **John 19:23-24**.

And what do these verses say? **“So he [Pilate] then handed Him [Jesus] over to them [his soldiers] to be crucified. (17) They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha [or if it were**

translated into Latin “Calvaria”]. **(18) There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.”**

And then going down to **verses 23-24** it says, **“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. (24) So they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be.’”** So based on John’s record of Christ’s crucifixion, what were the three Old Testament verbal prophecies that were fulfilled and therefore designed to help us to see the deity of Christ?

The first Old Testament prophecy was Psalm 22:16, which prophesied that the coming Messiah would have His hands and feet pierced, which, of course, took place when Christ, according to our text, was crucified in **John 19:18**.

The second Old Testament prophecy was Isaiah 53:12, which prophesied that the coming Messiah in His death would be numbered with transgressors, which, of course, took place when Christ, according to our text, was crucified with criminals one on His left and one on His right also in **John 19:18**.

The third Old Testament prophecy was Psalm 22:18, which prophesied that at the time of His death that His clothes would be divided by the casting of lots, which, of course, in our text was very clearly described in **John 19:23-24**.

These are only three of the hundreds of verbal prophecies found in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in their entirety in Jesus thus confirming with certainty that Jesus was and is the promised Messiah of Israel and thus by inference, based on **Psalm 2:7** as well as **2 Chronicles 17:11-14**, the very Son of God, or in other words, deity. So how was the deity of Christ in John’s record of Christ’s crucifixion highlighted? It was initially highlighted, first of all, by fulfilled prophecy. What else have we discovered?

We have also discovered in our text that the deity of Christ was highlighted by an inscription Pilate placed on Christ's cross (John 19:19-22). Let me now read these verses for you.

“Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, ‘Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews.’ (20) Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. (21) So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, ‘Do not write, “The King of the Jews”; but that He said, “I am King of the Jews.”” (22) Pilate answered, ‘What I have written I have written.’”

Just as fulfilled prophecy confirms for us that Jesus was, in fact, the promised Messiah of Israel and thus truly the Son of the living God, so does the inscription that Pilate placed on the cross of Christ. How did this inscription accomplish this? Pilate's inscription accomplished this by demonstrating how Christ, even from His cross, reigned over all things, even over the matter of what was written by Pilate. Truly this inscription was a mind-boggling thing, considering the fact that neither Pilate nor the Jews believed that Jesus was, in fact, the king of the Jews. So why did Pilate write the inscription in the way that he wrote it? From an earthly perspective he wrote it in the way that he wrote it in order to irritate the Jews and to display his disdain for them as a people and nation. But from a heavenly perspective he wrote it because this is how God wanted him to write it. Thus declaring for the whole world to see that Jesus was, in fact, not only the Christ, but also by inference truly the Son of God.

We are now ready to consider a third way that John's record of Christ's crucifixion highlighted Christ's deity. And what was this third way that John highlighted His deity?

The deity of Christ was highlighted by His infinite, abounding, and ever present love (John 19:25-27). People speak of love, sing of love, write about love, declare their love, but the truth is that apart from a personal relationship with Jesus they will never know love in its purest and perfect form. Why is this? It is because the love of men has limits in contrast to the love of Christ whose love is without limits. It is infinite, abounding, and ever present.

What do I mean by this? I believe that we have an example of what I mean by this in the text we will be examining this morning.

Let me now read for you **John 19:25-27**. **“Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (26) When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ (27) Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.”**

I believe that this is an example of the unlimited, boundless and ever present love of Christ. An expression of love that only Christ Himself, as God incarnate, was and is capable of expressing. This is the conclusion that I believe that the Apostle John would want us to make in light of what he recorded for us in **John 19:25-27**.

May God give us the grace this morning to see these verses in this way. And may we in seeing these verses in this way be comforted knowing that His love for us as His disciples will never fail.

So let us, first of all, take a look at **verse 25**. **“Therefore the soldiers did these things.”** This is a simple statement designed to cause us for a moment, as readers, to review what John has just stated concerning the conduct of the soldiers. And why would he do this? He did this in order to draw a contrast between the conduct of the soldiers, who had just crucified Jesus and had divided up His clothes by the casting of lots, and a very small group of Christ’s friends, who without regard for themselves and their own personal welfare chose, not only to be present at Christ’s crucifixion, but to place themselves near to Him.

So let us continue to read the verse. **“But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.”** So, what do we see in this verse? The Apostle, in contrast to the conduct of the soldiers, identified a group of four women who, out of love for Christ, made their way to the foot of His cross (John 19:25). So, who were these women?

Mary the mother of Jesus was there (Luke 2:35). Certainly her presence at Christ's crucifixion should not be surprising. She was His mother. So let me ask you this question. How do you think she was responding to what she was witnessing? Her heart was breaking.

How do we know this? We know this because when she and her husband Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to have Him dedicated shortly after His birth, Simeon, after blessing Jesus, prophetically told Mary, according to **Luke 2:35**, that one day in the midst of Israel's rejection of her Son that her own heart would be pierced. That prophecy by Simeon in **Luke 2:35** we would, I believe, have to conclude was now being fulfilled here in **John 19:25** as she, according to the Apostle John, was now standing very near to the cross of Christ. But she was not the only one. Who else was there according to **John 19:25**?

Mary's sister, Salome the mother of James and John was there (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40). Mary's sister, Salome, is also mentioned in **Mark 16:1** as one of the women who bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus. And, of course, if Salome was, in fact, the mother of James and John, which I believe she was, we would have to conclude therefore that she was also the one who asked Jesus to grant special places of honor to her sons in the kingdom in **Matthew 20:20-21**.

So now we know that it was not only Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was willing to get close to the cross of Christ during His crucifixion but also Mary's sister, Salome. But we are not done. Who else was there according to **John 19:25**?

Mary the wife of Clopas was there (John 19:25). Let us go back to John 19:25 and see if this is not so. **"But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister,"** and then it says, **"Mary the wife of Clopas."**

Little is known about her. She was most likely the "other Mary" who kept watch with Mary Magdalene at Christ's tomb in **Matthew 27:61** and also the same person who went with Mary Magdalene to the tomb of Christ on the morning of the resurrection in **Matthew 28:1**.

So how many supporters of Jesus does it appear were standing by the cross of Christ at least so far in our study of **John 19:25**? There have been three so far: Mary the mother Jesus, Mary's sister Salome, and Mary the wife of Clopas. But we are not done, there are still more. So who was the next person that the apostle mentions?

Mary Magdalene was there (John 19:25). So who is she? Mary Magdalene, of course, is a very prominent figure in the various accounts of Christ's resurrection (**Matthew 27:61, 28:1; Luke 24:10; John 20:1-18**). Her name seems to indicate that she was from the town of Magdala, located on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee between Capernaum and Tiberias. **Luke 8:2** describes her as one "from whom seven demons had gone out" through the ministry of Jesus.

This is the fourth and last person named that the apostle lists for us in **John 19:25**, who were standing beside Christ's cross.

Now it is very obvious at this point that all four of those listed are women. So the question might be asked, wasn't there men who were willing to identify themselves as a follower of Christ by being willing to stand beside His cross even while He was being crucified?

Actually there was one man. Let us now read **John 19:26-27**. "**When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' (27) Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!'**"

Not only did the Apostle John specifically identify four women who were willing to stand by Christ's cross, but he also, in John 19:26, indicated that he himself was also standing there with them. And where do we see his name? We don't. But we do see him referring to himself as "**the disciple whom He [in other words, Christ] loved**" which was John's common way of identifying himself throughout this Gospel.

These were the five individual supporters of Christ who decided to put aside their fear of being publicly identified with Christ in order to support Him in this hour of His greatest need. They were Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome the sister of Mary, Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene and, of course, last but not least the Apostle John himself.

But how can this be explained? How can it be explained that these five individuals were willing to set aside their individual fears of publicly identifying themselves with Christ and what it might mean for them and their families if the Jewish leadership turned their hatred of Jesus upon them? There is a very simple explanation. It was these five individual's love for Christ that made it possible for them to set aside their fears in order to stand by Christ's cross (1 John 4:18). What does **1 John 4:18** tell us? It tells us that, **“perfect love casts out fear.”** These individuals were able to do what they did at this moment in time because of their love for Christ.

When love is present, it is amazing what people are willing to do. But if this love originates with them, and not from God, their love will have limits (Matthew 26:41). Why? It is because of what Jesus said to His disciples in **Matthew 26:41**. **“The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”** In other words, in and of ourselves we all have a breaking point when it comes to the matter of loving another person or persons with perfect love. And isn't this clear to us when realize that of all Christ's disciples the only people who were still willing to show their support of Christ in His most difficult hour were four woman and one man. And even their loving support for Christ in this most difficult hour certainly appeared to be very muted.

All of this stands in stark contrast to the infinite, boundless and ever present love of Christ. If there is any doubt about this all we have to do is to go back one more time and read the end of **John 19:26** and then go on to read the first part of **John 19:27**. So, what do we see?

Jesus having spotted this group of loving followers beneath His cross chose to focus on just two of them: His Mother and the Apostle John. And what did He say? He, first of all, spoke to His mother and He said, **“Woman, behold, your son!** When Jesus addressed His mother as **“woman,”** He was not being disrespectful. He was simply once again reminding her and as well as others that His relationship with her had forever changed once He set His course toward the cross. In other words, Mary, like every other person, needed to look to Him not as her son but rather as her Lord and Savior.

Then after speaking to Mary and asking her to behold her son, which of course from the context was clearly referring to John He then addressed John and said to him according to **john 19:27** **“Behold, your mother!”**

What was Jesus doing in addressing His mother and John in this way from the cross?

Jesus, from the cross, in John 19:26-27, was committing the care of His mother to the Apostle John. There can be no doubt about this in light of fact that at the end of **verse 27** it says, **“From that hour the disciple [the disciple whom Jesus loved] took her [His mother] into his own household.”**

So why did he choose John? Obviously His father Joseph, the husband of His mother Mary, was no longer alive. And His half-brothers would have not been the ideal choice since they at this point in time were not only not present but were unbelievers, therefore Christ at this point in time could think of no one better to care for His mother after His death than John.

So, what is so significant about this in light of our study? Let me tell you what is so very significant about this. Christ’s expression of care for His mother under the circumstances clearly was an expression of divine love, a love that was infinite, boundless, and ever present.

Let me ask, how long had Jesus been without sleep? How about over thirty hours! How much food and water did He have? He had none! Not only had He been deprived of food, water and sleep, but He had also been beaten, mocked, scourged, and crucified. And now let us go even further. Not only had He been deprived of food, water and sleep; not only had He been beaten, mocked, scourged, and crucified, but He was now also in the process of satisfying the debt we owed to God because of our sin, and not our sins only, but the sins of the entire world. And yet even while all this was happening, His infinite, boundless, and ever present love was undiminished. In other words, it was divine.

It a wonderful thing to be loved by a mother, a father, a wife, husband, child or friend, but their love in and of themselves, apart from God’s ongoing supply, is limited.

But this is not true of Christ. His love is infinite, boundless and ever present, and why is this? His love is infinite, boundless, and ever present because He is not simply a man, but He is also God.

This is what I believe the Apostle John wanted us to see and hopefully this is exactly what you have seen this morning. Therefore if you are a disciple of Christ, if you have embraced Him as your Lord and Savior, you can count on this infinite, boundless, ever present love every day of your life and throughout eternity.

May God give us the grace as Christ's disciples, not only to know that Christ's love is divine and therefore unfailing, but may God also give us the grace to rest in this wonderful truth.