



The Crucifixion of Christ

Matthew 27:33-44

1. The Pain of the Cross (verses 33-35a).
2. The Shame of the Cross (verses 35b-44).
 1. The soldiers considered Him dead (verses 35-36).
 2. Pilate accused Him of treason (verse 37).
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Four years ago today, an event took place that changed the course of human history. Early in the morning, four airplanes were hijacked by Muslim terrorists. At 8:46 A.M., American Airlines flight 11 crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center. Seventeen minutes later, at 9:03, United Airlines flight 175 crashed into the south tower of the World Trade center. Eighteen minutes later at 9:21, the Federal Aviation Administration halts all flights in U. S. airports for the first time in history. Seventeen minutes later, at 9:38, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. Thirty-two minutes later, at 10:10, United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. By 10:30 A.M., both towers of the World Trade Center were completely destroyed. When all was said and done, 3,000 people died that day due to the terrorist attacks on America. It took only two hours to change the face of this world. Terrorism had reached a new height in awareness. Never again would we in America look upon the world in the same way. Terrorism had come to the United States! We often hear people describe the differences by referring to America "before 9/11" and "after 9/11".

As big and tragic as the events of September 11th were, it doesn't compare with the event that we will have the opportunity of remembering this morning. We will look this morning at the event that changed the world. I'm talking about the crucifixion of Christ. This event is the pinnacle of history. When you read the Bible, everything in the Old Testament is written in anticipation of this event. Everything in the New Testament reflects back upon this event. Jesus said that it was the Old Testament Scriptures that bore witness of Him (John 5:39). It was the apostles who would later interpret the life of Jesus for us. They would look back to the crucifixion and explain it in light of all of its implications for us.

Matthew 27:33-44

And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots. And sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there. And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left. And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God; Let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words.

By way of outline this morning, I would like to look into two aspects of the cross. The first aspect is the, ...

1. The Pain of the Cross (verses 33-35a).

The pain of the cross is what I usually think of first when I think about the crucifixion of Christ. I think about pain of the beatings. I think about the pain of the nails in the hands and feet. I think about the pain of hanging from nails. I think about the pain of struggling to breathe. We should rightly think about these things.

But, it is curious to see how little the Bible devotes to the actual pain of being crucified. In our text, it comes in half of one verse. Look at the first half of verse 35. "And when they had crucified Him, ..." That's all that it says about it. It is mentioned in this verse as a relative clause that isn't even the main point of the sentence. This clause serves merely to identify for us the time in which the soldiers began to divide up the garment of Jesus. In fact, that's about all that it says about it in this entire extended passage. We read in verse 26 that Pilate "delivered Him to be crucified." And in verse 31, we were told that the soldiers "led Him away to crucify Him." That is as descriptive as Matthew gets.

At this point, you may ask, "Why?" Why so little told about the pain and agony of the cross? Why doesn't Matthew record anything about the actual pain and suffering that Jesus went through on the cross? Why didn't Matthew explain the pain of receiving a nail through your hands and feet? Why doesn't he describe the pain of such things as hanging upon the cross on a few nails and lifting yourself up to breathe? Why doesn't he explain the pain of the cramps that you would experience due to the dehydration?

I believe that Matthew didn't write much about this because those who first received this gospel account were very familiar with the process of crucifixion. Most of the people who originally read the gospel of Matthew had probably seen a crucifixion or two. Perhaps they had seen three or ten or even fifty or more in their lifetimes. It loomed large in their society. This is the common way in which the Romans put their criminals to death.

There were many ways in which the crucifixions would take place. Practices varied from geographic region to region. There was no one standard way in which crucifixions were carried out. I'm sure that those doing the executing used whatever was available to them at the time to pin their victims to the cross and let them hang there until they die. When the Persians practiced crucifixion, a single post may have been used. At times, criminals may have even been impaled upon a high-hanging branch of a tree. The custom of the Romans at the time of Christ was to use a cross of some shape and size, which varied from region to region. Some were formed in the shape of an "X" which would stretch out the victim's arms and legs. Some were formed like a capital "T" which would consist of a vertical stake with a crossbeam that would rest upon it. In the case of Christ, he was probably crucified upon a cross that looked like a small letter "t" with the horizontal crossbeam a bit lower than the top of the stake to allow a sign to be nailed above the head of Jesus (as in verse 37).

In Jerusalem during the time of Christ, the Romans crucified their criminals at a place called Golgotha. This was a well-known place in the days of Jesus. It was known only for its name, which means "The Skull." We don't know exactly where this place was. We do know from John 19:20 that it was "near the city." We also know from Hebrews 13:12 that this location was outside the gates of the city. But in the days of Jesus, the people would have known exactly where this place was.

I suspect that this was where many of the Roman crucifixions took place. The crowds knew where they were headed when they followed Jesus along the Via Dolorosa. It was obvious. They were heading to the place where all criminals were executed: "Golgotha." In that place, there were certainly some vertical poles, called "stipes" upon which the crossbeams which the criminals carried to Golgotha would be attached. All the crowds knew what to expect when they arrived at Golgotha. They would see men nailed to crosses and lifted high for all to see. They would observe these men die a very slow death.

This whole process was familiar to those alive at the time, and so Matthew felt little need to expound upon the pain of the cross. The case is a bit different for us today. We don't see crucifixions too often in our society. It would do us well to spend a few moments this morning thinking about the pain of the cross. The process of the crucifixion was designed with the intent of producing a slow death while maximizing pain and suffering. None of the crucial organs of the body were damaged in the process of crucifixion. Bodily functions would carry on as normal. Eventually, the victims would die from lack of energy, as they simply no longer had the energy in them to lift themselves up to breathe.

I remember being at a friend's house in California with a group of college students. We happened to notice some rather large beetles which flew. I don't know what kind of beetles they were, but they were about the size of a quarter. We got the idea that it might be fun to put a leash on them and have our own "beetle on a string." And so, we went into the house and got some thread. And we tied the necks of these beetles with some thread and let out between five and ten feet of thread. It was really pretty cool. We would hold one end of the thread and watch the beetles begin to fly away until they reached the end of their tether. At that point, they were stopped in their flying. Often, they would find another direction in their flight so as to loosen the tether. And off they would go again, until the thread became taut again. We walked around the yard taking our "pet beetles" for a fly. As I remember, we had probably a half-dozen beetles tied like this. They provided great fun -- for about an hour. After that time, the beetles preferred to sit on the ground, rather than fly. They didn't even move very much when poked or prodded. Eventually, they died. I believe that they died of exhaustion.

This was a little bit like crucifixion. These beetles died because their energy was spent. However, these beetles weren't in great pain as they became fatigued. This is what happened in the case of crucifixion. All energy was lost. And there was no way to breathe any more. Eventually, the criminal would die from what physicians call "exhaustion asphyxia." Through the scourgings, much blood would be lost. Through the carrying of the cross, much energy would be lost. Upon the cross, the victim would slowly be worn down until they eventually expired.

Once the procession arrived at Golgotha, the first order of business would be to give the criminals some wine to drink, which we see happening in verse 34. This was given as a form of analgesic, to lessen the pain. I remember a few years ago being in California with my wife's family. On this particular trip, we were doing the "gold rush" tour. We went to Sutter's Mill, where gold was first discovered in California in 1848. My family also went to Sutter's fort, where many of the people who came out to California in the gold rush would first visit before they took off to find their fortune. I remember going on to the town of Columbia, which is essentially a giant museum. They have tried to keep the town as it would have been in the days of the gold rush. As we walked through the town, we saw the old fire-engine. We saw the old saloons, which still function as restaurants. I remember going to the dentist's office. They had a replica of the chair that the dentist used. Out for display were the tools that the dentists would use to pull teeth.

Think about this dentist. This was 150 years ago. They had no novocaine back then (it wasn't invented until 1905). Furthermore, dental hygiene 150 years ago isn't what it is today. This was especially the case in the rugged wilderness of California during the days of the gold rush. I remember pausing with Yvonne at this place, just thinking about the reality of using these crude pliers to pull out teeth. The dentists who were particularly fast about removing the teeth were well-known as the "good dentists." So, what did they use to help dull the pain? They used hard liquor. They got their patients drunk. When they pulled their teeth, it didn't hurt nearly as bad, and patients wouldn't remember what happened. Such a practice is biblical. Proverbs 31:6 instructs us to "give strong drink to him who is perishing." I believe that this was the purpose with the wine that was offered to Jesus. This wasn't "fine wine." This was more like hard liquor wine to help manage the pain of the cross. It was to help be an anesthetic for the pain that He would endure on the cross.

But, of course, once Jesus realized what had been placed near His lips, He refused it. As our text says, "He was unwilling to drink" (verse 34). He wasn't going to go through with this sacrifice in any way diminishing the pain or suffering. His cup was to endure the full brunt of the suffering involved. I'm sure that the "two robbers" willingly took it (Matt. 27:38). Surely they wanted to do anything that they could to decrease the pain involved in their death. But Jesus, Himself, "did not take it" (Mark 15:23).

Jesus felt the painful iron spikes that were driven through His hands. These spikes were some 5-7 inches long. They probably would have been driven through His wrist, between His radius and His ulna to be able to bear His own weight upon the cross. Though the spikes would have missed the bones, they would have been driven right through the median nerve, crumpling the fingers into a fist and shooting great signals of pain to the brain.

Jesus felt the iron spikes that were driven through His feet. His feet may have been nailed just below his second and third metatarsal (which is half-way up his foot). Or, His legs may have been turned to the side to enable the soldiers to nail the spike right through His heel bone. In 1968, archeologists uncovered portions of a skeleton of a who was crucified near Jerusalem. His heel bone still had the spike in it when it was discovered. At any rate, the nails would have been placed well enough to miss any major arteries to cause the victim to bleed to death.

Jesus felt the pain of hanging by these spikes for hours upon the cross. Have you ever attempted to move a heavy object that has no good place to lift? The small surface area begins to dig into your fingers so that your fingers begin to hurt. Perhaps your fingers go numb. You decide to put it down for a bit because of the pain. That gives you a small taste of the pain that Jesus endured on the cross. But His pain did not let up.

All I can say is that the pain of His death would have been excruciating. Isn't that the word that we use to describe the greatest amount of pain that we can bear? "Excruciating!" Do you know where the word, "excruciating" comes from? I'm no Latin scholar, but I read that this word comes from the Latin, "excruciatu," which literally means "out of the cross." The cross is the measure of the greatest pain that we experience as human beings. Pain "out of the cross" is the most severe pain that might be experienced.

Jesus experienced the full amount of pain for us. He didn't take the mercy of diluting His pain with the "wine ... mingled with gall." He didn't have the mercy of having His legs broken like the criminals on either side of Him did (John 19:32). Breaking your legs was an act of mercy, allowing you to die quickly. Jesus bore all of our punishment. Peter writes, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross" (1 Pet. 2:24).

Excruciating pain is the punishment that all of us deserve. In our minds, we think that such a great punishment is due only for the worst of criminals! But, what we don't understand is that in light of our rebellion against an infinitely holy God, every single one of us deserves such a punishment for our sins. The descriptions that Jesus gives of hell ought to establish this in your mind. He describes hell as a place of terrible pain that continues forever. Jesus said that the suffering of hell was like a man feeling the agony of burning in a flame of fire (Luke 16:24). In Revelation 20, it is described as a "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15). Jesus said that such punishment is eternal (Mat. 25:46). This is what we deserve! It is only by faith in the sufferings of Christ that we are even delivered from such punishment.

You ought to wake up each and every morning realizing that whatever grace you receive from God today is far more than you deserve. Whatever pain and suffering that you receive today is far less that you deserve.

2. The Shame of the Cross (verses 35b-44).

I remember the day when I was struck with a sense of the shame hurled at Jesus. In the early days of Kishwaukee Bible Church, my father gave a presentation of the physical aspects of crucifixion as seen from a medical perspective. I believe that it was on Palm Sunday, 1994. He showed pictures using anatomical diagrams which displayed how the body would be impacted by a crucifixion. He described the physiological sufferings that Christ experienced. ^[1]

As soon as my father sat down from that presentation, a verse suddenly flashed into my mind. It was Hebrews 12:2, which tells us to fix "our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). As terrible as the sufferings were, I remember coming to realize that the Bible speaks of the shame hurled at Jesus as being the most hurtful part of the crucifixion. Jesus Christ endured the pain of the cross, all the while knowing the shame of the cross. There is more to the cross than the mere physical sufferings of Jesus. While Jesus was upon the cross, He was shamed by many. In fact, in verses 35-44, we see one person after another ridiculing and hurling verbal abuses at Jesus. Psalm 22:7 says, "All who see me sneer at me. They separate with the lip. They wag the head."

When the day comes that you are dying, I guarantee you that you don't want to hear a bunch of different people coming to your bedside telling you of what a fool you have been. You don't want to hear of all of your past failures. You don't want to be reminded of the promises that you never kept. No, when you come to die, you will want to be encouraged by the truth of God's word. When you can no longer open your eyes, and when you struggle to breathe, you want people reading Scripture in your ear. You want people singing the hymns of the faith around you. You want people encouraging you to continue on believing in Jesus.

It would have been well for Jesus to have had His disciples surrounding His cross to be crying out to Him, "Jesus, continue in your faithfulness! Jesus, we know that you have been wrongfully accused and condemned! Entrust yourself to God! Jesus, You are doing the right thing! Press on!" And yet, the things that Jesus heard as He was dying on the cross were far from this. Everyone surrounding the cross was hurling abuse at Him, which was only to His shame.

Never underestimate how difficult this was for Christ to accept. We have this saying, "Sticks and stones break my bones, but names will never hurt me." It may be a nice saying, but it isn't true. Words can do much harm. In prayer time this morning, I was reminded again of the power of unjust words. As we prayed for our president, a man shared with us about how Laura Bush was once asked what the hardest thing about being First Lady was. She replied, "Seeing my husband being criticized unjustly." It wasn't the long hours or the great pressure that was the most difficult. It was unjust criticism. Words do hurt us!

I remember one time being on a flight home from California after taking a class. I happened to sit next to a well-known Christian leader. At first I didn't know who he was. I only knew that he was a Christian worker of some type. Somehow the conversation turned to talk about fear. I had recently been studying in Psalm 27, in which David was found trusting the Lord when many were coming against him to kill him. I made the statement to this gentleman that death is the worst thing that can happen to you in this life. He said that it wasn't true. I insisted that it

was. And so, he proceeded to tell me of what happened to him. He had been leading a thriving radio ministry that reached across the United States. Much of his written material was being distributed to many, many people. I remember listening to this radio ministry as a boy. And then, he became the object of slander and shame. Many people wrote against his theological beliefs. His ministry came to a screeching halt. He ended up being millions of dollars in debt. His name has been forever smeared. He told me of the difficulties that he has experienced these past 15-20 years. He said that it has been far worse than death. He has continued to minister to people throughout the country, but with far less of a platform than he had before. Through hard work, he is almost out of debt. But, he told me how very difficult it has been for he and his wife. So, never minimize the shameful things that were told Jesus upon the cross.

As Christ was upon the cross, He suffered from all of the things that were said to Him. I want to consider seven different aspects of the shame of the cross this morning. Consider first the soldiers, ...

1. The soldiers considered Him dead (verses 35-36).

Look at verse 35, "And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots; and sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there." Right before the eyes of Jesus, they were fighting for His clothing. Jesus certainly didn't need His clothing anymore. In a few hours, He would soon be dead. As they divided up His remaining possessions, it was a mockery to Jesus. The least that they could have done would have been to ask Jesus what He wanted done with His remaining few possessions. Perhaps Jesus would have given them to His mother or to some other disciple. This would have been the decent thing to do. But, these soldiers considered Jesus to be as good as dead and divided them among themselves.

When you read the gospel of John, you find out that these soldiers cast lots for the outer garment that Jesus wore. This was in fulfillment of Psalm 22:18, which said, "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." I can just imagine these men rolling some dice to see who would get the garment. When the winner was decided, the soldier may well have grabbed the tunic from the middle of the circle and said, "Yes. I've won it." All the while, Jesus was looking down upon them, to His shame. But, it didn't matter to them, for Jesus was now as good as dead. They merely needed to watch Him die (as verse 36 indicates). In fact, the soldiers were prohibited from leaving their post until Jesus was dead. They knew that there would be no dinner tonight at home until Jesus was dead and taken down from the cross.

2. Pilate accused Him of treason (verse 37).

Though Pilate never made it to the actual crucifixion, he sent the official charge against Jesus to be hung above His head. In verse 37 we read there what the charge against Him read. It read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" (verse 37). As I have mentioned before, the placard that was placed above Jesus got it exactly right. Jesus was the "King of the Jews." The "King of the Jews" is another name for the Messiah. Psalm 2 makes that clear. The anointed one is the King that the LORD has installed upon Zion. When the Jews read this sign, it angered them. They tried to get Pilate to change to wording of it (John 19:21). What he had written, he had written and he wasn't going to change it (John 19:22).

Pilate's accusation however, contains within it a note of rebellion. There was only one king. That was Caesar. This sign hints that Jesus was a rebellious traitor against the Romans. Anyone who would claim to be king cannot be submissive to Caesar. And yet, we know that this wasn't true. Jesus was the model citizen who completely submitted Himself to the Roman government. Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). He helped to make life and society better. But Pilate shamed Him in accusing Him of treason.

3. Jesus was numbered with transgressors (verse 38).

This comes out clearly in verse 38. "At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left" (verse 38). This was prophesied in the Old Testament. Isaiah 53:9 says that "His grave was assigned with wicked men." The shame that came upon Jesus was that by being crucified with these wicked criminals, Jesus was assumed to be a criminal as well, though He, Himself, never committed any sin. This would have caused many to think of Jesus in ways in which we don't even dream. When we think of Jesus, we think of Him as a righteous man. Even unbelievers today who think of Jesus will think of Him as a good man. But, when many of those who saw Him hanging upon the cross with these criminals, they would have thought Him to be a great sinner. It would have brought great shame to Jesus.

Think about what takes place when a prominent religious leader falls into some great sin such as embezzling the church's funds or running off with the church secretary. The shame that it brings upon him is great. The press gets wind of what takes place and publishes it all around the nation! (For bad news makes popular news). The one who professed to be a righteous man was exposed to be a wicked man. All look upon him as hypocrite. The names Bakker and Swaggart are synonymous with shame. As those passing by would see Jesus upon the cross with these wicked men, it would have brought shame upon Jesus. It's the typical "guilty by association."

4. The crowds called Him a fool (verses 39-40).

The crucifixion of Christ was done in a very public place. As a result, there were many people who would have seen what was happening. As they passed by, they may have looked at the men to see if they recognized any of them. I suspect that when they looked at Jesus, He was unrecognizable, having been awake all night and having been scourged by the Romans. Those who passed by Him must have asked those who were standing around, "Who are these people being crucified today?" When it was explained to them that it was Jesus, certainly, they would have remembered His teaching and laughed at Him. Perhaps they were reminded by it of others who were at His Jewish trial. "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself!" "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." (verse 40). These weren't words of genuine entreaty. These weren't words of helpful suggestions. As verse 39 suggests, these were abusive words, meant only to insult Jesus upon the cross.

These were words that were intended to show Him how foolish He was. Have you ever done a stupid thing, only to have others notice it and laugh at you? These people thought that Jesus had done a foolish thing, and so they made fun of him. Those who said these things wagged

their heads at Jesus, mocking Him. All of it was to the shame of Jesus.

5. The religious leaders mocked His integrity (verses 41-43).

Verse 41 says that the religious leaders were doing the same thing that the common folk were doing. They "were mocking Jesus ... in the same way" (verse 41). The content of what they said was a bit different. But, the attitude with which they said it was very similar.

It seems as if they weren't really even talking to Jesus as much as they were preaching to the crowds about Jesus. With Jesus as the ultimate object lesson, they may have preached something like this:

He saved others; He cannot save Himself. Look at Him. He is perishing upon the cross. He certainly isn't a savior. He is not to be trusted in. "He is the King of Israel." Or so says the sign above His head. But, is he really a king? Are kings crucified like this man? Certainly not. Let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. He has every opportunity to show Himself to be who He claimed to be. All He has to do is climb down from the cross. And then we will believe in Him. The Psalmist clearly said, "He trusts in God; Let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him" (Psalm 22:8). Let us wait and see if God will come and rescue Him. Didn't the Psalmist also say, "He will give His angels charge concerning you" (Ps. 91:11). Let us see the angels come down and rescue the one who said, ... "I am the Son of God."

All of this sort of mocking was intended to bring shame upon Jesus Christ. Lest you think that such mocking only took place in the days of Jesus, please realize that such mockings are a bit similar to the one who tries to prove that God doesn't exist by making some preposterous claim. I've heard a few people in my lifetime mock God by saying, "If God is really God, let Him strike me dead with lightening in the next five seconds." And five seconds later they proclaim, "See! He didn't strike me dead. He surely is not real." Certainly, Jesus could have come down from the cross. Jesus had said that He had the authority to summon twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53) to help Him. Certainly, God, the Father, could have delivered Him. Certainly, God can strike people dead in the next five seconds (and He has done it before!). But, in His mercy, God remains silently patient.

But, for the greater good, God refused to allow any of these things to happen. Should Jesus have saved Himself, we could not be saved. There would be no atonement for our sin! And yet, Jesus was mocked upon the cross as if He was a weak and impotent impostor. This was the shame of the cross.

6. The criminals insulted Him (verse 44).

Look at verse 44, "And the robbers also who had been crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him." Luke tells us in His gospel how one of these two robbers confessed His sin before Jesus and requested mercy in His kingdom (Luke 23:39-43). And yet, before this criminal did so, he joined right along with the others in insulting Jesus as well. "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" (Luke 23:39). "You are no better than we are! How can you claim to be innocent. You must be a criminal as well! Surely, the Romans would not put to death an innocent man. You are a sham and a disgrace."

The words of this robber would only serve to heighten the extent of the shame upon Jesus. It's one thing to be verbally abused from free men who are watching the crucifixion from the ground. But, when those being crucified along with Jesus join in shaming Jesus, you know that it is getting bad! It's one thing for a crowd to boo a certain athlete for his poor performance. But, it's another thing entirely for his own teammate to turn on him and boo his performance in front of everybody. That would be a shameful thing. And that's exactly what this was when the robbers on the other crosses were casting insults at Jesus as well.

The cross of Christ was filled with shame. The soldiers considered Him dead. Pilate accused Him of treason. Jesus was numbered with transgressors. The crowds called Him a fool. The religious leaders challenged His integrity. The criminals insulted Him. But that was not all. The final aspect of the shame of the cross that I want to look at this morning is worse than all of them. For, the Scripture also teaches that, ...

7. God pronounced a curse upon Him (Gal. 3:13).

Turn over to Galatians 3:13. This is where I want to end my message this morning. It speaks of the shame of the cross. Let's first focus our attention upon the last half of the verse. "It is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" The whole idea of dying upon a cross was a very shameful thing for the Jews. It reminded them the law in the Old Testament that prohibited the hanging of a body on a tree all night long. In Deuteronomy 21:23, Moses wrote, "he who is hanged [on a tree] is accursed of God." So, as the Jews thought about the process of the crucifixion, they would be reminded of the shame that the LORD placed in those who are left hanging on a tree.

But, the good news comes in the first part of the verse. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). Again, we come upon this concept of substitution. Jesus took the punishment that we deserved. Jesus took the shame that we deserved. As we failed to live according to the Law of God, we are cursed. But, Christ Jesus took the curse upon Himself in that He was crucified upon the cross. To be redeemed and freed from your sins, you simply need to look to the cross of Christ for your salvation.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 11, 2005 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] He received much of his information from an article that appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association in its March 21, 1986 issue, pp. 1455-1463. The author found this article to be extremely helpful in developing the first point of this message.