

## Hands of Brutality

**Matthew 27:27-31** <sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. <sup>28</sup> And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. <sup>29</sup> When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>30</sup> Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. <sup>31</sup> And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

Hands of brutality, we usually just call them bullies, there really is not any other word for them. Already condemned to death the roman soldiers nevertheless feel the need to bully, mock and even physically beat Jesus.

They were bullies, professional bullies. That is what the Roman government was for that matter. The roman government ruled through the threat of fear. Do what we want, or we will beat you up. And the Roman soldiers were men of the same spirit hired to bully the people.

You might wonder why they were beating up on Jesus. They did not hate him personally, not like the Jews did. He was already condemned to death. But nevertheless, they mock and beat him. When it comes down to it, they were just entertaining themselves. Stuck in this backwater, middle of no where city of Jerusalem they had to find amusement somewhere and here was a criminal they could have some fun with. He was already condemned why not kick him around a bit just for fun. They were bullies, there is no other word for them.

Bullies is a subject that comes up a lot in TV sitcoms. In fact, I doubt there is a single show aimed at families or children that does not at some point deal with the question of bullies.

How do you deal with them? If you tell on them, you're the snitch. If you fight back, you get in trouble. If you let them keep hurting you, they might hurt others as well.

There is an episode of everybody loves Raymond where Raymond rides the school bus because his daughter is getting bullied, only to find out his daughter is the one doing the bullying. Why is she doing it? Because she is afraid of what the kids think about her so she is deflecting and making them laugh at and make fun of someone else

How does Jesus deal with these bullies in our text? Of course, he simply accepts it.

Every part of his body is beaten. His back is already torn apart by the whip here they put thorns on his head. Notice they use sticks to hit that crown of thorns, each blow pushing those thorns deeper into his head. They spit on him. They strip him naked. They mock him.

And Jesus silently accepts it all. Not just the pain and suffering but the humiliation, the shame. He accepts that as well because that is all part of the payment we deserve for our sins.

There are people who will kick and brutalize other people and/or animals simply because they can. When Vanessa and I were in Qatar, at an outdoor market we stop at the animal vendor to look at the puppies. Along came this one kid who started kicking the puppies just because he can. I was worried Vanessa was going to try and stop him and we would get in trouble.

These soldiers are evidently of that sort. Men who just like to kick dogs or anyone they perceive as weaker than them. That puppy in Qatar did not deserve to be treated like that. Jesus did not deserve to be treated like that. But we do. We deserve less than a dog. We deserve shame and humiliation and beating. And because we deserve it Jesus accepted it silently in our place.

Think back to a time when someone hurt you, really deeply hurt you. Think back to everything you may have thought that you wanted to do to that person. Think back to everything you thought that person might deserve. Yell at them, hit them, spit on them, kick them, ridicule them, shame them. All those things we think another deserves because of their sin. Here are all those things poured out on Christ.

It was not enough for Jesus to die. He had to accept the full payment of our sin. Not only death but the shame and humiliation as well.

**Isaiah 50:6 <sup>6</sup> I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.**

Many people would say the way to deal with a bully is to fight back. Show him you are not scared. Prove they have no power over you. Stand up for yourself. But of course, Jesus did not do that. He accepted the brutality; he accepted the bullying because we deserve it.

**Isaiah 53:7 <sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.**

The romans were good at being professional bullies, but they have nothing on Satan. Remember the words of the voice in Revelation.

**Revelation 12:12 For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.**

Satan as a bully is something, we see quite a bit of in the new testament. One time Jesus commanded a demon to come out of a man. The demon came out but as he was coming out, he threw the man to the ground. Another time when Jesus commanded demons to come out a man they went instead into pigs and threw the pigs off a cliff. All of these and so much more that we read about Satan are the actions of a bully.

Full of wrath at having lost, Satan has come down to the earth seeking to expel his wrath on us, seeking our destruction.

Sometimes his bullying takes the form of demon possession like we were just talking about. More often it takes the form of accusations, temptations, guilt, depression, humiliation etc.

The name Devil means the accuser or slanderer. The one who never stops bullying us with every accusation he can find. No one is as good at mockery, derision, and name calling as Satan is.

On Sunday we heard how Satan tempted Peter and caused him to fall into temptation. But just bringing him down to sin was not the fullness of Satan's plan. Afterwards Satan bullied Peter with doubt and guilt.

Sometimes we are told to stand up to bullies. If you stand up to them, they'll go away. Well perhaps that works sometimes but usually only bullies are stronger than us and often just beat us up.

Satan is stronger but nevertheless we are free from his bullying through Christ.

How do you deal with a bully? At school tell him/her that she/he is forgiven and then talk to your parents.

But when it comes to Satan remind him that Jesus took his beating and then crushed his head. Remind Satan that he has no power over you.

Jesus accepted the shame and humiliation we deserve and then crushed our bully Satan.

Amen