**Utterly Rejected and at Peace**

Based on [Luke 23](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk23)

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Passion Sunday

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One of the most astounding things about how the passion and crucifixion of our Lord takes place is the degree to which he was totally and utterly rejected. On Palm Sunday, he was received in daylight as a king with all manner of praise and accolades. He entered Jerusalem in Triumph and yet, in a matter of days the tides change. He was **betrayed by Judas, arrested by a mob, abandoned by his closest friends, put on trial before the Sanhedrin, defamed by false testimony, denied by Peter, mocked by Herod, delivered up by Pilate, flogged by soldiers**, driven outside the city, crucified with thieves, and in that final agony forsaken by God.

We know why Jesus suffered died and was buried. It was for our redemption. God meant it for good, but men meant it for evil. **Why did all of these players do what they did to an innocent man?** Certainly they did not know that Jesus cross was going to pay for the sin of the whole world. Why did these players, through their actions or inactions, send Jesus to the cross?..Because they did not trust God to rule them, but instead were grasping for his kingdom.

It is fitting that Jesus died for our sins, because what are our sins but rejections of God? What are our trespasses except active wishes that God were not our king? Whenever we intentionally break a commandment of God, we are saying we know better how to rule than God does. There are only two ways for God to rule a sinful people; either he come in glory and destroy them; or he comes in humility and they destroy him. Because that's what sin is folks; its making our own rules and vying to overthrow God's government. Thus Isaiah says of the birth of Christ, "**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder**." The killing of Christ was a coup against the government of God, and the kingdom of Christ.

Listen to scriptures record of the plot to kill Jesus. “So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “**What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.**” But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “**You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish**.” He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. **So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.**” (John 11:47–53, ESV)

The fifth commandment clearly states **"Thou shall not murder**." It is a pillar of God's Government, of his kingdom and rule. In our gospel lesson today, Pontus Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea says of Jesus whom they arrested, "**You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him**" (Luke 23:14-15. To kill a man not deserving of death is murder, even if it's done by religious leaders, or by the government. It invokes a curse upon those who do it; it grieves the Holy Spirit, it is jumping headfirst into the fiery flames of God's wrath. “Don't murder” means don't murder. And yet they murder Christ.

They murder Christ because, our text says, He "**stirs up the people**." The religious leaders said, "**If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation**." They don't kill Christ because he was actually guilty of the things he was accused of. They kill him because they believe the kingdom of God belongs to them. They kill him because they think they will thus save their nation and more importantly, their ability to govern it.

Ladies and gentlemen, God's commandments don't have escape clauses. God never said, "**Thou shall not murder, except if it's for the good of the nation**." He didn't say, "**Honour your father and mother; except when they are being unreasonable.**" Never did God say, "**Do not bear false witness against your neighbor, unless you're pretty sure he's a bad guy anyway**." What these religious leaders had forgotten is what all forget whose faith is strangled because they become are entangled in the cares of the world. Faith knows is that what is always best for the nation, for your family, for your very own life is keeping God's commandments and abiding in His Word.

If you, baptized children of God, truly believe that God is king why do you worry? Jesus teaches, "**Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows**." And elsewhere he says, “**Do not worry about what to eat or drink or wear, your heavenly father knows you need these things. Rather seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things will be added to you**." It is a great comfort to know that the government is not on our shoulders, but on Christ's...That we do not have to worry about grasping control over the world; Christ says let us worry about being faithful to God, because he's the one who governs all thing. It is the almighty God who kills and makes alive; who wounds and who heals; who has all things in his secure and capable hands.

The Epistle lesson tells us what kind of a savior we have in Jesus Christ. It tells us what kind of a king he is. Paul writes, “**Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself**.” How do you “grasp” equality with God? It’s when you act as though you need to sin in order to do the right thing. That is when you take matters into your own hands because insodoing, you try to grasp them from Gods’.

Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem in glory, on Good Friday he was driven out carrying a cross. At the time of his arrest, Peter was not going to abandon Jesus, but fight. So he takes out a sword and cuts off a soldiers ear. Then, of course you know what happens next: **Jesus elbows his captor in the face, John drop-kicks Judas and the rest of the apostles take a cue and overpower the mob and head off to Caiaphas for a final showdown...spaghetti western style.**

Of course that’s not how it happens. When Peter begins to fight, intending no doubt to kill the soldier and break the fifth commandment Jesus says, “**Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?**”

The scriptures will be fulfilled, because what is written is the very plan of God himself. God’s people never need to murder, lie, cheat, steal, slander in order to make sure God’s will is done. **God’s will is always done apart from our works, apart from our will, even apart from our prayers Gods will is always done.** He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. He doesn’t need our street smarts, our clever ideas. He doesn't need us to sin so that his grace may abound; nor does he need us to grasp control of the world for him. The devil is never going to get the upper hand on God, no matter how much it may appear so; and if we believe that God is depending on us to usher in his kingdom; no wonder we are anxious.

But Jesus is the only one who had reason to be anxious. He was rejected not only by those whom he was sent to save; but he was rejected by God himself on the cross.

On the cross Jesus cried out, "**My God, My God, why have you forsaken me.**" Why had God forsaken him? The answer is that he who knew no sin became sin for us. **And having been crowned with our sin and guilt, Christ also felt God’s wrath, that is, God’s verdict of condemnation and rejection, in His soul, just as if He had personally committed all sins of mankind.**

Jesus suffered the full measure of God's wrath on the cross. But God's word also says this, "**I will not accuse forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life that I made. Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry, I struck him; I hid my face and was angry, but he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart. I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners**." (Isaiah 57:16-18). God hides his face from sin; he hid his face from his son who became sin for us. But even when God hid his face; Jesus remained faithful. He did not grasp at glory or save himself from the appointed cross. He fulfilled the scriptures as they were written; for God will not fail to accomplish all he has promised for his people.

But his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime (Psalm 30:5). Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning. Christ was rejected and died; but Christ was vindicated and resurrected and all this happened according the the scriptures; without Christ grasping his crown.

So too, little children, we are not to grasp this world, though it is promised to us. Christ says, the meek shall inherit the earth; they shall not ***grasp*** it. So we have peace now in the midst of strife, because God is our king, he has atoned for our sin in the body of his son; he has forgiven our rebellion by the blood of his testament, and the world is in his capable hands until the scriptures are fulfilled and he comes in Glory to take us where he is. For Anyone who believes in the Lord, who trusts his governance, will not be put to shame.