

## He Bore It All

by Max Lucado

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*Then the soldiers bowed before Jesus and made fun of him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on Jesus. (Matt. 27:26–31)*

The soldiers' assignment was simple: Take the Nazarene to the hill and kill him. But they had another idea. They wanted to have some fun first. Strong, rested, armed soldiers encircled an exhausted, nearly dead, Galilean carpenter and beat up on him. The scourging was commanded. The crucifixion was ordered. But who would draw pleasure out of spitting on a half-dead man? Spitting isn't intended to hurt the body—it can't. Spitting is intended to degrade the soul, and it does. What were the soldiers doing? Were they not elevating themselves at the expense of another? They felt big by making Christ look small.

Ever done that? Maybe you've never spit on anyone, but have you gossiped? Slandered? Have you ever raised your hand in anger or rolled your eyes in arrogance? Have you ever blasted your high beams in someone's rearview mirror? Ever made someone feel bad so you would feel good? That's what the soldiers did to Jesus. When you and I do the same, we do it to Jesus too. *"I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!"* (Matt. 25:40 NLT). How we treat others is how we treat Jesus.

*"Oh, Max, I don't like to hear that,"* you protest. Believe me, I don't like to say it. But we must face the fact that there is something beastly within each one of us. Something beastly that makes us do things that surprise even us. Haven't you surprised yourself? Haven't you reflected on an act and wondered, *"What got into me?"*

The Bible has a three-letter answer for that question: S-I-N.

Allow the spit of the soldiers to symbolize the filth in our hearts. And then observe what Jesus does with our filth. He carries it to the cross. Through the prophet he said, "I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting" (Isa. 50:6 NIV). Mingled with his blood and sweat was the essence of our sin.

## Responsive Reading: Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word, I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.

## Lesson: Ezekiel 37:1-4

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?"

I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know."

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus, says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'"

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.'"

I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act," says the LORD.

## Gospel: John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, *"Lord, he whom you love is ill."*

But when Jesus heard it, he said, *"This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."*

Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, *"Let us go to Judea again."*

The disciples said to him, *"Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"*

Jesus answered, *"Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them."* After saying this, he told them, *"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him."*

The disciples said to him, *"Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right."*

Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, *"Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."*

Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, *"Let us also go, that we may die with him."*

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, *"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him."*

Jesus said to her, *"Your brother will rise again."*

Martha said to him, *"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."*

Jesus said to her, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

She said to him, *"Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."* When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, *"The Teacher is here and is calling for you."* And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ...

## Gospel (cont'd)

Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, *"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, *"Where have you laid him?"*

They said to him, *"Lord, come and see."*

Jesus began to weep. So, the Jews said, *"See how he loved him!"* But some of them said, *"Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"*

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, *"Take away the stone."*

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, *"Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days."*

Jesus said to her, *"Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"* So, they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, *"Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."*

When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, *"Lazarus, come out!"* The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, *"Unbind him, and let him go."* Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.



## upcoming events

See reverse of Prayer List

## Calendar...

- ✓ No events planned until Covid-19 crisis is finished, over, kaput