Simon of Cyrene

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Preacher: Principal Clement Graham

[0:00] According to Matthew, chapter 27 and at verse 32. Matthew chapter 27 and verse 32.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, him they compelled to bear his cross.
They forced him to carry the cross. The mock trials were over. There had been an ecclesiastical trial and two political trials.
The ecclesiastical trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin had proved a highly embarrassing affair for the leaders of the people struggled to find witness against Jesus that would justify them in having him condemned to death.
They went to the extent of bribing people to bear testimony against him but such testimony as was forthcoming in that way was neither consistent nor sufficient to gain the sentence that they desired.
[1:32] And then Caiaphas, the high priest, had put the matter bluntly to Jesus.

He had put him under oath to declare if he was the Christ, the Son of God. And when he received from Christ, when he received a positive answer and a forecast of how in a coming day he would be seen coming in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, there was the ritual tearing of clothes that Jesus had uttered blasphemy and was worthy of death.
And so that settled the matter so far as the Sanhedrin was concerned. Jesus must die. But owing to the Roman occupation of the land They were not able to carry out this final sentence Without the authority of the Roman governor The matter had to be referred to Pontius Pilate And he found the matter even more embarrassing than the Sanhedrin had done For when he examined Jesus He was persuaded that there was no case against him He realized that it was out of sheer envy That the rulers of the people had brought him before his court He wanted to set him free He declared publicly
I find no fault in him But that was Pilate's personal opinion And that was what he would have liked to do But for the pressure of politics He couldn't afford to have the people He couldn't afford to have the Jews rioting Ill reports of him and of his administration of the province Might filter, in fact would be sent back to Rome And he might find himself in difficulties So Pilate hit upon a scheme To get someone else, as we would say, to carry the can Someone else, pass the buck Get someone else to be responsible For the sentence that he didn't want to pronounce
He sent him to Herod He hoped that Herod would get him off the hook But Herod also Found no fault in Jesus He could discern nothing in his personal conduct That would merit the death sentence And so he sent him back to Pilate Sent him back to Pilate with the information That he saw no cause of death in him So what could Pilate do?
[5:10] It was either a case of giving an honest judgment As a Roman governor And a Roman judge He ought to have done And suffering the consequences In the displeasure of those powerful Jewish leaders What could he do?

Well, he told himself that for the public good Sort of echoes the word Echoes the word of Caiaphas You remember when Caiaphas told his group That it would be expedient for the people That one should die And that the whole nation should not perish And so Pilate also took the view That for the public good For the sake of maintaining the peace Of the land He should give sentence As the Jewish leaders demanded And he gave sentence That Jesus should be crucified He handed him over To his soldiers In order that they would take him To the place of execution And carry out the sentence But first of all
The soldiers had their fun with Jesus They took him and mocked him They mocked him as a king A king without a crown to be sure But they gave him a crown They gave him a crown of thorns They mocked him as a prophet They blindfolded him and smote him And asked him Who smote you?

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But they didn't mock him as a priest They didn't know They didn't know That he was the priest of God After the order of Melchizedek And that what he was about to do Was to offer the sacrifice That would satisfy divine justice And reconcile God's people to himself They didn't know that But they mocked him as prophet and king And then when they had had their sport They led him out To the place of crucifixion And now they were in a hurry There was something unpleasant to do And they had to do it And get over with it As quickly as they could But on the way To the place Of execution The soldiers became aware Of the weakness The physical weakness of Jesus They realized that He was unable to carry the cross To the appointed place And they weren't in any mood for delay And none of the soldiers None of themselves Would volunteer to carry this cross Because the cross bearer Might be mistaken For the man who was condemned to death As a phelon In the eyes of Roman law So what they did They laid hold on a passerby A man of Cyrene Simon Now whether the choice of Simon Was deliberate Or just random We can't say It's been suggested That Jews of Cyrene Were known For their particular bitterness
[9:04] Against the Roman overlords Of the land And it may have been It's possible That Simon was recognized As a man of Cyrene Perhaps by his dress Or some other way That would give away His place of abode Anyway They took hold of him And if they did think of him Know him to be a Cyrenean And one who would be naturally Very bitter against Rome They would regard it As a kind of macabre jest That such a one Such a one Such a one Should be made To carry this cross And appear as though He also were a phelon Serve him right If he's identified As the victim Of Rome's vengeance They forced him To carry the cross Now we've noticed That it was Signs of physical weakness

On Jesus' part That convinced the soldiers That someone else Would have to carry the cross Well it shouldn't surprise us It shouldn't surprise us at all If Jesus was physically weak If you consider the experiences Through which he had just come Physically and emotionally Draining one after the other You think of his leave Taking with the disciples In the upper room And how that drained The emotional strength Of our Lord You think of the time In Gethsemane Pleading, pleading If it be possible Let this cup pass from me Nevertheless not my will But thine be done And coming to the disappointing Sight of the disciples Sleeping What could you not watch With me for one hour
You think of him Taken Captured in the garden And taken before the Sanhedrin You think of him Shuttle back and forth Between the Sanhedrin And Pilate And Pilate And Herod And back to Pilate again Is it any wonder That he should be totally Reduced to exhaustion That's what I want to think of First of all How the weakness of our Lord On different occasions Was met But I want first of all To go back Just a little Before that To the What I might call The inauguration Or the beginning Of those Last days That led up To the cross I'm thinking Just now Of what happened On the mountain Of transfiguration There you had An overt
Preparation Of our Lord For the work That he was to do Upon the cross And it's If you think of that You think There are evidences Of glory here Here Is not It's not only That Moses And Elias Have come To talk about The exodus To set to What Jesus Is about to do In terms of Accomplishment In terms of Liberation In terms of The great Act of Liberation That God Had accomplished For Israel Long ago Not that only Not even That specially But the immediate Presence there Of the Father In the cloud Of glory And the voice That came From the Excellent glory As Peter Tells us This is my Beloved Son Hear him And what I
Want us to Reflect upon Particularly As we are Coming to the Beginning of The climactic Event in the Ministry of Our Lord Is the Assurance Given to him Directly by His Father And made Public to Those who Would hear To the Disciples The Assurance Given of The Father's Love God Is pledged To uphold His Son Now Then Pass on To the Weakness That was Experienced By Jesus In Gethsemane Consider the Weakness Of Gethsemane And what Was done About it There arose
[14:13] This Weakness Arose From the Intense Agitation Of spirit That he Experienced The pressure That was Associated With our Lord's Anticipation Of the Dreadfulness Of what He was To endure What he Had to Suffer He himself Described As a Cup That his Father Would give Him And he Knew the Contents The deadly Contents Of that Cup All that Was human In our Lord Dreaded That Experience Dreaded The drinking Of that Cup He Prayed That it Might Pass From him If that Were Possible Father If it Be Possible Let this

Cup Pass From me He Was at That time In such Agony In such Agitation In such Physical And emotional And mental Weakness That it So seemed As though His life Would ebb Away There and Then And it Might well Be That a Voice That sounded Like human Reason And a Voice That was

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Really The voice Of the Tempter Might say To him There It's Better This way Be much Much Easier To let Life Just Drain Out Let Life Just Ebb Away Here And now Among The olive Trees And you'll Escape You'll
Escape That dreadful Immolation That dreadful Sacrifice But all That was Great All that Was divine In our Lord All that Was committed To the Keeping Of covenant In him Rebelled Against that Very suggestion With strong Cries And tears He made Supplication To him Who was able To save him From death And was Heard And then An angel Appeared An angel Appeared To strengthen Him in his Weakness Just Just one Angel Just one Angel Well you say An angel Yeah but you Think of the Angel
You think of The month of Transfiguration You think of The immediate Presence of God the Father You think of The proclamation And you think of The host of Angels that Celebrated his Coming into The world When he was Born in Bethlehem There's There's only There's only one Angel And it's Brought home To him That for This work Of redemption He is made A little Lower than The angels For the Suffering of Death That angel Does indeed Bring him Heaven's message Of support Heaven's assurance Of concern And support But you will Notice that The first Outcome The first Outcome Of the Strengthening By the Angel Is the Increase Of suffering Not the Easing
Of the Burden For it Is after This angel Came After this Angel Comes to Him And speaks To him That his Sweat Drops As great Drops Of blood To the Ground Still That is a Comforting Experience So far As it Goes Lacks The glory It lacks The Celebratory Note Of the Mount of Transfiguration But it's An angel From heaven Now And then Consider The weakness Of the Way to The cross The way Of Dolorosa It's Real And there's Now no Possibility That Jesus Can withdraw From everybody As he did In the Garden To have
[19:16] Matters Out with His God And Father Now there Is no Strengthening Angel Only a Conscripted Passer Passer By No Strengthening Angel Now Only a Conscripted Passer By A man Whom They have Forced To carry His cross Does the Redeemer Feel now The beginning Of the Distancing Of heaven From him That Distancing That will Climax And the Cry Of dereliction When he Suffers The pain When the Pains Of hell Get hold Upon him And he Suffers Grief And torment And he Cries Out My God My God Why Have You Forsaken Me Yes the Face of The angel Was encouraging It was Friendly The words

Of the Angel Were Holy Reassuring No doubt But this Sour Faced Conscript Is resentful And Outraged Why Should he Be Identified With a Man Doomed To die As a Phelan Why Indeed And why The redeemer Might well Ask Why Why is This all That heaven Gives me Now in This moment Of crisis But even In this Moment Of crisis The resolution Of the redeemer Was confirmed The resolution He had Confirmed And get Semen Was renewed Nothing Now Not weakness Not disappointment Not loneliness Not abandonment Nothing Now Will alter The determination
To obedience And covenant Faithfulness The redeemer Will walk The redeemer Will walk This road Until he Comes to the Appointed Place And time He will Fulfill All of his Assignment Until he Can say It is Finished First What I want Us to Recognize Is how Matters Become More and More Dreadful In the Experience Of our Lord They become More and More dreadful The nearer One comes To Calvary Of course The shadow Of Calvary Had been Over the Whole Ministry Of Jesus The slaying Of the Infants By Herod Had indeed Spoken Of the Enmity Of the World That he Had come To his Own But his
Own Did not Receive Him Every Step Of the Way That he Took In his Ministry Every Step Of the Way Made It Born Until It Was Exhausted And though This is Intensified It is Intensified As one Moves Even From Gethsemane To the Cross This Shadow Has been There From the Beginning All the Time Do you Remember How Jesus Spoke Again And again Of his Own My Time Is not Yet Come But Always It Was Before Him Always It Was There The Prospect The Thought The Anticipation But as He Went Along He
Was Held As He Said Himself He Knew The Fellowship The Unbroken Fellowship With His Father My Father Works Hitherto And I Work But Now From Gethsemane There Has Only Been An Angel On The Road To The Cross There Has Only Been A Conscripted Helper Now There Is No Helper At All Except This Conscripted Helper And There Is Sight Of The Time When He Will Have To Say I Looked On My Right Hand And There Was None To Know No Man Cared For My Soul As Yet It Is Not Yet But It Is Near Always It Is Coming Nearer And Here Between The Garden And The Crucifixion We Are Not Just In

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[24:20] The Shadow Of Calvary We Have Come Into That Very Darkness The Moment Of Utter Darkness Comes It Comes Quickly From The Weakness Of Gethsemane Helped By An Angel From Heaven To The Weakness Of The Way To The Cross Where Help Is Just By A Man Forced To Carry The Cross The Dreadful Denouement Of The Dereliction Is At Hand Yet There Is One Little Element Of Light In This In The Fact That Simon Was Forced To Carry The Cross How Else If It Had Not Been That The Cross Was Laid Upon The Back Of Simon How Could Jesus Have Turned As He Took His Way To Calvary How Could He Have Turned

To Respond To The Weeping Of The Women Of Jerusalem The Women Who Came After Him Weeping And He Turned To Them And Said Daughters Of Jerusalem Weep Not For Me But Weep For Yourselves And For Your Children And For The Miseries That Shall Come Upon You For For If They Deal These Things In The Green Tree What Shall Be Done In The Dry But What I Want Us To Fix Our Minds On Particularly Is This Deepening Of The Distress And The Intensifying And Lengthening Of As He Moves On From Gethsemane To The Cross So Then Let's Reflect Just Briefly In Conclusion On Some Of The Practical
Lessons That God's Treatment Of Jesus In His Time Of Weakness Teaches Us And The First Lesson Is This That God Provides For His Servant In The Way He Sees Fit Simon Was Provided By God God Provides For His Servant In The Way He Sees Fit Like Us Jesus Lived By Faith He Is The Just One The Author And Finisher Of Faith And That Means That He Had To Take Things And Trust As God Provided He Believed That God His Father Was Always With Him Providing For Him Sustaining And Guiding And Rescuing As His Situation Required And As A Man Of Faith Jesus Was Subject To The Surprises That God's Treatment And Provision
So Often Provide Sometimes God's Provision Seems To Make Matters Worse Rather Than Better God's The Angel Of Gethsemane May Have Appeared As A Very Natural And Proper And Expected Bearer Of God's Message But The Consequent Increase Of Suffering May Have Been A Source Of Bewilderment And Confusion Others Also At Their Own Level Have Found That God's Answer To Their Distress Is Sometimes An Increase Of That Very Distress And Confusion Do you Remember How Upset Jeremiah Was When It Seemed To Him That God Was Not Running The World In A Way That Would Clearly Show That He Was In Control Wicked People Jeremiah Thought Wicked People Were Prospering Much
To This Dismay Of The Godly Jeremiah Thought He Had Good Advice To Give To God He Had A Conclusive Way Of Dealing With The Situation Drag Them Off He Said Drag Them Off Like Sheep To Butchered Set Them Apart For The Day Of Slaughter And God Seems To Say To Jeremiah And What Will You Learn From That If That's The Way That I Should Behave If That's What I Should Do What Will You Learn From That The The Conclusion That You And Others Might Draw Would Be That God Is As Impatient That God Is As Impatient And As Cruel Just As Cruel And Violent As Wicked Men And God Seems To Say To Jeremiah You Have A Lot To Learn And
[29:22] You Learn It The Hard Way You Learn It By Suffering A Great Deal More Than You Have Up Till Now Up Till Now You Have Only Had Minor Problems And Difficulties And You Wilt And Faint But Wait Wait Till You Come Up Against The Really Testing Situation If You Have Raced With Men And They Have Worn You Out How Can You Compete With Horses If You Stumble If You Stumble In The Safe Place Safe Country How Will You Manage In The Thickets Of Jordan Out Of Trial And Distress We Call On God We Expect The Situation To Get Better In The Short Term Surely We Say To Ourselves God Hearing

My Prayer If That's What I Believe That God Hears My Prayer Surely Things Will Get Discernably Better Quite Soon And It's Hard To Bear Hard To Bear When They Only Get Worse Our Savior's Behavior In Gethsemane On The Way To The Cross Tells Us That Whatever Appearances Are God Is Totally Reliable In Wisdom And Grace He Provides As Seems Best To Him We Might Think Something Better Could Be Provided But God Provides As His Wisdom Dictates So Accept The Unwilling Forced Helper As Well As The Heavenly And Expected Messenger Both
Are Sent By God He Knows What The Situation Requires And Deals With It In Infinite Wisdom He Provides As He Sees Fit That's The First Lesson Second Lesson Is A Restatement And Perhaps An Emphasis On Something That's Just Been Said It's To This Effect Never Despise What God Provides Even Though It Seems Disappointing Inappropriate And Inadequate Of Course It Was The Soldiers Who Forced Simon To Carry The Cross But In This They Acted As The Agents Of God Who Was In Entire Control Of The Whole Proceedings The Contrast Between Simon And The Angel And

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The Dire Message That That Implied Was Not Lost On Jesus Nevertheless He Didn't Despise The Help That Was Given But Accepted It Without Demur Or Complaint Yet We On Our Part So Often Long Long For What's Dramatic For What's Spectacular What's Self Vindicating This We Think Is How God Will Help But If We Need To Be Humbled If We Need To Be Humbled God Will See To It That We Are Humbled If We Need To Be Brought Down God Will See To It That We Are Bow To The Wisdom And Grace Of God That Is Our
Wisdom To Bow To The Wisdom And The Grace Of God He's Often The God Of The Unexpected He's The One Who Chose The Foolish Things Of The World To Shame The Wise And The Weak Things Of The World To Shame The Strong He Chose The Lowly Things Of The That Are Not To Nullify The Things That Are That's The God We Know Through Jesus Christ Let None Of Us Despise What He Provides Even If Our Initial Reaction Is One Of Disappointment The Third Lesson Is This God's Provision Is To Enable Us To Fulfill His Mission God's Provision Is To Enable Us To Fulfill His Mission It's Not Primarily To Make Us
[34:24] Feel Good It's Not Primarily To Make Us Feel More Comfortable And Reassured As We Face Difficulty And Trial It's Not Primarily Concerned With How We Feel At All But How We Can Be Made More Usable And Useful In His Service Now This May Sound Very Harsh You May Say What Are You Telling Us That God Doesn't Care About How We Feel Has Has He No Sympathy No Sympathy At All With Us In Our Present Distress Of Course He Feels And Of Course It Is In Infinite Love And Compassion Perhaps We Don't Appreciate It At The Time But It Is In His Love And Compassion That He Sustains Us We Have Much To Learn About The Love Of God And Sometimes Our Learning Is

At The Expense Of Feeling Rejected And Abandoned Even Of The Beloved Son It Was Said That He Learned Obedience By The Things That He Suffered In Our Times Of Trial And Weakness God Provides Us He Has Assigned Us In The Path Of Duty We Are Never Unsupported By God And To Appreciate This We Need To Be Clear Of Course As To The Duty That God Has Assigned Us This Jesus Had With The Atmost Clarity And The Enormity Of His Mission Appalled Him As A Man Such Was The Closen Of His Fellowship With God And The Father That He Recognized Every Means By Which God's Assistance Was
Conveyed And He Could Distinguish Infallibly Between What Was Assistance That God Gave Him And What Was A Temptation That Perhaps Even Friends Would Offer He Could Distinguish Between What Would Be Truly Helpful For His Mission Given By God Even If It Were Just A Conscript On The Way To The Cross And He Could Distinguish From Between That And What His Own Disciples Would Offer When They Threw Threw Threw Sword To To Defend Him And He Said Put Your Sword Back In Its Place Do You Think Do You Not Think That I Cannot Call My Father And He Will At Once Put At My Disposal More Than Twelve Legions Of Angels But How Then Should The Scriptures Be Fulfilled That Thus It Must Happen
But Our Guidelines Are In Scripture It's Through Them That We Come To Know What God Wants Us To Do From Them That We Get Assurance That God Will Provide The Necessary Help For Our Task However Difficult And Daunting It May Be He Will Never Fail His People But Don't Let Us Try Don't Let Us Try To Prescribe Beforehand To Prescribe To God The Help That We Think He Should Give But Let Us Recognize The Help That He Gives When He Does Give It And Finally There's Another Lesson No Service To The Lord Goes Unrewarded No
Service To The Lord Goes Unrewarded There's One Qualification That I have To Make To This Statement What People Do In Wickedness In In Sheer Perversity And Opposition And Defiance Of God's Will Sometimes Advances God's Purpose It Was So In The Crucifixion Of The Lord Of Glory Him Being Delivered By The Determinive Counsel And Foreknowledge Of God You By Wicked Hands Have Taken And Crucified And Slain What They Did Was According To The Determinive Counsel Of God But They Did It With Wicked Hands What Is Done With Wicked Hands Is Not Done In Service To God Whatever Use God May Make Of It What
[39:27] Simon Of Sarine Did However Was Not Done With Wicked Intention He Did Not Carry The Cross Because He Approved Of What Was Being Done To Jesus And Wanted To Help To Help The Soldiers At Any Rate True He Didn't Offer His Services He Didn't Offer His Services To Be A Help To Jesus But What He Did Was Helpful All The Same It It Was It Was Not The Result Of Deliberate Choice There Probably Indeed Was A Measure Of Resentment In His Heart But Still He Helped The Lord And The Lord Is No Man's Debtor Now What Evidence Do We Have That Simon Was Rewarded There's No Evidence Of Temporal And Material Reward But There Are Clear

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Indications In The

New Testament That Simon Became A Believer In The Lord Jesus Christ And So An Inheritor Of The Eternal Life Which Jesus Purchased For His People On The Cross Not Only So But Two Of His Sons Alexander And Rufus Are Referred To As Well Known Figures In The Early Church They Also Shared The Blessing Of Life In Christ And No Doubt Their Coming To Faith Was Largely Due To What Their Father Told Them Of What He Had Done And Witnessed On The Road To Calvary And At Calvary Itself For God Is No Man's Debtor And No Service To God To The Lord Goes Unrewarded So From The Compulsion Brought Upon Simon To Bear The Cross Of Christ We May Reflect As We Have Done Upon The Gathering Cloud Of Darkness What Appeared To Be The Diminishing Help To The Savior He Must Do Alone What Has To Be Done The Voice From The Excellent Glory At The Transfiguration Indeed Indeed Is Something To Boy Him Up For The Accomplishment Of The Exodus But In The Garden There Is Only An Angel And On The Way To The Cross There Is Only An Unwilling Conscript How The Clouds Gather Over The Head Of The Beloved One For The Word From The Transfiguration The Mount Of Transfiguration
Is Still True This Is My Beloved Son Hear Him And Let Us Hear Him And We Shall Live Let Us Pray We Give Thee Thanks O Lord For What Has Been Born For Us How Little We Understand Of It How Little We Know Of What Our Lord Endured That We Might Be Delivered From All Iniquity O Grant That We May Have Some Sense Of Fellowship With Christ In His Sufferings That We May Know The Power Of His Resurrection And Glorify Him Be With Us In All That Concerns Us For His Name Sake Amen

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