

Response to the Death of Christ

John MacArthur

I. Introduction.

A. Text: Matthew 27:54-56.

B. Matthew gives four responses to the death of Christ that we can see today.

II. Saving faith.

A. This is the best response illustrated by the Centurion.

B. The responsibility of the Centurion was to guard Jesus, so he became very much aware of the issues surrounding Him.

C. The Gentiles were afraid when they saw the cosmic events that happened after Jesus' death. (Matthew 14, 17:6-7)

1. Their fear communicated an awareness of sin.

2. They were very afraid.

D. The Centurion's confession indicates his salvation. He confessed Jesus as the divine Son of God by the Spirit. God's Son means "the Son of God" not the son of a god. (Matthew 16, I Corinthians 12:1, Matthew 27:24, Luke 23:47, John 19:7, Matthew 26:53, Matthew 14:33, Matthew 27:33, Luke 1:45, John 12:32)

III. Shallow conviction.

A. The people were overwhelmed with a sense of guilt and grief. (Luke 23:48)

B. However, these feelings passed, and the people went home.

C. The same crowd received Christ later, however. (Acts 2)

D. We should not let those feelings of guilt pass—godly sorrow is a good thing. Ungodly sorrow is resentful only. (II Corinthians 7:8-9)

IV. Sympathetic loyalty.

A. Nothing could overcome the loyalty that the women had for Christ.

B. They were fearless in the face of the Romans and their society. (John 19:26-27)

C. Mark links the Centurion with the women. (Luke 8:1-3)

D. Many women provided resources out of their own possessions. (Luke 4:39, 10:40)

E. The distinct role of a mother and woman is provision. (Psalm 113)

V. Selfish fear.

A. The disciples were not present because of selfish fear.

B. They forsook Jesus and fled. (Matthew 26:56, Luke 22:34, Matthew 10)

C. We are prone to choose other things instead of Christ.

Application questions:

1. What was remarkable about the Centurion's confession?

2. What is the difference between godly sorrow and human grief?

3. What idols do you face that make you run from Christ in selfish fear? How can you respond differently?
