

Oops, Did I Say That?

“He saved others,” they said,
“but he can’t save himself.”
Matthew 27:42 (NIV)

Have you ever been in a situation where you have said something that did not come out right? Saying things we do not mean are often referred to as Bloopers. I believe that the term Bloopers is used throughout the English speaking world.

One of the triggers for us to say something funny or inappropriate is strong emotion. We may be extremely nervous, or upset, or angry about something and words come out before we think of what we are saying.

The context of our verse for today is Calvary, and it is the day Jesus was crucified. The emotional reactions of the people around the cross ranged from apathy to rage. The Roman soldiers were uninterested in what was happening to Jesus. They had brought their hammer and nails, the prisoner had been crucified, now they had to sit and wait until all three men died before they could return home.

Among the witnesses to the crucifixion were many people who hated Jesus and took pleasure in His misery. The physical

alternatives to torment Jesus culminated in the cross, now all that was left to those who hated Him were verbal taunts. The task of completing the suffering of Jesus lay in the ability of the crowd to say things that would humiliate and abuse Him psychologically.

Our verse today is a genuine slip in their efforts to compound the sorrow of Jesus. The first half of their taunt was a confession that Jesus had saved others. Exactly what Jesus did to “save others” the crowd did not specify. However, they indeed admitted that Jesus was a Saviour of sorts. This compliment was unintended and was a mistake on their part.

Looking back on the life of our Lord, we see that He did raise the dead, cause the blind to see and the deaf to hear. Never did the enemies of Christ deny His miraculous powers to do such things. People today who wish to discredit Jesus accuse the Gospel writers of fabricating the miracles. Why was this charge not levelled by those of our Lord’s day who desperately wished to disgrace Him in front of the world?

The only answer as to why Jesus’ enemies did not deny His miracles was because they were totally convinced that He did them. They were there and they saw the miracles. In fact, the leaders of the Jews held a council to seek His death precisely because of the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11). Jesus’ enemies thought that if He continued to do such miracles of saving others they would lose their place of prominence in the land.

Marvel that our sovereign Lord arranged for the wrath of the crowd at the cross to testify concerning Jesus’ mighty power. This taunt was, and is, a very clear statement of fact. Jesus is the Saviour. If God can use such an incidental “slip of the tongue” to tell of His saving power, can He not use the difficulties in our lives to work for our eternal good and His glory? Indeed the worst of difficulties shall be turned into voices of praise to our God and we shall be content.

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