# Cursed to Bless

# God Curses Jesus to Remove the Curse from People

Episode: 8

Passage: Matthew 27:27-54

Characters: - Host - Sam - Pastor - Ben - Pete - Ruth - Kate

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Language: en-AU

### Intro

**ATMOS**: Theme music 5 sec, Host background music below host’s volume

**HOST**: Hello, this is Mary, your host. Welcome to Cursed to Bless, the show that asks a big question: Why is life so hard, when God is so good? We hear God blesses us, but how? Money, health, happiness? The answers are found in *Jesus*, in who he is and what he’s done. We see this when we read the Bible as *one big story*, with Jesus as the hero from start to finish.

**HOST**: In this episode, we learn that God himself, in Jesus, came to pay the death penalty of the curse so that it could be removed.

**HOST**: Remember to pause, read the passage, and answer the questions when you hear the sound. Our first question is: Imagine you’ve been kidnapped and you’re allowed one phone call. Who would you call and why? Pause and discuss now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Thank you.

### Bible Study

**FX**: Flasback Outro

**ATMOS**: Host background

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s listen to the friends’ Bible study. They were all sitting at Pastor’s house…

**FX**: Flashback Intro.

**ATMOS**: House living room

**PASTOR**: Welcome everyone. Let’s pray first: “Dear Father, please help us listen carefully to your Word now, and learn together. In Jesus name…”

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Let’s review our memory verse from last time: Matthew chapter 5, verse 17. I will read it out loud. When I pause, say the word that comes next, without looking at your Bible:

**FX**: In each ‘…’ gap below, Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**PASTOR**: (Leave a 2 second pause where you see ‘…’ and say the answer word with emphasis.)
“Do not think that I have come to … *abolish* the Law or the … *Prophets*; I have not come to abolish them but to … *fulfill* them.”

**TRANSLATOR**: Replace this with text from the local Bible translation. Pick the same significant words for the gaps, as much as possible.

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Today we’ll be reading about Jesus dying on the cross. But first, I wanted us to think a bit about his life. He did and said many wonderful things! What are some that you remember?

**BEN**: It feels like Jesus blessed people all the time.

**PETE**: Yeah, he fed thousands of people.

**KATE**: He healed so many people - the blind, the paralytic, leper …

**SAM**: He taught the people about God’s Kingdom. They loved it!

**PASTOR**: He also suffered greatly during his life.

**BEN**: Oh yes, the leaders would try to trick him and accuse him. They wanted to kill him - eventually they did.

**PETE**: He didn’t have much money.

**RUTH**: His friends just slept at the garden that time he was really upset before the cross.

**SAM**: It’s amazing to think that the Son of God would suffer so much.

**PASTOR**: Yes. So Jesus suffered during his life, yet he blessed others. He had power over nature, sickness, death, and evil. He shows us what God’s kingdom is like - and he is the king!

**KATE**: Pastor, if his life was so good, why focus on his death?

**PASTOR**: Because in his death we see Jesus’ greatest suffering and most wonderful blessing - how we can enter his kingdom.

**KATE**: That sounds good! What’s our passage?

**PASTOR**: It’s Matthew chapter 27, verses 27-54. Let’s read it together.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR**: Ben, what are the main ideas in this passage?

**BEN**: It explains how Jesus was crucified. The Roman soldiers beat him, mock him, take his clothes, and crucify him. Then the Jews, Jesus’ own people, also make fun of him. Even the two rebels getting crucified with him start mocking him! He eventually dies and some amazing things happen. One of the soldiers, after watching all this, says he was the Son of God!

**PASTOR**: Thank you Ben. What did others notice?

**SAM**: It sounds so painful and shameful. After all the good things Jesus did for so many!

**RUTH**: I hate how everyone mocks him. It’s so evil!

**SAM**: Yeah. The Romans put up a sign saying that Jesus is the king of the Jews. I think it was part of the mocking.

**BEN**: But the sign is correct!

**RUTH**: His own people laugh at him. He could have easily come down to save himself, but he stayed there for their sake.

**BEN**: And even the criminals beside him mock him!

**PASTOR**: The cross shows us humanity’s sin at its most awful and wicked.

**KATE**: A crucifixion would hurt your body so much!

**PASTOR**: Yes, it was a horrible form of execution! But can anyone see something special about *this* crucifixion?

**SAM**: Darkness covers the land in verse 45.

**RUTH**: From verse 51, we see the curtain of the temple tears and the earth shakes.

**PETE**: Then it mentions people coming back from the dead, that’s amazing!

**BEN**: It wasn’t just anybody that died on that cross. Jesus was the Son of God!

**PASTOR**: Yes. The shame and physical pain were terrible, but the worst for Jesus was being rejected by his own Father, whom he had obeyed perfectly.

**PETE**: Jesus says God has forsaken him! Really?!

**PASTOR**: Galatians chapter three makes it very clear that Jesus really was cursed - for us. He really did die and face the judgement of death we deserved because it was our sin he was paying for.

**SAM:** Last time, we talked about God forgiving our sins from Jeremiah chapter 31.

**RUTH:** Yes! God said he would forgive our wickedness and remember our sins no more.

**PASTOR:** This is how God can do that! Jesus has paid our penalty and we are forgiven. Free to live with him and his people forever!

**KATE**: Why did Jesus go through all this pain and shame for us? It doesn’t make sense.

**PASTOR**: Remember God’s love, and his faithfulness in keeping his promises. Our forgiveness is very expensive, because God’s holiness is so great. Thank God Jesus was willing to pay that price.

**RUTH**: I can’t imagine telling my child to do something so awful…

**PASTOR**: I know, Ruth. But remember that Jesus delighted in following his Father’s plan. He died willingly, no one forced him.

**RUTH**: But what motivated him?

**PASTOR**: His love for the Father, and for us, is so great! We can’t understand how great it is.

**BEN**: That’s wonderful for us! And it’s a great example for us to follow.

**PETE**: But what did all this achieve?

**PASTOR**: At the cross, we see a great exchange. Jesus removed our curse and took it on himself! He took our shame, and gave us his righteousness and glory.

**KATE**: That doesn’t feel fair.

**PASTOR**: It’s *not* fair! But it’s God’s gift to us! God hasn’t given me what I deserve but has rescued me instead.

**PETE**: I don’t like having someone rescue me. It makes me feel weak and helpless. You have to appear strong, otherwise people will walk all over you.

**PASTOR**: My friend, if you’re going to die you can’t afford to be proud!

**BEN**: We can’t remove the curse by ourselves.

**PASTOR**: Yes! Look at verse 51. The curtain in the temple that separated God’s holiness from the people is torn. Which way does it tear?

**RUTH**: From the top…

**SAM**: … to the bottom!

**PASTOR**: Yes. In the same direction of God’s gift of salvation! It’s not our idea or our work. It’s all of God. It was always God’s plan. Remember our memory verse from last week. Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophets, the whole Old Testament.

**BEN**: Yes! God promising to crush the snake, promising blessing to Abraham, blessing Israel…

**KATE**: And then the promises to Abraham!

**PASTOR**: Yes! And we see it in so many ways and places in the Old Testament.

### Questions to Pastor and Application

**PASTOR**: OK, what questions would *you* like to ask?

**RUTH:** I find it hard to really feel that Jesus actually died for *me*.

**PASTOR:** Yes, Ruth. I feel the same sometimes. Do you know the famous verse, John chapter 3, verse 16? See if you can complete the first sentence. “For God so loved…

**RUTH:** the world

**PASTOR:** Right. But you are part of the world, aren’t you?

**RUTH:** Yes.

**PASTOR:** Put your name in place of the world and into the rest of the verse.

**RUTH**: For God so loved… Ruth, that he gave his only Son, that if … Ruth believes in him… Ruth will not perish but will have eternal life. Hmm…

**PASTOR:** The apostle Paul was a wicked man, a terrible sinner. But in Galatians chapter two he says, “The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, *who loved me and gave himself for me.”* We may not feel that God loves us, but that is what God says he does! And if God says it, we must believe it!

**SAM:** Pastor, I’m not sure I really trust Jesus. How can I know?

**PASTOR:** Great question - We’ll discuss it next week. But keep thinking and praying about it until then.

**PETE:** What about the dead people coming to life and walking around the city?

**PASTOR**: Yes, it does sound weird. Notice how this is placed right after the curtain is torn. The curtain was a symbol of the barrier between God and people. But when Jesus died, that barrier was taken down. We can now live with God forever. So right then and there God gives a real demonstration of what Jesus’ death has done for us. God brings people back to life!

**EVERYONE:** Wow!

**PASTOR**: OK, let’s talk about our own lives now. How might this passage impact us personally?

**RUTH**: This feels so big! It makes my sin a big deal. It’s not just bending a little rule here and there. The Son of God *died* because of it.

**BEN**: It fills me with gratitude. I’m so humbled by his amazing grace to me.

**KATE**: I hope I’m trusting Jesus fully. I know I can trick myself sometimes.

**SAM**: Yeah, this study has shaken me up. I really wonder if I’m putting my faith in Jesus. Maybe I’m still relying on my own strength to be right with God. I need to think about it more.

**RUTH**: It reminded me that I can never impress God. It feels offensive to try to show off my good actions to him.

**SAM**: Yes, I understand. I often worry that God isn’t pleased with me. Maybe that’s because I think it depends on me instead of trusting Jesus.

**PASTOR**: Pete and Kate, what difference do you think this makes for you?

**PETE**: It doesn’t feel comfortable, Pastor. It feels… humiliating actually. I don’t like that.

**KATE**: I’m just not sure how to tell how much I trust Jesus. I hope I can work it out.

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone. Let’s read our memory verse on the whiteboard: Galatians chapter 3, verse 13. Let’s read it together now.

**ALL**: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole’.”

**PASTOR**: Let’s memorise that for our next lesson. Let me pray. Good Father, it is so amazing that you would pay the death penalty of our curse, in Jesus. It’s such a blessing that it can be removed for us - thank you! We long to be raised to eternal life with Jesus. Please keep us going until then. In Jesus’ name…

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone, see you next time.

**ALL**: Goodbye pastor.

### Interactive Questions

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s answer some questions now. Say your answer aloud. **HOST**: How can our curse be removed? Is it by *our good works*, by *Jesus’ work*, or *both*?

**FX**: Response prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: By Jesus’ work. Only the work of Jesus can remove our curse.

**HOST**: I will say some sentences. For each sentence, say ‘True’ if you agree, or ‘False’ if you disagree.

**HOST**: True or False: Jesus had no choice about dying on the cross, because God commanded it.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. Jesus freely and joyfully obeyed his Father, because Jesus loved his heavenly Father and us.

**HOST**: True or False: we cannot remove the curse by our obedience or good works. It’s all God’s work.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: True. Our salvation is all God’s work, so all the glory belongs to him.

**HOST**: True or False: Jesus was divine, so he didn’t really feel the pain of the cross.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. Although Jesus is fully God, he’s also fully human. His death was very real and painful.

**HOST**: True or False: Jesus removed the curse from us by taking the curse on himself when he died on the cross.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: True. This is the great exchange that Jesus does for us. He was cursed so we could be blessed.

**HOST**: Now, discuss this question: why do Christians sometimes feel tempted to trust in their own good works instead of in Jesus?

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence.

### Outro

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, now we’ve heard about Sam’s day, listen to what he prayed before going to sleep…

**ATMOS**: Soft prayer background effect (e.g. chimes) fade in

**SAM**: Dear God, I feel so grieved after today’s lesson about Jesus’ death. The crucifixion was painful - but it’s bigger than that. Jesus lived a perfect life and is your own Son. That made the cross so … *unjust*. I think I often try to impress you. I see how silly that is - insulting even, when I compare it to what Jesus has done to wash me clean. I’m trying to understand how I can really receive this blessing. Pastor keeps talking about ‘faith’, but my faith seems so small and weak. Please help me repent, and give me the faith I need. Amen. ::: {custom-style=“Instruction”} **ATMOS**: Prayer background fade out :::

**HOST**: Thank you for completing this lesson. We learnt that God himself, in Jesus, came to pay the death penalty of the curse so that it could be removed. Will you join me for our next lesson? We will learn that the resurrection of Jesus exalts him above all powers, and proves that God has removed the curse and has brought blessing to his people. Please read Acts chapter 2, verses 14-39 before then. Now you can discuss how this lesson matters in your life: How might this passage impact us personally? Goodbye.

**FX**: Theme music fade out.