

## Mark 15:16-32

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[ 0 : 00 ] We find ourselves in Mark's text in the Passion Week, coming to the great climax of that the watershed moment in all of history.

! And we've been in this week for quite some time in Mark's account since chapter 11, which was Monday. And we've seen Jesus' activity in Jerusalem that ultimately and finally culminates in what we will look at and discuss this week and next.

And then, praise God, the timing worked out so wonderfully on Easter Sunday. We'll get to preach the resurrection from chapter 16. But we saw back in chapter 14, Jesus had participated in the Passover meal with his disciples where he instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

And this would have been on Friday in Jewish terms. It would have been our Thursday night, but their sundown Thursday became Friday. So Friday, the beginning of Friday for them, is when they had this Passover meal.

And then Jesus and the disciples had gone to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested. Jesus then stands trial before Annas, who was kind of the godfather of the priesthood of the day.

[ 1 : 14 ] And Mark does not record this trial, but then he's then taken to Caiaphas. We saw this a couple of weeks ago, along with the rest of the Sanhedrin. And then we see Peter deny him in the rest of chapter 14.

At the beginning of 15, there is a mock trial held with the Sanhedrin once again, just for show, because it was illegal for them to have trials at night. They had to have them in the daytime. So they go through the activity of a trial once again in verse 1.

And then as Kyle preached to us last week, a trial before Pilate, a trial before Herod, which Mark also doesn't record, and then another trial before Pilate.

And so we observe together these varying trials. There were six altogether, all perversions of justice, all unable to honestly declare him guilty of any real offense, but all of them leading to his final sentencing.

And we read to you again, Mark 15, 15. So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released from them Barabbas. And having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

[ 2 : 22 ] And it was ultimately and finally the Jews that really wanted Jesus dead as he was coming and disrupting the power that they had established with this false worship of the one true God.

And we have seen repeatedly that it is possible to worship the right God wrongly. And Jesus is disrupting the system of power and prestige that they had.

And so it's ultimately the Jews, the Jewish council, the Jewish religious leaders that want him put to death. But they need the Roman sentence because it was illegal for them to give out a death sentence.

The death sentence for the Jews would have been stoning. The death sentence from a Roman court was crucifixion. And this is why all of this is necessary to bring about the events that we look at today.

And so we see that Jesus is delivered over to the soldiers in verses 16 through 20. We see him and observe him being mocked by the Roman soldiers.

[ 3 : 21 ] Now it mentions that he's scourged in verse 15. He's already been beat rather viciously with what's called a cat and nine tails with a whip that had within it pieces of bone and glass.

And they would intentionally try to embed this whip into the skin of the person being beat and rip skin off. The Romans prided themselves in this type of torture.

They were very, very good at it. And so Jesus was already probably likely a pitiable sight as he's delivered over to the soldiers. But the soldiers feel the need to ridicule him all the more.

The battalions of this day would have been gathered in amongst men who lived amongst the Jews that were not of Jewish descent. Men who would have been of lesser class than Jews.

But when Rome came and conquered, they were included in these battalions and they had a personal vendetta against the Jews. So they seek to show their military might over the Jews by holding this mock ceremony of enthronement.

[ 4 : 31 ] This is Jesus who they have said could be the Messiah, could be the king of the Jews. And in the Jewish improper understanding, the Messiah was going to come and rule militarily.

And these men know that. Oh, this is the one that's come to deliver you from the hands of the Romans. Let's make a mockery of that. Let's deride him in every way.

Calling him the king of the Jews rightly, but in a improper fashion. Now in verse 16, we see that the whole battalion was called together and a Roman battalion was typically 600 men.

It varied in some cases and simply could mean in this case that all the men on duty were gathered. But nonetheless, it would have been quite a scene.

The entire battalion, those at least on duty, drawn together to mock and ridicule our Lord. In verse 17, we see the way in which they carried out this ceremony of enthronement.

[ 5 : 34 ] And Matthew describes the dressing up of Jesus in Matthew 27, 28, and 29 in this way. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. It wasn't likely that they could actually afford purple cloth, which was very expensive.

But likely robed him in something that was of military relation. It was a military uniform. And they clothed him in a scarlet robe and twisted together a crown of thorns.

They put this on his head and put a reed in his right hand. Possibly the very reed that they beat him over the head with later is this reed put in his hand meant to look like a scepter.

And we see the royal robe and the crown as well. And they say and they bow before him, hail, king of the Jews.

Now, I'm so very thankful that we are on this side of the cross. I'm so incredibly thankful that we know what the final outcome of this derision is for our Lord.

[ 6 : 36 ] But let me ask you just to put yourself in the place of a disciple of Jesus Christ. This being done in secret, but seeing fully and finally the things that would happen to him. The severe physical beating that he received in his great love for us.

And then they lead him out. They take off the purple cloak, Mark records, the scarlet cloak, as Matthew says. And they put his own clothes back on him.

Which would have been something they would have done to meet Jewish sensibilities. People were most commonly crucified naked. And our Lord himself was as well. We see them casting lots for his clothes later on.

But in order to parade him through the streets, they put his clothes back on him. It would have been seen as shameful and inappropriate to Jewish viewers to do this to him.

So they re-clothe him. Many pictures of Christ on the cross include his crown of thorns. But this would have also likely been removed as they would not have been allowed to mock him.

[ 7 : 42 ] These soldiers would have. They did this in secret and then they lead him out into the streets. In verses 21 through 32, we observe his actual crucifixion.

And a quick note before we look at all this together. Note in your text, at least likely, some of you may have a verse 28. If you, like me, use ESV, there is no verse 28.

Verse 28, if it is in your scripture, says, And the scripture was fulfilled that says he was numbered with the transgressors. Which is a quote from Isaiah 53, 12.

Certainly not wrong if it's contained within your text. It's certainly true. This was a prophecy fulfilled in Christ. But it only occurs in later manuscripts. And so many translators have chosen to leave it out of the text.

And that's why there is no verse 28 in our study today, as well as possibly in your copy of the scriptures as well. After this comparatively lengthy account of the soldier's mockery of Jesus, Mark's account of the crucifixion is economical but powerful.

[ 8 : 55 ] Mark has a way, does he not, if we've looked now at so many chapters in the text of telling things in such pointed accuracy. So very briefly, but so very powerfully.

Economical, but certainly powerful. We pick up from the text that Jesus is crucified at 9 a.m. That's the third hour seen in verse 25.

At a place called Galgotha or place of a skull, the parenthetical tells us, which would have been included in the original text. We don't know exactly why it was called this.

Some have said that the hill itself was in the shape of a skull. Others have said it was simply because it was a place where people were crucified. It was a place of execution.

But it would seem either way that Mark doesn't want us to miss the nuance of that. That the place in which our Lord was crucified was called Galgotha. That he was crucified between two robbers, we see in verse 27, who also reviled him.

[ 9 : 56 ] Other texts tell us that one of them stood up in defense of Jesus at a later time and was then converted. Jesus makes a promise that he will see him in glory. There are a couple of things that we have to note about the way in which they're mocking our Lord, because the mocking hasn't ceased.

They've put him on the cross. But even as he hangs there, the mocking goes on. The conviction that's hung above him on the cross says that he is the king of the Jews with a great deal of dripping sarcasm.

And the accusation thrown at him in verse 32 is let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.

Once again, are we not so very fortunate to see on this side of the cross, knowing undoubtedly that Jesus is, in fact, the king of the Jews and the whole world.

That by his activity on the cross, he secured his rightful place forever. Now, this peace that's carried, we see in the text here and other gospel accounts that Jesus carried it some way.

[ 11 : 11 ] John says he carried it all the way. Doesn't include Simon at all. There's likely the cross piece, the piece that Jesus's hands were nailed to, that held his hands out wide, that caused the weight of his body to bear up in suffocation.

In verse 21, this is likely the piece that's carried and the man that's asked to carry it as a man called Simon. Likely due to Jesus's exhaustion, the skin being ripped from his bones.

He has now taken multiple beatings, a beating the night before by the Sanhedrin. We've now seen him scourged by Pilate. We've now seen him beat by the soldiers. The life being beat out of him.

He is already close to the point of death. So likely because of this exhaustion, knowing full well that he couldn't quite get it there. In fact, it would seem in Mark's account that he may not have even walked.

It's possible that they took him to the place. Verse 22 says, and they brought him to the place called Golgotha. He may have already been so weak. But it also may have been a further mockery.

[ 12 : 16 ] Kings in this day could demand that anybody, anybody that was subject to them would carry a load for them. It also could have been simply that, that they were asking someone, some random guy out of a crowd, one coming from the country into town to carry his load for him.

Now it's interesting that Mark includes some detail about this man. He's coming in from the country. He's from Cyrene. He's the father of Alexander and Rufus.

We don't know exactly who this man is. We don't see him definitively anywhere else in the scriptures. It's likely that Mark includes some of these details because the original readers of his letter knew who this man was and knew his sons.

Likely, a man who him and his sons had come to faith in Christ. This is the beginning of that, their exposure to him. Some have said that he is the Simeon called Niger, found in Acts chapter 13.

Some have said that potentially this Simon was a black man, which is a rather fascinating thing. We can't say with certainty, but he was from Cyrene, which is modern day Libya.

[ 13 : 36 ] And it was very possible that there's now some ethnic diversity already beginning in the church. What a precious thing, if that is true. In verse 23, we see that something is offered to our Christ.

They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And we don't know who they are. It's easily presumed that it's the soldiers that are carrying him there.

But it's likely, as they have now beaten him to within an inch of his life, they have mocked and ridiculed him, that they would not have done a thing that would have been generous towards him.

They would not have shown him compassion at this point. So I think rightly, they are presumed to be sympathizers. People who are either waiting for people in general to be crucified or those who are sympathetic specifically to Jesus Christ.

Christ. This wine was a spiced wine. It's a wine mixed with myrrh, which was a resinous gum used for perfume and for flavoring, made for a spiced wine.

[14:45] It's possible that the wine would have served as a crude kind of narcotic. And it was offered to him to help ease the pain of crucifixion. There's an example in the Old Testament of wine mixed with frankincense to serve this very purpose.

We know for a fact that it was, in a sense, a numbing agent, a narcotic of some sort. We can't say with certainty that myrrh was as well. But likely, this is what's going on.

But Jesus refuses it. Why did he do such a thing? He had made a commitment in the garden to the Lord to drink the cup of suffering allotted to him in full measure.

And I believe that he wanted to maintain his full faculty as he did so. This scene is recorded by Mark in such a way as to draw his readers' minds to Psalm 22.

The very psalm I read to you at the opening of today's service. And the fulfillment of that prophecy. Our Lord fulfilled every single Old Testament prophecy about who he was and what he would do.

[15:58] Verse 24. It's fulfilled. The fulfillment of Psalm 22.18. They divided my garments among them. And for my clothing they cast lots. Verse 29 is the fulfillment of Psalm 22.7.

All who seek me mock me. They make mouths at me or say derisive things towards me. They wag their heads. And we see some more fulfillment of that in next week's text as well.

So as we look at this and as we consider it, I want us to observe three things from our text to apply to our hearts. I will tell you at the outset of telling you these three things, this has been a difficult week for me.

Just the meditation on, not that the death of Christ ever is absent from my thinking, but to really consider the things that he suffered on my behalf were heavy for my heart this week.

So let me give you three things to apply to our hearts. Number one, this is not the moment of our Lord's defeat, but rather the moment of his victory.

[17:12] This is not the moment of our Lord's defeat, but rather the moment of his victory.

Although paradoxical, Jesus' death was the death blow delivered to sin and death. Colossians 2.13-15 says this, And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with his legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

We now have life. We are delivered from death because all of the penalty that was due us because of our sin has been nailed in the person of Jesus Christ on the cross.

This was the great high moment in redemptive history. Satan thought he was defeating Christ when in fact Satan was being defeated. The enemies of God thought that they had Jesus right where they wanted him, but as it turned out, they were fulfilling God's design.

Take comfort in this reality, beloved. The most tragic and gruesome of murders in all of history was worked by God's good design so that you would be delivered and so that he would be glorified.

[18:44] Do not think that the circumstances of your life are not working to the same great ends. God is in control at all times, in all things.

Secondly, God's sovereignty was not laid aside in this tragic moment, but rather was in full exercise, as it always is. Kyle last week made this point in his introduction to last week's text, and I really appreciate it.

It was good for my heart this week to recall this and remember it. At one of Jesus' trials with Pilate, we see the record in John 19, verse 10 and 11.

So Pilate said to him, you will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?

Verse 11, Jesus answered him, and I love this. I love this. You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.

[19:54] Boldness of that. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, after speaking of who Jesus is, in chapter 2, verse 23 says, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. He doesn't exonerate them of the guilt of crucifying the Christ, but he does recognize that it was part of God's definite plan.

This was a thing that would come to pass because God's sovereignty is always in full exercise. He is always, and in all things, sovereign.

Nothing escapes his attention, and everything is controlled by his providence. Praise him. And thirdly, and this was the overwhelming meditation of my heart this week.

It's so quick and easy to try to put ourselves in the place of Jesus Christ, to try to stand in his shoes in this, to try to fully grasp what was going on in these moments.

[ 21 : 01 ] So quick was I to rush to that place as a follower of Jesus Christ that I missed something from the text, and that is that I am Barabbas.

I am Barabbas, and so are you. Barabbas was guilty of murder during a recent uprising of the Jews against Rome.

We see this in chapter 15, verse 7. Mark is very careful to note this so that we are no doubt, there's not a single doubt in our mind, that Barabbas was guilty.

He deserved the penalty of a sin. He deserved death on a cross. This would have been the penalty for the crime that he had committed.

And in this moment leading up to Jesus' crucifixion, the guilty was made innocent. Barabbas was let go. He was made free because of Christ. And the innocent, Jesus, was made guilty.

[ 22 : 00 ] This is us, beloved. What is due to us because of our sin is the eternal wrath of God. But we have been set free in Christ.

He took our place in bearing God's wrath. The second verse of a fantastic song called Man of Sorrows, What a Name, or by a newer version of it, Alleluia, What a Savior, says, Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood.

Alleluia, What a Savior. And we look at a text like this and we can observe Jesus' physical suffering. It's so readily apparent to us, recorded here.

And this was the punishment due to us. Death, derision, reviling, beating, all of these things were due to us because we're enemies of God.

But the thing that we cannot see was Jesus' spiritual suffering. The Son of Man, who had had perfect union with the Godhead from all eternity past, came to this earth, lived in a continual state of union with God the Father and the Spirit.

[ 23 : 21 ] And He was separated from Him. God's favor turned from Him. You see so much of that in Psalm 22 and in Isaiah 53, which I'll read to you in a moment. That this union was disrupted in this time.

And all of God's wrath for all of our sin was poured out on Christ. Because God is perfectly just. He couldn't simply just dismiss our crimes.

He had to punish them and He punished them in Jesus. The perfect, the innocent, bore God's wrath on our behalf. Heard a great analogy which I've stolen from David Platt.

Seems always so much more enjoyable when people are dead to steal their analogies. But He said it this way. Imagine you're standing in a valley and your sin is in front of you as a great lake held back by a dam that is eternally wide and eternally tall.

The weight of the water just waiting to crush you in an eternal manner. And as you're standing there looking up and from side to side at this great weight before you the dam cracks and it splits and it rushes forth sure death for you.

[ 24 : 45 ] Coming so quickly that there's no way you could avoid it. There's no running away from this punishment coming your way. And just before it crushes you a great hole opens up in the ground before you and all of that water all of the water the eternal weight of that is swallowed up into this hole and this is what Christ did on the cross.

He drank deeply of the wrath of God and when He was finished He turned the cup over and He slammed it down and He said it is finished. We have been delivered from the weight of our sin the spiritual damnation that is due us forever because of the redemptive work of Christ.

He hung on the cross and He did this for you and for me. I am Barabbas and so are you. As I said to you when we began we are commanded to be devoted to the public reading of Scripture.

Paul exhorts Timothy to this in 1 Timothy chapter 4 and I want to read to you in closing Isaiah chapter 53 so turn there with me if you will please.

I keep in my Bible random little bits of encouragement that I get. Many of you have wrote me nice little encouraging notes they get stuck in here and it breaks my heart when they fall out and I lose them.

[ 26 : 08 ] I have in my Bible a little handprint of Judah's little hand my three year old now and Sam wrote on it thank you for loving us and as I was looking for something to mark Isaiah chapter 53 with I came across this and reminded me of a conversation that Sam and I had just yesterday where I said to her if our boys understood how much we love them they would be so much more apt to obey us in spite of their sinful little hearts if they really understood how much my four year old and my three year old how much I love them how desperately I want their good they'd be so much more apt to obey my commands have that in mind as I read to you Isaiah 53 who has believed what he has heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed for he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground he had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him he was despised and rejected by men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted but he was wounded for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his stripes we are healed all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned every one to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before it shears is silent so he opened not his mouth by oppression and judgment he was taken away and as for his generation who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living stricken for the transgression of my people and they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him he has put him to grief when his soul makes an offering for guilt he shall see his offspring he shall prolong his days the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied by his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities therefore I will divide him a portion with the many and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with transgressors yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors let's pray together