

Mark 15:33-47

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[0 : 00] Our text for today is going to be Mark chapter 15 verses 33 through 47. It's a bit of a chunk for today. I must admit that I'm pressing a little bit through the text so that we can preach in a verse-by-verse expositional manner as we've been doing throughout Mark on Easter, the resurrection.

I think we'll find that the themes are very well connected here and can be done quite readily. Let me begin, though, with an exhortation to you and an apology from me.

I'm growing increasingly frustrated by the trend in America and our consumer-driven churches, by the need to be entertained in all things, including preaching.

All across our country this morning, businesses are opening up their doors and clicking on their open signs and people are coming in and they're consuming.

People are looking for churches or they're floating from place to place to place and they're coming in and they're getting a snapshot of a presentation given to them and passing judgment on it.

[1 : 10] The church is a people. It includes things like this, getting together, the preaching of God's Word.

But I think that because of this growing trend, the standard of good preaching has shifted. It's no longer enough that a man simply speak the truth on any given text, but that he'd rather speak in such a way that he keeps the attention of everybody and leaves you feeling really good.

And it is very possible to do this without saying much at all. In fact, this is happening in many places this morning. Very little is being said and many times heresies are being uttered, but everyone is so very entertained.

Now, I'll say that this is much less the case among you. Case in point, you're here this morning and I don't believe that I make much of an effort to entertain, but I still feel this pressure to get up and give a presentation of the Word of God rather than just telling you what it says.

And this is as much my fault as it may be yours, and it may be even that I'm making it all up in my own mind. I want to be sure that you guys understand that the preaching of God's Word is not meant to be entertainment.

[2 : 35] It's supposed to be good for your souls. Preaching is probably 10 to 20% of my week, both in preparation and in the presentation.

There are many, many other things I do as a pastor, but I know that this is the major thing that you guys see. What does Nathan do all week? He prepares a 45-minute sermon. It's loose.

45 to an hour. Right? It's what he's up to every single week. But there's so very much more that goes into this. And I carry with me throughout the week, while it may be 10 to 20% of the work I'm doing, the pressure of presentation.

And I'm making some corrections in my own heart to this degree. But I want to encourage you all, as a part of a culture, a subset, Christ Family Church, as part of a greater culture, to have a right understanding of what good preaching is.

A great place to go and see that. You don't need to turn here. I'll read it to you carefully and clearly. 1 Corinthians 2, 1 through 5. Paul's writing to the Corinthian believers. The Corinthians were people who consumed Greek oration in high degree.

[3 : 48] They loved, loved grand speeches. And many of these speeches, I read a few of them, say very little. But boy, do they sound so good.

The Corinthians worshipped the silver tongue. And Paul says this to them. 1 Corinthians 2, 1 through 5. And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom, which Paul was certainly capable of doing.

Read any of his epistles. Verse 2, For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling. And my speech and my message were not implausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

He intentionally spoke simply to them that the Spirit might work and that they would have to give all credit and praise to Him.

[4 : 57] Earlier on in 1 Corinthians, he says, verse 27, chapter 1, But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

And we're presented with a bit of a challenge in our day because we have access to so much preaching. In fact, I think, and this is not your fault at all, but the fact that I'm being recorded right now places a pressure on me.

I hate that my sermons go out on the World Wide Web. It causes me to tremble. That people who are going to potentially visit our church, whether they do or not, I don't know, probably go and preview the preaching. Last week's sermon may not have been a very good sermon.

I've said this to you continually. I'm just hoping to get on base most of the time, much less hit a home run. Oh, if we could just get a score home, that would be fantastic. I hope for this.

I long for this. And I pray for it. There's so much access out there. A hundred years ago, you would have just been so happy to get to come and hear the Word of God preached.

[5 : 55] You would have visited the church that gathered closest to your home. So my exhortation to you this morning is ask yourself, by what standard do you measure quote-unquote good preaching?

What is the standard for you? Is it the truth is proclaimed? Or is it that you were entertained? You must ask yourself this question. So if I were to pause and stop and take a long drink of water, is this awkward to you?

Are you feeling nervous for me? Could be because you think I'm giving a presentation.

And how could I dare pause? When I fumble with words, did your heart tighten? It shouldn't. I encourage you to ask that question. How do you measure good preaching?

And become an active listener. Become an active listener. And what I mean by that is a passive listener is just going to sit. And I'm hoping that I say enough things in the right way, that I use my hands in an exuberant fashion, that I raise my voice at the right time, and I lower my voice at the right time, so that something will get through whatever else is happening inside of your head.

[7 : 16] We're so easily distracted as a people. I'm the same way. Become an active listener. This will help you. Pick a pen up in your hand and write down notes.

It's such a massively helpful way to stay on point with what's going on. I try to lay sermons out in an organized fashion. I don't always, but I certainly try. Now, participate a bit in this.

We're a Baptist church, and there is never an amen in our church. And I think that's in large part because most of you are students, and so you're studious, and you would never amen a professor in the classroom.

And you shouldn't. Amen? A head nod now and then would be great. I've got to tell you, there's usually three things going on in my brain at one time when I'm preaching.

There's typically the next thing that has to be said. I'm trying to get my head going in the right direction. There's what's actually coming out of my mouth, and when I do mess stuff up, that's usually because I switch to the future, and what's coming out of my mouth just doesn't come out of my mouth, and I get yanked back to the present.

[8 : 19] And then there's also the, what in the world is everybody thinking? Many of you have the strangest listening faces. Usually look mad, like I've really, really said something wrong, so then my head goes into the past to figure out what I messed up and if I need to correct it.

So an occasional nod my direction to let me know that you agree, and you're being changed by the Word of God preached is helpful. And then take what's preached and go talk about it.

Not all of you, but most of you came with somebody, you know somebody here, you're going to see them throughout the week. Carry on a conversation about what was preached, even what I may have erred in, because I may, and I need to be told of these things, but have conversations about it and be sure you as the congregation are accountable for what I preach.

I need your help in that. And I want your help in that way. So pen in hand, participate, and discuss later. That's the exhortation to you. The apology on my part, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, who is a phenomenal preacher, I would encourage you to read his sermons.

He's a 20th century Welsh Protestant. He said, Preaching is theology on fire, which I think is a fantastic definition. Simple, but fantastic definition of what preaching is.

[9 : 34] And I'll tell you that I need to spend more time catching fire each week. Less time concerned about presentation. Really, I just need to say, damn presentation, it doesn't matter.

And I need to be catching fire and coming and preaching to you. Because the embers of my heart often grow cold. Just like you. I am a man. And they often grow cold and they need to be fanned into flame.

And I need to spend more time doing that in my weeks. I apologize that I haven't always done this well. I want to process sermons in this way. It's a fantastic quote, Charles Spurge, on how to best prepare to preach.

It's been a habit that I often read this every single week. It's been a few weeks since I've read it. Let me read this to you. Let us, dear brethren, try to get saturated with the gospel. I always find that I can preach best when I can manage to lie a soak in my text.

I like to get a text and find out its meaning and bearings and so on. And then after I have bathed in it, I delight to lie down in it and let it soak into me. It softens me or hardens me or does whatever it ought to do to me.

[10 : 43] And then I can talk about it. You need not be very particular about the words and phrases. If the spirit of the text has filled you, thoughts will leap out and find raiment for themselves.

Become saturated with spices and you will smell of them. A sweet perfume will distill from you and spread itself in every direction. We call this unction.

It's not a word we use these days. Do you not love to listen to a brother who abides in fellowship with the Lord Jesus? Even a few minutes with such a man is refreshing. For like his master, his paths drop fatness.

I love that. Dwell in the truth and let the truth dwell in you. Be baptized into its spirit and influence that you may impart therefore of to others. If you do not believe the gospel, do not preach it for you lack an essential qualification.

But even if you do believe it, do not preach it until you have taken it up into yourself as the wick takes up the oil. So only can you be a burning and a shining light.

[11 : 46] And with that, I say to you and to me, this is God's word to us. It's written for His glory and our good.

We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Let's read together Mark 15.33-47. And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And some of the bystanders hearing it said, Behold, He is calling Elijah. And some ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put her on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.

And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion who stood facing him saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, Truly, this man was the Son of God.

[13 : 02] There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, the younger, and of Joses and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there also were many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

And when evening had come, since it was the day of preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died, and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

And Joseph bought a linen shroud and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock, and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.

Pray with me. Father, I would ask this morning for the preaching of your word to be blessed by your spirit, and for all of us who are hearing it, even me as I speak, and that you would work through me that certainly today preaching would be theology on fire.

[14:16] And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Kind of stealing once again from Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. Many people call him the doctor.

He did have a format for the way in which he preached, which I've always really appreciated, and I tend to do this, although it's often a little more hidden, but he has this kind of pattern where he would do exegesis, doctrine, and application.

So that's the way we're going to walk through this text together this morning. So first, exegesis. If you don't know what that means, it means literally to lead out of. It's a critical explanation of a text, simply that.

It means that we get out of the text what God intends to say to us, which would be the opposite of eisegesis. If we read into the text, to apply something here that I have some idea I want to prove to you, and therefore I go to the text to prove it, but rather that we look at the text and we pull the teaching out of it.

So simply, we'll exegete the text together. I looked back before we jump heavily into that, just for the joy of it, to see when it was we started Mark's gospel.

[15:19] We did so on September 22nd of 2013. How about that? So we've been now, we'll have two more Sundays in Mark, and it'll be a year and a half, plus a little, about 21 days, to finish it all up.

And we have noted across that time, as we've seen the life of Christ, leading up now into the Passion Week, this is Friday of that week, the day, obviously, that He is crucified, His active obedience.

Jesus Christ was commonly called His active obedience, and that was Him submitting His will to that of God the Father. Doing the things that God had asked Him to do, His active obedience.

John 8, 28, Jesus said, I do nothing on my own authority. He just did whatever God the Father told Him to do. Mark 8, 34, we get this passed along to us, in this charge He gives to a crowd, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

This is the way in which we follow God the Father, is in active obedience. Last week and some Sundays before and this Sunday, particularly, we're going to be looking at Jesus' passive obedience.

[16:34] And that was what He suffered on our behalf, the way in which He was obedient to the Father in His suffering, which was something He did throughout His life. He suffered as He lived in the world, but certainly is highlighted the great high point of His passive obedience is in His suffering and death on the cross.

And I'll share with you shortly why the two types of obedience are absolutely necessary for our salvation. Let's look at verse 33. When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Last week in 1525, we saw that it was the third hour when they crucified Him, which would have been hour 9 a.m. Beginning of the day, 6 a.m. The third hour was 9 a.m.

So He's on the cross at 9 a.m. And then at noon until 3 p.m., Mark says, there is darkness over the whole land. We don't know how exactly this came to pass.

I read some things this week that said that it was impossible for there to be an eclipse at this time. I don't know how people know these types of things, but this is what they said. So likely some cloud cover, something else.

[17:41] It doesn't really matter, but ultimately there was darkness, darkness, which is symbolic of God's displeasure and His judgment. Listen to Amos 8, 9, And on that day, declares the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.

You can look at some other texts concerning this, Deuteronomy 28, 29, Jeremiah 15, 9 are some examples of those places, symbolic of God's displeasure and judgment.

It's likely that Mark wanted his readers to recall the final plague at the time of the first Passover, the way in which he has written this. Exodus 10, 21-23, you can take a look at that, but the final plague

before the Passover happened, when the Israelites were captive in Egypt, was the plague of darkness.

For three days, there was absolute darkness. In Exodus chapter 10, we see that they couldn't even see each other. It was so incredibly dark. It would seem that they couldn't even light lights.

For three days, it was dark, but the Israelites had light in their homes. And this was the last judgment given before the Passover came to be, that when the angel of death came and the posts of the door were painted with the perfect spotless lamb, this whole celebration that's happening in this week, the Passion Week, is about celebrating that, Jesus, or God, leading the people out by the blood of the lamb, and that is who Jesus is.

[19 : 11] This is likely why Mark is recording it in this way, that people would see that and remember who Jesus is. Verse 34, this three hours of darkness, we don't know if the darkness lifts or if it still exists, it does not really matter, but Jesus cries out with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,!

which means my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This is a quote, he draws this directly out of Psalm 22, 1. Last week we talked a bit about the physical pain of the cross.

As far as capital punishment is concerned, the divinement of death on a cross was one of the most heinous capital punishments that exists in all of history.

Certainly our Lord suffered greatly on the cross. He was beaten beyond recognition even before he was there. There were punishments added on top of the punishment of him hanging on the cross. But we cannot forget, beloved, we cannot forget about his spiritual suffering. The spiritual suffering is the most important thing that he accomplished on the cross.

[20 : 23] And I can say this to you with a confidence, although I would do it with a great deal of trembling, and actually presented with the case, it would be hard to say it out loud, but I would suffer physically what Jesus suffered for you all.

There's some guarantee of great good for you all. I would suffer physically the way Jesus suffered, but I could not the way he suffered physically. Isaiah 53, 6, all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord, that's God the Father, has laid on him, God the Son, the iniquity of us all.

Galatians 3, 13, Paul writes, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.

Really incredibly difficult for us to even understand what he may have experienced on the cross.

The only perfect man to have ever lived, living without sin, living in perfect union with the Father.

None of us can relate to this in any way whatsoever. Also, the only one to have had all of that fellowship, and all of that perfection stripped from him, and all of God's wrath, all of the punishment given to him, poured out on him.

[21 : 38] There are times in our life when we're punished unfairly, unjustly, something may happen. I try to intervene with my two boys when they're fighting about stuff, and sometimes I'm really afraid that I made the wrong call, like who actually had the toy first?

Sometimes I don't know. I take a gamble and go with it. I'm sure at times I deliver justice unjustly.

We don't have any idea what it would be like to be completely free of guilt, and yet have wrath and punishment poured out on us.

Jonathan Edwards wrote of Christ's atonement and his suffering. Besides what our Lord endured in this excruciating corporeal death, which means bodily death, he endured vastly him, and to put him to grief, now he poured out his soul unto death, as in Isaiah 53.

And if the mere forethought of this cup made him sweat blood, remember Christ actually sweat blood considering what was to happen to him on the cross, how much more dreadful and excruciating must the drinking have been.

Many martyrs have endured much in their bodies, while their souls have been joyful and have sung for joy, whereby they have been supported under the suffering of their outward man and have triumphed over them.

[22 : 57] So see what he's saying, all the martyrs, many, many martyrs have had a great deal of joy as God gave them grace to suffer well in those times, but this was not the case with Christ.

He had no such support. The Father turned his back on him even as he poured wrath out on him, wrath that was due us.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, Isn't that good?

Verse 35, And some of the bystanders hearing it said, Behold, he is calling Elijah. And this just points to the ignorance of the Jewish people.

The Jewish people had been led by religious leaders that had built a whole system that was not proper worship of the true God. They had developed an eschatology, kind of a growing eschatology, which is a theology of the end times, with a view that Elijah would return to restore all things, which included the hope that he might appear from heaven to help in times of need.

[24 : 11] In one sense, he had kind of become the patron saint of sufferers, that they had hoped that Elijah would come and rescue in times of need. This is entirely false, not true whatsoever.

The Old Testament doesn't speak in these terms at all. That ignorance is not an excuse for disobedience. Acts 3, 17-19, which is when Peter's delivering the second of his wonderful sermons at the temple.

They've healed a man who was a cripple from birth, and a great crowd has gathered around him. I'd encourage you to read that. And then at the beginning of chapter 4, we see 5,000 people come to faith at this time.

And he says, starting in verse 17, And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. And he gives credit to them. You acted in ignorance, but this is no excuse. He goes on, but what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, all of that great grand literature that you had at your fingertips, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

[25 : 13] Repent, therefore, and turn back that your sins may be blotted out. Ignorance is not an excuse for disobedience. So they thought possibly he was calling out to this Elijah.

And in verse 36, we see, And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, lifted it up to where he was and gave it to him to drink, saying, Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him.

It's likely that they were trying to prolong his life to see if maybe Elijah would come, right? Keep him alive long enough to see if that is something that would come to pass. And this sour wine would have been like a vinegar that they lifted up to him.

And he drinks of it. We see in other texts, and this is a fulfillment of prophecy. Psalm 69, 21 says, They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

So we see Jesus, in last week's text, not drink the wine mixed with myrrh, which we think was possibly some type of light drug that would have eased the pain.

[26 : 14] But he does drink this, and he does so because of Psalm 69, 21. And then verse 37, And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

Verse 38, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. John 19, 30 records that in that final cry, he cries out, It is finished.

It is finished. And there are so many implications that we don't even have the time for today, but his work was done. It is finished. Your salvation and mine were accomplished in this moment.

The work was completed. The temple curtain is torn. This is the curtain that would have separated people from the presence of God in the temple. Now, interestingly, historically, the presence of God had left the temple long before these days.

The whole worship was a huge farce. The high priest going into the presence of God wasn't actually happening in this day, but it still symbolically separated people from God through this sacrificial system.

[27 : 24] One man, one day a year, got to pretend to enter into the presence of God. And this curtain is torn, symbolically showing us that we now can have full access.

It's been granted to us full access to God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. A great text that speaks to this is Hebrews 10 19-22. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, you hear that?

We have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain that is through His flesh. And since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith.

You see all that language there? We've now been given full granted access. No longer have to go through some intermediary because Christ is now the perfect high priest. He makes propitiation for us.

And when Jesus dies in this way, the centurion in verse 39 stands facing him, saw the way he breathed his last and he says, truly, this man was the Son of God.

[28 : 37] Now it's interesting in Mark's account, Mark is so bullet point as he moves through things. Sometimes you just go, come on Mark. And it makes me so thankful that we have other gospel accounts, which isn't to say that Mark's is a lesser account.

But you wonder when you read this, you say, the way he breathed his last, here it just says that he cried out with a loud cry. So you go, so he was loud? And the centurion said, truly, this was the Son of God.

But we do get some detail in Matthew's account, chapter 27, verse 51, verse 54, when the centurion and those who were with him keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, truly, this was the Son of God.

So something cataclysmic happens. You've got this darkness over all of the land. Jesus cries out this last cry. He dies and then there was a massive earthquake. These centurions didn't see the temple curtain torn, but they certainly felt the earthquake that happened and it turned their doubt to faith.

Truly, this was the Son of God. And praise God, he is the Son of God today. And then Mark goes on in verse 40, verse 41, to speak about the women, the women looking on from a distance.

[30 : 01] We talk about the two different Marys, who they are, and how we can notify them as we go through, note them, I should say. They followed him around, they saw his life.

We see these women again in chapter 16, verse 1. And Mark is likely recording their presence as they were witnesses to the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You note that they traveled with him, they ministered to him when he was in Galilee, they observed his life, they were there, they observed his death, they saw where he was buried, Mark records that for us, and later, chapter 16, they're also witnesses to his resurrection.

They witnessed all of the central facts of the gospel. He's giving them credibility in who they say Jesus is. A moment ago, Wes sang a song based on the Apostles' Creed, that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.

The third day, he rose again from the dead. They saw all of these things. And then Mark goes on, beginning in verse 42, to give us this account of Joseph of Arimathea, who was a respected member of the council.

[31 : 16] And the council that's being referred to here is the Sanhedrin, this group of people that would have passed the judgment on Christ to have him crucified to begin with. We saw back in chapter 14 these trials that take place before the council.

Some people have guessed that maybe Joseph of Arimathea wasn't there. Mark's account in verse 43 says he was also himself looking for the kingdom of God.

And so they say maybe he was absent that day, but Mark says that the whole council was gathered. So it would seem to me, at least, my opinion on the matter, is that Joseph has now changed his tune.

He has seen and witnessed Christ crucified, and has now realized that he is in fact the son of God. And I want you to note two things as he goes to Pilate.

First, awkward water-drinking moment. It's not awkward, it's okay. Note first the doubt of Pilate.

[32 : 23] Note first the doubt of Pilate. Verse 44, notice Pilate's attitude, doubting that Jesus had died, and he does so because it usually took two days for a man to die on the cross.

Jesus died in six hours, not because he was weak, not because he couldn't bear the punishment, although his physical punishment had been so much greater than most people hung on a cross, but because he bore the wrath of God for our sin.

That is what killed him. Mark 15, 15, look at the attitude of Pilate. Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

Kyle Webb, a couple of weeks ago, said very well that Pilate, for fear of the crowd, in order to please the crowd and make them happy, to make men happy rather than God happy, because Pilate knew that this man had no fault in him whatsoever, yet he condemned him to death.

So notice first this doubt of Pilate. Note, second, the courage of Joseph. Joseph risked everything to be associated with Jesus.

[33 : 34] Everything. Likely, Joseph no longer sat on the council. All of his power and prestige, all of his financial gain, he risked in going and claiming Christ's body to be buried probably in his tomb, probably the tomb that he had prepared for his own burial.

He is very bold in this. Seems like a massive turnaround. If he was in fact at the council that condemned Jesus to death, maybe hesitant, maybe not knowing, is this man who he says he is, but he didn't speak up then, but certainly now he has been bold in approaching Pilate and claiming the body of Christ and having him buried in his tomb.

We'll look at some application for that in a moment. So now the doctrine. What doctrine should we be learning from this text together? I know I've already been going fast. I'm going to speed up a little bit for the sake of time. What you need to see here, one doctrine, there are many we could talk about, but I want you to really focus your gaze in on the atonement of Christ.

The atonement of Christ. Atonement is reconciliation. In this case, between God and man, the greatest version of atonement there is.

We call it the atonement for that reason. Wayne Grudem in his book, Systematic Theology, defines the atonement in this way. I really like this definition. The atonement of, boy, I didn't type it out right at all.

[34 : 56] The atonement of Jesus is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation. The atonement of Jesus is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.

And I love these phrases, the work Christ did to earn our salvation. Christ's work, it is finished, accomplished work on our behalf. Before we talk a little bit about what the atonement is, first we should ask the question, was it necessary?

Was the atonement necessary? Was Jesus' death necessary to save us? And I'm going to answer the question in this way, yes and no. Firstly, no.

God did not have to save anybody. And I really think you need to get this clear in your mind, that the sin that you have committed, past, present, the future sin that you will commit, is enough, it's right and proper, that God damn you to hell forever, punish you forever because of that sin.

If you don't get this, if you can't wrap your mind around this, you really don't understand the holiness of God. You don't get how very far removed he is from sin. That he has set up a standard which we are to live by, and we have failed at it in every possible way.

[36 : 14] We are his enemies because of sin. We have set ourselves up as king in our life rather than him. We have messed up the created order.

He is creator, we are creation. We have said, no, we are creator as well. We will rule over our own lives. He does not have to save anybody.

2 Peter 2.4 Peter writes, for if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until judgment. See that the angels themselves weren't saved.

Certainly if he had to do it, he would have, but he didn't. Nobody tells God what to do. But, God tells God what to do, so I would also say yes to the question, due to God's divine attributes.

God is just, but he is also loving. He is also forgiving. So in that sense then, yes, but not because we deserve it, not because we're his creation and therefore he has to redeem us, that there had to be an atonement on our behalf, but because of who he is.

[37 : 27] Because he desired to express all of his character into his creation, right, and this was the way that he could best express his love and his forgiveness, his forbearance toward us.

Romans 3, 25-26 says, Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith, this was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. This is why the atonement was necessary for God's great glory.

Always keep in mind that we are the recipients of the benefit of the gospel, but the gospel is ultimately and finally about God and his glory.

Praise him, we're part of that. that he says, I must show forth who I am to my creation and he uses us as an object lesson for that very thing.

[38 : 38] Praise him forever for that beloved. The letter to the Hebrews makes explicit because this is true that Christ had to suffer for our sins if we were to be saved at all.

Hebrews 2 17 reads, Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

The author of Hebrews continues by saying that since this is true it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins That's Hebrews 10 4 a better sacrifice! is required Hebrews 9 23 Because God is infinitely holy perfect in every respect forever then our sin against that holiness is infinitely offensive the two counter in that way our sin is infinitely offensive so we needed an infinite sacrifice to be made on our behalf the atonement of Jesus is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation and notice that Grudem says in his life and in his death here you have again this idea of active and passive obedience so why were both necessary why were they both necessary on our behalf Jesus passive obedience checked off dismissed all of our wrongs placed our faith in him it takes all those things that we have done and it wipes them away but this is not enough we would then just be neutral but we also must be righteous we also must have kept the law of the Lord not just sinned against him but also kept those things not! not! not! not! in that way, active obedience in that regard. So our record is made clean in Jesus' passive obedience, and a deposit has been made to our credit in our active obedience.

[40 : 41] We get all of His righteousness. Our wrongs dismissed, Jesus' perfect obedience given to us.

2 Corinthians 5.21 sums this up in the most beautiful of ways. For our sake, He, being God the Father, made Him, Jesus Christ, to be sin who knew no sin, perfect sacrifice, infinitely perfect, able to become sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is what Martin Luther called the great exchange. We take on Jesus' righteousness. We give to Him all of our sin, or rather He takes it from us.

So the atonement is the doctrine you must see in the death of Jesus Christ. And so what is the application for this? In closing, three quick things.

What is the application? Number one, be a Joseph and not a Pilate. Be a Joseph and not a Pilate. When the question Pilate poses in Mark 15.12 is presented to you, and it is, it's being presented to you now.

[41 : 59] There's no getting around it and away from it. Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews? What will be your answer?

You must do something with the Jesus that's being presented to you. The Son of God. The claims that we make must be dealt with. Those of you who have been with us for a while, for the sake of time, I won't go into it completely, but remember Mark 3.20-34.

The liar, lunatic, or Lord conundrum. There's these various accusations being made of Him. And many people these days want to give some type of credit to Jesus. They want to say that He was a prophet.

They want to say that He was a good teacher. But He Himself said that He was a son of God. So He's a liar. He's an absolute madman.

Or He must be who He said that He is. What will you do with this question, what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?

[43 : 02] Be a Joseph and not a Pilate. Be willing to give everything away, to sacrifice it all, to gain that thing that you cannot lose, the person of Jesus Christ. So number one, be a Joseph and not a Pilate.

Number two, as you reflect upon Jesus' active and His passive obedience, take confidence in His accomplished work. As you reflect upon His perfect righteousness and the fact that He suffered and took all of our sins away from us, dwell this week on John 19.30.

It is finished. All of your sin, past, present, even future, has already been paid for by Christ if you have placed your faith in Him.

Romans 8.1. I love Romans 8.1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. This means that we get to take all of the guilt and the weight of that and cast it off because Jesus has already paid the price for it.

We don't go on sinning so that grace will abound. But when we do sin, grace certainly does. D.A. Carson, in his book entitled Scandalous, The Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus, wrote this, This is Satan's tactic, right?

[44 : 47] That we are separated from God, having placed our faith in Christ. Now there's just division, this rift that's put between us because Satan's constantly being an accuser, right?

Constantly piling back on us our guilt. We pick it up so readily. D.A. Carson then says, What can we say in response? Will our defense be, Oh, I'm not that bad.

All these accusations you're making are not quite an accurate representation of me. I'm not that bad. You will never beat Satan that way. Never. What you must say is, Satan, I'm even worse than you think.

But God loves me anyway. He has accepted me because of the blood of the Lamb. So that's secondly. As you reflect on Jesus' active and passive obedience, take confidence in his accomplished work.

And then thirdly, share his accomplished work with others. Christians and non-Christians alike, we all need to hear the gospel all the time, preached to us constantly.

[45 : 52] I mentioned at the very beginning of this how my flame grows dim sometimes and I need it fanned. I need to hear the gospel preached to me. Tell me about the things that are happening in your life, the ways in which God has working in you the gospel truths and causing you to act differently than you might have previously.

Tell me about the good things that are going on. Preach to me the gospel. Anytime any of you wants to call me and say, Nathan, I want to preach the gospel to you, I'll go, alright. I don't grow tired of hearing this great truth.

I hope you're the same. Let me say specifically, those of you who are found in the faith, know the gospel, who understand the gospel, who can meditate on it, who can preach it, can have it preached to you, you'll get it.

Preach the gospel to non-Christians. Consider their eternal damnation. Have hearts for them, pity for them, and preach to them the gospel.

2 Corinthians 5, 16-20. This is in closing. Paul writes, From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer.

[47 : 08] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

He made things right between us and He gave us that job to go make things right between others and Him. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

It's been entrusted to you, the gospel message. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making His appeal through us. You feel the weight of that?

God making His appeal to mankind to be reconciled through us. And then Paul concludes, verse 20, We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

And this ought to be the great message on our lips. As we go from this place and everywhere that we go throughout this week, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

[48 : 16] Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Thank you.