

## Crucifixion

The Gospel of Mark 11-16: #12

Mark 15:6-11; 16:20; 27-32; and 33-34

*But he was pierced for our transgressions. Crushed for our iniquities. The chastisement that brings us peace was upon Him and by his stripes we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to our own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. And after he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify the many, as he will bear their iniquities.*

Crucifixion. That's a word that we don't take from our lexicon and put it into our vernacular very often. It's a strong word. It's a harsh word. It's a guttural word that's produced from the back of our throats. It's a word we took from the Latin lexicon of the Ancient Roman Empire and put it under the third letter of our alphabet right after the word "crucible." And, oh, what a word Romans designed it to be! It comes from two root words. One of them is a noun that means "cross." The other is a verb that means "to fasten." Put them both together and you have "to fasten to a cross." Or, as we say, "crucifixion."

"Fastening to a cross" or "crucifixion" was, quite possibly, the most painful form of capital punishment ever invented by humankind. The Romans perfected it. They used it for the vilest of criminals – the vilest of offenders – and meant for it to be a public spectacle not only to punish, but to also warn others what will happen to them if they dare to live and act in a manner disagreeable with Caesar. It started with nails through both wrists that severed the median nerve upon impact. Then it continued with nails through both feet. Next, as the crucified is lifted up, the full weight of his body dropping by gravity caused his shoulders and elbows to dislocate from the joints. But the worst part of crucifixion came when the crucified breathed and exhaled. When he breathed, the air became trapped in his lungs. When he exhaled, the crucified had to lift up on his nailed feet just to extinguish the air. And the difficulty of exhalation lead to a slow form of suffocation. Oh, yes, what a word crucifixion – fastening to a cross – is!

Friends, today, I want to suggest to you that as bad as the physical agony of the cross was for our Lord Jesus Christ, the worst part of his crucifixion was not the difficulty of exhalation that led to a slow form of suffocation. Nor was it the scourging. Nor was it the blood and water that flowed from Jesus' body. The worst part of Jesus crucifixion is seen in 4 statements from Mark 15: (1) Release Barabbas Instead; (2) Hail, King of the Jews; (3) They Hurling Insults at Him; and (4) My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me. But, friends, I also want to suggest to you that these things had to happen for the veil to be torn into and for Jesus to reside in your heart and mine by the power of the resurrection. So, my objective today is very simple. It's to tell you the worst part of the Jesus' crucifixion through these four statements. Think about them today. Think about them tomorrow. Think about them for the rest of the week. Because you cannot fully appreciate "Up from the Grave He Arose," without fully appreciating the fact that Jesus was willing to be forsaken by the Father for you. But when you do, you won't just celebrate Easter one day of the year. You'll celebrate it every day of your life until you see him in glory. 4 statements. The worst part of Jesus' crucifixion. Let's ask the Lord to bless our time in His Word together.

### 1. Release Barabbas Instead (15:6-11)

- **What Is Wrong with the World?** (1) I don't know about you, but that's a question I've been asking a lot lately. Just over the last two weeks, we've read about 2 murders in our community, 3 in one month. (2) There's immorality in our streets, in our homes, in our schools, and in our communities. (3) But the problem with the world is not immorality. Immorality is a symptom of a greater problem: the problem of irreverence. (4) Immorality on our streets is because there is irreverence in people's hearts before God. (5) Mark gives us one statement that tells us what was wrong with the world then and still is today: "release Barabbas instead."
- **Mark 15:6-11** - <sup>6</sup> Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. <sup>7</sup> A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. <sup>8</sup> The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. <sup>9</sup> "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, <sup>10</sup> knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. <sup>11</sup> But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.
- **What Is Wrong with this Picture?** (1) The release of a Jewish prisoner was customary before the Feast of Passover. The Roman prefect clemency to one criminal to show goodwill towards the Jews whom he governed. (2) The choice that Pilate set before them could not be more-clear: Do you want (a) Barabbas – a violent murderer who was clearly guilty? Or a rabbi who worked miracles who was demonstrably innocent? (3) Mark narrates that the crowds wanted to "release Barabbas instead." The other Gospels, however, let us know exactly what the crowd said: (a) Matthew – "Barabbas!" (b) Luke – "Away with this man. Release to us Barabbas." (c) John – "Not this man, but Barabbas."
- **But There's More to This Picture Than You Realize** (1) We were all once Barabbas. (2) We stood guilty before God and deserving of death. (3) But Jesus was chosen to die in our place. (4) And He, the Innocent One, bore the punishment we rightly deserved. (5) Consequently, we, like Barabbas, are granted freedom and clemency and are not condemned. For there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.
- **App** – Only Jesus is big enough to take what is wrong with this world and make it right. And the way he goes about what has gone wrong with the world right again is one heart at a time, moving them from irreverence that produces immorality to reverence that produces righteousness.

### 2. Hail, King of the Jews (Mark 15:16-20)

- **Mockingbird:** (1) My mom had a cassette tape in her Subaru by Carly Simon and James Taylor that contained a song that haunts my memory to this day: Mockingbird. (2) The mockingbird gets its name from its ability to mimic the songs of other birds. But it has a beautiful song of its own. (3) The

soldiers were mocking birds in their own right. However, they didn't sing a beautiful song of their own. (4) They could only insult our Lord Jesus with "Hail, King of the Jews."

- **Mark 15:16-20:** <sup>16</sup> *The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. <sup>17</sup> They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. <sup>18</sup> And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup> Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. <sup>20</sup> And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.*
- **What Is Wrong with This Picture:** (1) One word ties these verses together. It's "mock" in v20. It means "to show contempt through scorn." We think of "mock" as showing contempt by "making light of." But that's not the connotation here. It's outright scorn. (2) They did this in three very important ways: (a) What they did with the purple robe – Purple is a color of royalty. They adorn him with a purple robe to mock him. Then they stripped it off of him and put his bloody shroud back on him. That's Mark way of saying they were "dethroning" him with hostility and scorn. (b) They put a crown of thorns on him – They fashioned this from the thorns of date palms which adorned Jerusalem then and now. It's spikes are thick and hard and grow up to 12 inches long. Moreover, they possess toxins that cause excruciating pain and tissue damage. And they "put" or stuck it to our Lord's head. (c) They said "All, Hail King of the Jews." – Kings were greeted with royal titles. But this one was designed to humiliate Jesus and the Jews alike. It amounted to saying: "is this the best King you can bring forth?"
- **But What Is Wrong with This Picture Is Precisely What God Used to Make Things Right:** (1) In the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned and brought a curse upon the world – for Jew and Gentile (like these soldiers) alike – part of the curse was "cursed is the ground because of you... thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you." (2) The soldiers unknowingly took the object of a curse fashioned it into a crown for the One who would deliver us – all of us – from that curse. (3) Consequently, that is why we now sing, like the real mockingbird, "All, Hail King of the Jews."
- **App:** The very things designed to mock the Lord were the very things he used to make our redemption possibility. That's the wisdom of God. You can rest easy in it.

### 3. They Hurled Insults at Him (Mark 15:27-32)

- **Bad Things Come in Threes:** (1) If you are a superstitious individual, you are convinced that bad things usually come in threes. (2) If your washer goes out, your dryer and the dishwasher is about to follow. (3) If you have to call an exterminator, he can be sure he's going to tell you that it will take three visits to solve the problem. (4) In Gethsemane, three disciples are asleep. Before Jesus was on the cross, the mocked him in a pattern of three. (5) While on the cross, it moved from mockery to insults in a pattern of three. (5) All of which denotes that Jesus completely rejected by mankind.
- **Mark 15:27-32** - <sup>27</sup> *They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left.* <sup>[28]</sup> <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>29</sup> *Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup> come down from the cross and save yourself!" <sup>31</sup> In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself!" <sup>32</sup> *Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.**
- **What is Wrong with This Picture:** (1) Those who passed by hurled insults at him: That's important because they were in Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus was crucified outside the city. That means they were going into the city to make sacrifices while insulting the ultimate sacrifice. (2) The Chief Priests and Scribes hurled insults at him: They acknowledge that his miracles that healed – which they were looking for in light of Isaiah's prophecy about what the Messiah would do (Give sight to the blind, etc.). But then they say, "that we may see and believe" (implying they didn't). (3) Then the criminals join in the chorus – Mark tells us they "heaped" insults on him. They piled them one upon another. Over and over and over.
- **But, Oh, What A Miracle That Would Occur in the Midst of the Ridicule:** (1) Luke tells us there was one thief who stopped the insults, thought about his life and his soon to be death, and said "Lord remember me in your kingdom." (2) Can you imagine that guy when he got to the pearly gates? Peter: "what are you doing here?" Thief on the cross: "I don't know." Peter: "then why are you here?" Thief on the cross: "Because the man on the middle cross said today you will be with me in paradise."
- **App:** We are that thief on the cross. The only reason we can even get through the pearly gates is because the man on the middle cross said we could come.

### 4. My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me? (Mark 15:33-34)

- **Where Were You, God? Why Has God Forsaken Me?** - (1) I emphasize with those who feel that way because they are their feelings. (2) But the reality is that there is only one person in this history of the world that God the Father turned his back on in his darkest hour: Jesus.
- **Mark 15:33-34** - <sup>33</sup> *At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>34</sup> And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").*
- **The Worst Rejection Was the Last One:** (1) In chs. 14-15, Mark paints the picture of Jesus completely alone. The disciples fled. The crowds ridiculed. The soldiers mocked. Now the Father forsakes. He turns away. His presence cannot be there with Jesus in his darkest hour.
- **But Nothing is Wrong with This Picture:** The Father cannot look upon sin. He can't do it. And at that moment, Jesus, with his hands and feet nailed, his elbows and shoulders dislocated, his diaphragm compromised, his lungs filled with air unable to escape, his body pierced, was abandoned by the Father so you wouldn't be abandoned! That's how much the Father, the Son, and the Spirit love you.
- **App:** But praise be to God the veil was torn. For it was finished. Finished on the cross. Finished by fastening to a cross. Finished by crucifixion.