

# Crucify Him

Mark 15:1-15

Justin Deeter – November 12, 2017



He came to teach us, but we closed our ears. He came to heal, but we abused him. He came to give us life, but we gave him death. He came in love, and we responded in hate. Though Jesus came to do us good, we did him harm. Yet, in the sovereignty of God, he takes evil and makes it good. Though the arrest, trial, and execution of Jesus shrieks of injustice. God takes this wicked act and brings about redemption for his people. All of the Gospel of Mark has been building up to this moment—the moment in which the Son of Man would give his life as a ransom for sinners.

Last week we saw the midnight sham of a trial put on by the Jewish leaders. As the trial imploded due to lack of evidence, Jesus gave them what they wanted and he gave them the truth about himself. Jesus told them that he was the Son of God and the promised Messiah. The crowd erupted in fury over this confession. For them, such a blasphemy deserves the death penalty, and the bloodthirsty crowd turned into a lynch mob as they abused Jesus. However, there was just one little problem. The Jewish leaders didn't have the authority to give out a death penalty. Any form of capital punishment had to be authorized by the Roman authorities. This meant that the religious leaders had to get the death sentence approved by Pontius Pilate.

Today, as we encounter Mark 15:1-15, we will see Jesus receive the sentence of crucifixion at the demand of the crowd and at the authorization of Pilate. As we enter into Mark 15, the sorrow of Christ's sufferings begin to overwhelm. We meditate upon Christ's sufferings and death. Today we will discover three truths about Jesus' suffering. At the hour of his crucifixion, we continue to learn about the significance and purpose of his death.

# 1. Jesus Suffers without Resistance

The first truth we observe this morning is that Jesus suffers without resistance. As Isaiah predicted, he is like a lamb being lead to the slaughter. He did not open his mouth. He was silent before his shearers. We saw that at the midnight trial Jesus stayed silent before the lying tongues. Here now, Pilate is astonished at Jesus' unwillingness to defend himself.

As the Sanhedrin, the council of Jewish leaders, brings Jesus before Pilate that morning, Pilate is skeptical. Pilate was the Roman governor of the province of Judea. As a Roman governor, the empire only wanted you to accomplish one goal—keep the peace. The Romans tried to leave as much of the cultural and religious practices continue after they conquered new lands in order to keep the peace. Pilate's job is to prevent any riots from tacking place. He's in Jerusalem in order to prevent an uprising during the Jewish celebration of Passover.

So as the Jewish leaders bring Jesus forward to Pilate to authorized his execution, he's skeptical. He senses that this has nothing to do with a political uprising, but rather a religious quarrel. So Pilate, almost mockingly, asks him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus responds simply, "You have said so." As Pilate watches Jesus' silence he's dumbfounded. Jesus doesn't appear to be a political revolutionary that will lead a rebellion against Rome. Pilate knows that at the core, the Jewish leaders are threatened by Jesus' influence and they are envious of him. As Pilate listens to the parade of inconsistent charges brought against Jesus, he knows that they have no ground, which is why he is astonished that Jesus will not defend himself. "Have you no answer to make?," he said, "See how many charges they bring against you." But the text tells us in v. 5, "Jesus made not further answer, so that Pilate was amazed."

Have you every thought about why Jesus was silent before his accusers and why he wouldn't defend himself? After all, if he resisted in the slightest, it sounds like Pilate was ready to come to his defense. Yet, Jesus doesn't speak. Why? To understand, we must look back to the garden of Gethsemane in Mark 14:48-49, "And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." Jesus suffers silently and without resistance so that the Scripture's might be fulfilled.

Jesus understands that what is about to happen to him is foreordained by God. Before the very foundations of the earth, God planned to redeem sinners through the death of his Son. Jesus suffers in obedience to his Father's will and to fulfill the prophets. As we read the Gospel of Mark, we see that Jesus doesn't avoid the cross, but rather intentionally puts himself in the path of the cross.

Think about this for a second; if we see suffering on the horizon, we do everything within our power to avoid it. If we were in Jesus' position we'd be calling our lawyers and demanding a false trial! We would defend ourselves against unjust accusation. We'd call our opponents liars so that we might be able to escape the cross. However, Jesus doesn't do that at all does he? Rather, he keeps his mouth shut without resistance, so that the divine plan of God might be fulfilled. Jesus suffers silently because he loves us.

However, Jesus' temptation at the cross goes far beyond what you and I could fathom. As Hebrews tells us, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." [FN](#) However, I'm convinced that Jesus experienced more temptation than any of us will ever experience. Why? Because Jesus had the power to escape suffering simply by opening his mouth. Remember in Gethsemane when Peter cuts off a guy's ear? Jesus told him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" [FN](#) You see, at any moment not just during the trial but during the crucifixion itself, Jesus could have given the word and been free from his sufferings. Jesus, as the son of God, wielded infinite divine power. Yet, he restrained himself from using it. Through the mockery of this trial and through the excruciating sufferings of the cross, Jesus suffered without resistance, so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

Look at his courage and self-control! Look at the love of Christ for you! Look at his obedience to his Father! Look at his righteousness even in the face of incomprehensible suffering! Jesus does all of this for us. He keeps his mouth shut for you. He suffers without resistance to save you, to pay the penalty for your sins, to fulfill his Father's glorious plan of redemption.

This leads us into the second truth we must discover about Jesus' sufferings, he suffers in your place.

## 2. Jesus Suffers in Our Place

Though Pilate believes that Jesus is innocent, he realizes that he could very well have a riot on his hands if its not careful. Pilates one goal is to keep the peace. In order to pacify the crowd and make an attempt to rescue Jesus from the blood-thirsty crowd, Pilate offered to release a prisoner, a custom that was often done during the feast to win the favor of the people. As his custom, Pilate offered to free Jesus in honor of the Passover. However, the chief priests agitated the crowds and stirred them up, demanding that they free Barabbas and execute Jesus.

Who was Barabbas? Barabbas was a criminal who had committed robbery, murder, and insurrection. He was a social revolutionary who engaged in guerrilla tactics to victimize the wealthy, particularly the Romans. Because of this, he had gained quite the admiration of the common people. However, the difference between Barabbas and Jesus are sharp. Barabbas deserved his upcoming death; he was a convicted guilty criminal. Jesus was innocent. Yet, we see the crowds insistence, spurred on by the religious leaders, to free Barabbas and crucify Jesus! The blood curling scream of the crowd to free Barabbas and crucify Jesus took Pilate by surprised. Pilate inquires, "What wrong has he done?" However, the unrelenting crowd would not back up. In order to keep the peace, Pilate killed the Prince of Peace.

As we look at the Scriptures, we see ourselves in Barabbas and the purpose for which Christ suffered. Jesus died in the place of sinners. He took on the punishment that we deserved. Though he was innocent, he took on the wrath of God for our sin. Jesus' death is a substitutionary death, meaning that he dies in the place of sinners. As Paul tells us in Galatians, "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"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."<sup>1</sup> As it is written, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 3:13-14

while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”<sup>2</sup> You see, just as Jesus told us he would, he has come to give his life as a ransom for many.

You see, this is the very essence of Christianity. Indeed, if you miss this, I’m afraid you’ve completely missed it. Before you can become a Christian you must realize that you are Barabbas—a rebel who has led an insurrection against the God of the universe. The Bible states that every human being is a sinner, and because of our sin we deserve God’s just judgment. Meaning, that like Barabbas, we sit on death row. God has tried and convicted us. Left in our sinful rebellion, at our deaths we face eternal punishment from God in a place called hell.

However, by God’s great love for us, he sent his son to take our place. Just as Barabbas was set free so that Christ would die, you and are are set free as Jesus takes our place. We receive life and freedom, Christ receives death and punishment. This is how we know the love of God, that he sent his only begotten son for rebellious sinners like us! Even though we are ungodly, Christ has died for us!

As a Christian, you must come to terms with your own sinfulness and see your need for a savior. Have you come to grasp your need for a savior? Christianity isn’t for the righteous, but the unrighteousness. A true Christian isn’t puffed up with self-righteousness, arrogance, or pride, rather you must see yourself as helpless, poor, and unrighteousness. Only when the Spirit helps you to see yourself as you are, will you see the glory of what Christ has done for you! In love, he has stepped into your place. Even though you’ve rebelled against him, though it was your voice that joined into the bloody chant of the crowd “Crucify him, crucify him,” yet Christ in love for you has laid down his life for you.

This leads us to our third truth about Jesus’ suffering.

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 5:6-8

# 3. Jesus Suffers at Our Demand

Not only must we see ourselves in the place of Barabbas, but we must see ourselves numbered in the crowd. It's easy to distance ourselves from the horror of this scene. As Pilate offers Jesus' freedom, the chant of the crowd gets louder and louder—"Crucify him." Even when Pilate resisted saying "Why, what evil has he done?" The crowd shouted all the more, "Crucify him." The crowd would not be satisfied until Jesus was dead. So Pilate, wishing to keep the peace, begrudgingly gives Jesus over to be crucified.

Throughout her history, Israel's pattern was to shoot the messenger. When a prophet arrived on the scene that proclaimed a message from God they did not like or who convicted them to much of sin, they killed him. Rather than receive the word of God, they killed the prophets of God. In the Old Testament, God graciously continues to send faithful prophets heralding a message of judgment and salvation in order to reach his people. Each time the prophet is rejected, cast out, and killed.

Do you remember the parable of the wicked tenants back in Mark 12? Jesus tells the story as judgement upon Israel. Jesus tells us a man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, a dug a pit for a wine press. He rented it out into the hands of tenants to work it for him. During harvest season, the owner sends a servant to collect, and they beat him and send him back. The master sends a few more servants, all with the same result—some they beat, some they killed. Finally, the master gets an idea. He thinks, "If I send my son, surely they would listen to him. Yet, because they wanted control of the vineyard, they conspired to kill the son, thinking that if they kill him they will gain inheritance of the vineyard. So they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

With the shrieking cries for Jesus' crucifixion, we hear just how right Jesus' parable turned out to be. Because the religious leaders were envious of Jesus, his ministry, and his following, they riled up the crowd to order his execution. Because the religious leaders wanted control and they disliked the teaching of Jesus, they conspired to kill him. Just as Israel had always done, they killed their prophets.

In Matthew, during Jesus' final week of life, he records Jesus' lament over Jerusalem,

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' "*<sup>3</sup>

Though Christ comes as the true prophet of God, we've rejected him, killed him, and stoned him. You might be thinking, well I've never wanted to kill Jesus! But, our idolatry is a sinful rebellion against the true king. When we harden our heart against the word of God, our voice joins in the chorus that demands the death of Christ. In humility, we must recognize that had we been among the crowd that day, we would have followed the coalition of death. We would have gone along with the crowd and followed the suggestion of the religious leaders to cry out "Crucify him!"

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, Peter and the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. There Peter proclaims these powerful words,

*"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."*<sup>4</sup>

You killed him. I killed him. Your voice and my voice is there among the scoffers of Christ. His blood is on our hands. Though he came to show us the way of life, we showed him the cross. Though he came to bring us to the Father, we brought him to Golgotha. Though he came to bring his kingdom, we hung the king upon a cross. However, by the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, Jesus by his death brings us to the Father. Unbeknownst to the religious leaders and to the bloodthirsty crowd, God was founding his kingdom through the sufferings of

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 23:37-39

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2:22-23

the cross. As Jesus suffers silently the horrors of crucifixion he does so in love for you and me. He dies for the very people who demands his death.

## Final Thoughts

*We've seen that Jesus suffers without resistance*, in order to fulfill the Scriptures and the will of his Father. Jesus sets out to accomplish the plan of redemption in order to love us and save us through his death.

*We've seen that Jesus suffers in our place*. Just as Jesus took the place of Barabbas and gave him his freedom, so too does Jesus take our place upon the cross. He dies for us and on our behalf.

*We've also seen that Jesus suffers at our demand*, meaning that our voice joins the angry mob demanding his crucifixion. It was our sin that sent him to the cross, and his blood is on our hands.

Yet, by the grace of God, he extends love and forgiveness to us all. If you do not know Christ, the invitation is simple. Do not reject Jesus any longer. Confess your sins, repent of your sins, and trust in Jesus as your savior and lord. In love, Christ has done this for you. He suffers without resistance in order to bear the burden of your sin. Trust in him today.

For those of us in Christ Jesus, may we press further into our need for Christ and may we be on guard of ever becoming like the religious leaders. May we humbly confess our sins to one another, and remind ourselves that our only hope is in Christ Jesus. May we be humble enough to receive the word of God with open ears and open hearts. May we not recapitulate the pattern of Israel by killing our prophets. But rather, may we listen carefully to the word of Christ. May we bask in the love that he has for us, and may we proclaim the good news of Christ's sufferings to the rest of the world. Even though our voice had joined in the crowds demand to crucify Christ, we now give him glory and worship as the resurrected king. For Christ has died for us, and in his life we now live.

