

Mrk60 – Does The Cross Move You? – Mark 15:21-32

My teaching Mentor is a man I'll never meet –
His name is R. Kent Hughes

& I can't help but borrow some of his Great Material
AS we approach our text today

Crosses are SO MUCH a PART of our culture today
that we are generally NOT Moved by them

Most often don't even notice a cross

But we've GOT to shake ourselves OUT
of that "Cultural Response" to the Cross

We CAN'T Become NUMB to the Cross

The Immense & Unimaginable SUFFERING
of Jesus on the Cross

Has to be the Greatest Sign
of his Immense & Unimaginable - LOVE for US

Thru the suffering of Jesus on the cross
we see the DEPTH, of the heart of God – For us

Let's Pray

Jesus had already **suffered greatly**

PRIOR to **Pilate** **turning** him **over** to be **crucified**

- Jesus **FACED** this **cup** of **suffering** in **Gethsemane**
 - He was **Beaten** during the **Arrest**
 - **Beaten**, **Spat** upon, & **Taunted** when he was before **Caiaphas**
 - **Scourged** by **Pilate** bringing him **near death**
 - Then **mocked** by the **Roman soldiers**, a **crown** of **thorns**
beaten into his **skull**,
 - & **then** more **ridicule**, & **Spit**, **mixing** with **Blood** running down
his **face** from the **beatings**
-

& **only THEN** did Jesus **BEGIN**

the “**Way of Sorrows**” – on the “**Via Dolorosa**”

& we **pick it** up **there**

Just **AFTER Pilate** had **ordered** Jesus **Crucified**

Mark 15:21 (NLT)

21 A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.)

Simon of **Cyrene** - was a **foreigner** (North Africa)

Most **likely** just **finishing** a **long journey**
to **celebrate** the **Passover** in **Jerusalem**

& most likely having NO IDEA - Who Jesus even WAS

All he knew was – this was NOT
how he intended to Celebrate Passover

But something happened to Simon
the day he was chosen - to carry the cross for Jesus

There are signs – in both Acts 13 & in Rom 16

that Simon, his Wife, and his son Rufus - MAY have all
Become CENTRAL Figures - in the Birth of the NT church

& IF that is the case – it HAD to be
In RESPONSE to THIS incredible moment

Jesus would have trudged - beaten beyond recognition
& covered in blood - in the center of FOUR Roman Soldiers

Initially shouldering a Cross-Beam
far heavier than a man so close to death could carry

In front of Jesus – one soldier carried the sign
“JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS”

& Jesus would've been led
on the longest possible route

In order for Rome - to instill FEAR
in all who witnessed it

& Finally - Mark 15:22 tells us (NLT)

22 And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means “Place of the Skull”).

But **Jesus was** already **close** to **death**

& so - Mark 15:23 says (NLT)

23 They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it.

Jewish history says that **women** would **be at**
the **execution place** – following **PROVERBS 31:6**

Which says, ***“Give strong drink to the one who is perishing”***

But **Jesus refused** it

Jesus rejected ANY **Form** of **RELIEF** for his **Suffering**

because he **HAD to take**
the **Full Wrath** of **God** - **FOR our Sin**

So that WE would **NOT have** to take - **ANY** of **God’s Judgment**

He had to **bear** the **Full Weight**
& the **Full Penalty** - that **ALL** of **OUR Sin Deserved**

& So **finally** – **Simon the Cyrene** – **THREW DOWN** the **cross**
that he **Didn’t THINK** was **his** to **bear**

(**even** tho **Jesus** was **about** to DIE on that **cross** –
FOR Simon the Cyrene – **AND for Us**)

& we read in Mark 15:24(a) (NLT)

24 Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross . . .

**Spikes were driven thru his wrists –
sending lightning bolts of pain thru his body**

**Then his knees were slightly bent
& a single Spike driven thru BOTH Feet**

**& then the cross was raised
& DROPPED into a hole in the ground**

With a Gut-Wrenching THUD
which would BEGIN the Agonizing Process of Death

**Medical professionals have often tried to describe
the intensity of the PAIN - of Death on the Cross**

The weight of the body – hanging by nails driven thru
the crucial nerves in the wrists and feet

made every moment excruciating

**& then – in order to breathe
Jesus would have to LIFT his weight against those spikes**

every time sending a Thousand Volts of pain thru his body

But he **HAD TO push his body up -
In order to get AIR into his lungs**

& so - With the White Hot Fire of PAIN
consuming every inch of his body

with every breath - Jesus moved closer to death

Let me Paraphrase

What C.S. Lewis wrote about his moment

C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (paraphrased)

Jesus created the universe, already seeing the buzzing cloud of flies around the cross, his own flayed back pressed against the splintered stake, the nails driven through the medial nerves, the repeated suffocation as the body droops, the repeated torture, time after time, as his body is wrenched up, for each breath's sake. If I may dare the biological image, God is a "host" who creates His own parasites, that we may rely on him to live. Herein is Love. This is the diagram of Love Himself, the inventor of all Loves.

Jesus Christ Died on the Cross

To ALLOW US – to LIVE in Him - (the parasite & the host)

Does the Cross MOVE YOU?

The Cross reveals the Love of God FOR YOU
like nothing else in all the universe does

The <u>HORROR</u> - & the <u>INTENSITY</u> of <u>the Cross</u> <u>SCREAMS OUT</u> to us – that <u>God</u> <u>LOVES US</u>
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**Has seeing God-in-the-flesh – on the Cross
Dying in your place – EVER MOVED YOU?**

**Are we MOVED by the idea
Of the Lord of all creation**

**Submitting Himself to the Brutality
of DYING on the cross - Out of his Love - FOR US**

& then Mark 15:24(b) says (NLT)

24 . . . They divided his clothes and threw dice to decide who would get each piece.

Psalm 22 was written 1,000 years before Christ

**& 700 years before Crucifixion
was first used by ROME**

Psalm 22:14–18 (NLT)

14 My life is poured out like water (the spear), and all my bones are out of joint (Crucifixion). My heart is like wax, melting within me. (easily describes what happens to the heart)

15 My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead.

16 My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

17 I can count all my bones (no bones broken). My enemies stare at me and gloat. (definitely happening)

18 They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing. (exactly what happened)

An incredible description
of the DETAILS of Crucifixion

Written 700 years
before it began to be used by Rome

Mark 15:25-26 (NLT)

25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him.

26 A sign announced the charge against him. It read, "The King of the Jews."

John Ch 19 tells us
the Religious Leaders DEMANDED over & over

that Pilate CHANGE the sign to say
"He CLAIMED to be King of the Jews"

But in John 19:22 (NLT)

22 Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

& Pilate used the "Perfect" verb tense

meaning this is a PERMANENT
UNCHANGABLE thing

Jesus of Nazareth – Dying on the Cross
like the most humiliated criminal

is NAMED Eternally – "The King of The Jews"

This King of the Jews – is the King of Heaven

& one day – will be the Returning King
who will RULE & REIGN over Heaven & Earth

& HE IS DYING on the CROSS – to Save US

This Image – MUST MOVE US

Mark 15:27-30 (NLT)

27 Two revolutionaries (criminals) were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

29 The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. “Ha! Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days.

30 Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!”

BUT – Jesus COULDN’T come down from the cross

NOT because the Nails - held him there

But because GOD’S LOVE for YOU - held him there

& it seems – that dying on the cross
in our place - wasn’t enough

Jesus also had to face - OUR Mockery of him

You might say,

“Oh, if I were there, I wouldn’t have done THAT”

**BUT – these people hurling insults at Jesus
AS HE was DYING for them**

Is a **PICTURE** – of **OUR Sin Nature**
And of GOD’S Unconditional LOVE for us

& the **Religious Leaders** also **did THEIR PART**
In the **final humiliating** of Jesus

Mark 15:31-32(a) (NLT)

31 The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself!

32 Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!” . . .

**Don’t we KNOW someone
who **STILL SCOFFS** at Jesus like this?**

**Have we ever BEEN someone
Who SCOFFS at Jesus like this?**

**For the most part - Jesus On the CROSS - Didn’t MOVE
Either **the Crowd** - OR – The **Religious People****

**AND - For the Most Part – Jesus On the CROSS
DOESN’T MOVE people today**

WHY?

Maybe - Because we don't understand

HOW REAL – HOW HORRIFIC - & HOW REQUIRED
the **Cross WAS** – for **OUR Eternal Life**

In a 17th Century – Puritan Devotional Book - by Lewis Bayly

Is a conversation
between the SOUL of a Man - & The Lord Jesus

Listen to the conversation
As **I read it – UPDATING** the **King James English**

It's a **series of Questions & Answers**
Between The SOUL - & the Resurrected JESUS

SOUL: Lord why would you be taken, when you could have escaped your enemies?

JESUS: So that your spiritual enemies would not be able to take you, and cast you into the prison of utter darkness.

SOUL: Lord, why would you be bound?

JESUS: That I might loose you from the bondage of your sins.

SOUL: Lord, why would you be lifted up on the cross?

JESUS: That I might lift you up to Heaven with me.

SOUL: Lord, why were your hands and feet nailed to the cross?

JESUS: To enable your hands to do the works of righteousness, and your feet to walk in peace.

SOUL: Lord, why would you have your arms nailed stretched out wide?

JESUS: That I might embrace you more lovingly, my sweet soul.

SOUL: Lord, why was your side opened with a spear?

JESUS: That you might have a way to come near to my heart.

When we **imagine having** this **conversation** with **Jesus**,
Does it MOVE US?

When the **Cross Occupies our Heart & our Mind**
Does it MOVE US?

We must NOT become NUMB to the Cross

<p><u>Because</u> – in the <u>Agony of the Cross</u> Is the <u>Epitome of God's Love</u> - for us</p>
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& **so finally** – **we return** to the **two criminals**
Who were **crucified** with **Jesus**

Mark 15:32(b) (NLT)

32 . . . Even the men who were crucified with Jesus ridiculed him.

Yes, **they did** – **initially**

Just as **we have** – in **some way** – at **some time**

BUT THEN – **something happened**
to **ONE** of these **Criminals**

& it is something that MUST Happen
inside each one of us

IF WE DESIRE to spend an Eternity in Heaven with God

Luke 23:39–43 (NLT)

39 One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”

40 But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die?”

41 We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.”

42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

43 And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

And in a few hours – that promise from Jesus
became TRUE – for THAT Criminal

Doesn’t it seem clear

That the Two Crosses – with the Two Thieves

Represent the CHOICE that each of us - must make?

We all BEGIN the SAME with Jesus

ROMANS Ch 3 says

“No one is righteous, not even one”

“For we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s standard”

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

THAT is what was happening on Calvary that day

Jesus was DYING for these Two Sinners

But **only ONE Received the Life**

That **Jesus was DYING to Give him**

**Somehow – this One Criminal was MOVED
BY Seeing Jesus on the cross**

& **suddenly it hit him**

“this man IS who he says he is”

& **AS he was dying – he put his Faith**

in **WHO Jesus WAS - Hanging on that Cross**

& **HE Put his Faith**

in **WHAT Jesus was Doing there**

He was MOVED By the CROSS -

Just in the Nick of Time

Have YOU been MOVED by the Cross?

**Please – Don't be made NUMB to the Cross
by our culture**

**Don't be made NUMB to the Cross
By some past experience with Religion**

**Take in the image – of God in the Flesh
Dying FOR YOU on the Cross**

& then Decide

**Does the Cross MOVE YOU
To put your FAITH in Jesus Christ - Today**

Let's Pray