

Mark 15:1-20

As we begin tonight, I just want to remind you that we are growing ever closer to the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. It's now about 3-4 hours before He finds Himself suffering for the sins of the world.

To bring us up to speed here in our study tonight we might remember that last week was really a study on two individuals and how they handled the trials of life that they found themselves in.

Our Lord Jesus was seen to stand in the immense pressures of a hatred so intense that the religious leaders broke numerous oral traditions in order to try and find accusations against Him. To just name a few of these traditions they broke they had chosen to place Jesus on trial in the night, they were doing so without any evidence, they did so without allowing the Lord to speak for Himself, none of the witnesses agreed and the list goes on.

And at the end of the trial they came to the conclusion that the Lord Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and the penalty for that was that He should die.

As Jesus went through this we talked about how He had prepared Himself previously while He was in the garden. He was looking to the Father for strength, He was seen submitting Himself to the will of God, He was seen putting on his spiritual armor for the task that was coming His way.

And then we had Peter and if you remember Peter was self-confident and cocky as the Lord had informed the disciples that they would all scatter when the Shepherd was struck. Peter had looked around and

said “they all may abandon you but I would never do such a thing as I am ready to die with you”

Peter if you remember was asked to keep watch by the Lord on three separate occasions...He was asked to pray during these times and each time the Lord Jesus came back He found Peter, James and John fast asleep.

We then saw Peter run away after the Lord was arrested...and then in our text last week we saw Peter following Jesus at a distance, trying to stay incognito as he warmed himself by the fire of the enemy.

Peter was then confronted three separate times and asked if he was associated with Jesus or not and each of these three times he denied knowing the Lord.

Peter then left a broken man as the rooster crowed a second time and he realized what he had done.

At this point in the narrative Jesus has had little to no sleep, we were told last week in our study that he had been blindfolded, beaten and spit upon, He has been whisked through two trials and then we come to verse 1 of chapter 15 which says this **Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.** If you remember last week I gave you a handout that listed the 6 trials of Jesus and I mentioned that Mark will focus in and give detail on 2 of those trials being the 2nd trial with Caiaphas the high priest that had been removed by the Romans and the 6th trial which will have Jesus before Pilate and we'll get to that in just a few minutes.

Here in verse 1 we have mention of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in an early morning trial which is the 3rd trial of 6 that Jesus faced and you can get the details of this over in Luke 22:66-71. More than likely they did this as a formality knowing that in order for a trial to be official it had to be done during the daytime.

And so you can imagine that first thing in the morning they are up and dragging Jesus out before them...If you read the account from Luke they questioned Him again and this time Jesus responded that no matter what He said they wouldn't believe Him anyways. They then asked Jesus if He was the Son of God to which He responded truthfully saying that He was and they then once again determined that He was guilty and they had heard it from His own mouth.

We are then told that they took Jesus to Pilate which would be the 4th trial Jesus went through and you might notice that they bound Jesus before doing so. I don't think that was really necessary at this point as Jesus showed no signs whatsoever of attempting to escape in this situation. We might remember that Jesus could have stopped this whole thing from happening had He chosen to do so. We know our Lord knew the cross was in His future and He embraced it with joy knowing that His sacrifice would bring about our salvation.

Now we might ask who was Pontius Pilate the man that Jesus was brought before. Pilate was the Roman governor over the province of Judaea and was responsible for keeping order, maintaining taxes and having judicial authority. One of his primary tasks was to make sure that the Jewish people were kept in check and that no uprisings took place.

If you remember from our study last week we said that the Jewish people had lost the right to put criminals to death as it had been taken by the Romans...In the case of Jesus we might remember that what they had found Jesus guilty of was blasphemy. The real problem with this was that the Romans didn't have the same standards as the Jewish people did. They had many gods that people worshipped and someone claiming to be a god was not a crime worthy of punishment in their eyes.

Now I'm going to read to you from the Gospel of Luke so you can get a feel for how the charges against Jesus changed from when He was before the Jewish leadership to the time that He was brought before Pilate...Listen to what Luke 23:1-5 says...**Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. ² And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."**

³ Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered him and said, "It is as you say."

⁴ So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man."

⁵ But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

So notice that the charges against Jesus have changed now. They accuse Jesus of perverting the nation, opposing the paying of taxes to Caesar and even saying that He Himself is a king. Now Jesus of

course was a King and we'll get to that before too long in our text in Mark but you might just remember that Jesus had taught not that long ago that if taxes were owed to Caesar then to Caesar they should be given. Jesus was not an insurrectionist, He showed no signs of coming against the Romans and yet here in this case the Jewish leaders are twisting things to try and make it so Jesus can be put to death.

Ok let's turn our attention back to the Gospel of Mark and look at verse 2 which says this ²Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered and said to him, "It is as you say." In Pilate's mind of all the accusations brought against Jesus the one that needed to be most understood and worked through was their accusation that Jesus was claiming to be a king. This would be in direct violation of the way the Romans placed all people under the authority of the Roman emperor. To come against that in any way would bring about death quickly.

I want you to imagine Jesus as He is before this governor. Here the Lord is bound, bloodied and without any group of people with Him to support His cause. The religious leaders of the Jewish people are bringing accusations against Him.

I kind of think as Pilate asked this question that he may have done so in a mocking tone..."You, are you a king of the Jews?" Perhaps Pilate laughed as he said this...I'm sure he wasn't all that impressed with Jesus.

I have a hunch that Pilate very quickly saw through the religious leaders accusations but we'll see in the end Pilate will bend to the will of the people and give them what they want.

I wanted to bring in a detail from the Gospel of John 18:33-38 which builds up this interaction between Jesus and Pilate if you listen to what it says ³³Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

³⁴Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"

³⁵Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"

³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

³⁷Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

³⁸Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

Pilate looked at Jesus and saw Him in a place of weakness and when he questioned Jesus as to whether He was a king or not Jesus responded saying His kingdom was not of this world. I'm so thankful

and I think you are also that the kingdom of God is not found in this world. Our Lord lived with eternity in mind, to please the Father and I'm thankful that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and one day He is going to come back for us.

Jesus did not live that He might have a political or a military kingdom but instead that He might bring to us the kingdom of God and that He might rescue you and I from the cruel kingdom of Satan. One day our King Jesus will return and it is just a matter of time before He does so and makes all things right once again.

Look with me at verses 3-5 of Mark 15 which say this ³**And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.** ⁴**Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!"** ⁵**But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.**

I can imagine that Pilate was not all that impressed with the charges against this man that was before him. And as I said I believe Pilate could see right through their wicked hearts...If Pilate had been more wise he would have dismissed them right way but we should remember that the Jewish leadership had a lot of power and sway as they made decisions. Pilate knew if he kept them happy that the odds were the rest of the nation of Israel would stay in line as well...and so it's a delicate balance that Pilate is trying to keep here as this unfolds.

You might remember last week I read to you from the prophet Isaiah in chapter 53:7 which says this **He was oppressed and He was afflicted,**

Yet He opened not His mouth;

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

You can imagine that charges against Jesus are coming from all over the place and the Jewish leaders are just trying to get anything to stick and then Pilate looks at the Lord and not one word is given in response until he himself directly asks Jesus for a response.

We talked about this last week but what would you do if you were innocent in a matter and you were before the judge? I know I'd make quite the scene in an effort to prove that I had nothing to do with what I was being charged with and yet our Lord is allowing these things to transpire against Him.

Something I would like to bring to your attention is that when a sacrificial lamb was brought to the priests to be slaughtered and offered as a sacrifice there was an inspection that took place of the animal. It had to be deemed as perfect, without spot or blemish, with no defects at all before it was presented before the Lord...I believe as we have these 6 trials of Jesus laid out before us in the Gospels that though the priests rejected the offering of Jesus that you and I can see plainly that Jesus was certainly without fault.

1 Peter 1:18- 19 says this of Jesus when it says ¹⁸**knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers,** ¹⁹**but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

And so as this unfolds before us we can see that Pilate was flabbergasted to see the Lord responded not one word to those that

repeatedly accused Him. His mind was blown that Jesus would respond this way as we are told he marvelled.

In the timeline of Jesus going to the cross we have just seen the 4th trial of Jesus and as we come to this next section just so you have it in mind between verses 5 and 6 of Mark 15 the 5th trial of Jesus takes place before Herod and it's found over in Luke 23:4-12.

When Jesus came before Herod we are told that he was excited to see Him for he hoped that Jesus would do a miracle before him...Herod proceeded to ask Jesus many questions but again we see that Jesus did not respond. It would seem from the text in Luke that the religious leaders were becoming more and more angry as it says they vehemently accused Jesus at this point. They then put a gorgeous robe on Jesus in an act of mockery and sent Him back to Pilate and we were told the two men became friends from this point forward.

Then we come to verse 6 of Mark 15 which begins the 6th and final trial of Jesus when it says ⁶**Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.** The other Gospels agree with what we have here that it was a custom that one prisoner was released at the request of the people during the Passover meal.

Possibly this was done to keep the peace between the Romans and the Jewish people as each year one was allowed to go free. It could have been done as a good will gesture.

Look at verses 7-8 which say ⁷**And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.** ⁸**Then the multitude, crying**

aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them.

Now we learn of a man named Barabbas and apparently he was a famous rebel as we are told here that he was a murderer...Perhaps the Jewish nationalists thought he was a national hero, someone that was willing to stand up to the tyranny of the Romans government...the other Gospels say he was a robber...the idea is he is a bad egg, a man full of sin, someone that doesn't submit to authority and isn't afraid to do things that are just straight up illegal.

Somehow Barabbas had been caught, and I believe that this day that is before us in the text is the day that Barabbas was going to be crucified for his crimes.

And so we have this crowd that has gathered before Pilate, and they are crying out that they want him to release someone as he always does for them.

Look at verses 9-10 which say ⁹ But Pilate answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” ¹⁰ For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. I have to say that Pilate is digging himself a hole as this unfolds. In his mind we are told here that he knew the motive of the chief priests and leaders was one of envy...they are jealous of how Jesus is causing the crowds to follow Him instead of them.

Pilate I would say half-heartedly looks to see Jesus set free but I want to tell you that at this point Pilate had every right and all authority to just go ahead and say to those accusing Jesus that they had no real reason to want Him dead and then see to it that Jesus is released...Pilate sadly has no backbone and we'll see that here in a few minutes.

Pilate's idea of getting out of this situation is to go ahead and allow Jesus to go free and he probably thought the popularity of Jesus among the common people would have been enough to secure that.

Look at verses 11-14 which say ¹¹ **But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.** ¹² **Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"**

¹³ **So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"**

¹⁴ **Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?"**

But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

I wonder how much convincing it took the crowd to sway them to come against Jesus and demand the release of Barabbas? I actually think it didn't take much for many of those that were asking Pilate to allow someone to be released were probably there because they wanted those who came against Rome to go free...Barabbas was that man.

We know from history that the Jewish people desperately wanted to be free from Roman oppression...And so if that was the case who do you think the people will choose to want to be free? A man that refuses to speak up for Himself or someone that is proven to the people as someone that is willing to work against the Roman government?

You know I think the same thing takes place in society today when it comes to people accepting Jesus...I think there are many that look at what they want in life, and what they think they need and the worldly

goals they have and they look at what Jesus offers and they want none of Him.

Many want relief from the temporal problems of the world we live in today and they look at Jesus and say He doesn't do enough for them in the here and the now and they will reject the Lord choosing the ways of this world.

So now Pilate is stuck as the crowd has quickly been swayed to ask for Barabbas to be free...Pilate asks what crime Jesus has committed to which the people simply respond "Crucify Him"

I wonder what went through our Savior's mind as this took place? To hear the world coming against You. To hear the people choose a convicted criminal over One that has been proven innocent. To know that those you love so much have now turned against You. I wonder did Jesus stand tall at this time in His life? I wonder did He look His accusers in the eyes or was His head down as He simply accepted His fate knowing it was in the Father's plan for His life. I don't think Jesus was ashamed so don't get me wrong I just try to put myself in His shoes as these things took place.

How difficult it must have been to know you had done no wrong and to see the world thoroughly reject you.

And then we come to verse 15 which says this ¹⁵**So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.** There are several things to take note of here in this verse. First I want you to notice that Pilate wanted to gratify the crowd. For Pilate it wasn't so much about

doing what was right and honorable but instead it was about how to keep the peace.

Perhaps you have found yourself in the same position as Pilate. You might find yourself surrounded by those who hate the name of Jesus and you have to make a choice as to whether you will stand up for what is good and right and choose to honor Jesus or you choose to honor the crowds.

Pilate with all his power and all his authority is seen here afraid of what man might think of him or do to him. Perhaps he was afraid he would lose his place of authority if he didn't keep the peace.

I want you to know tonight that there will come a time in your life when the rubber will meet the road in your walk with Jesus...The world will eventually confront you over your faith in the Lord and you will have to decide whether you will do what honors Jesus or you will do what honors the world.

Jesus talked about what Pilate was failing in over in Matthew 10:28 which says this ²⁸ **And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.** Pilate failed as he chose to give Jesus over to the will of the people.

The second thing I would like you to take note of is that we are told that Barabbas was released to the people and Jesus was instead delivered over to be crucified.

Now I want to take just a minute to point out to you that there is a very large spiritual picture we can learn from this situation. Jesus essentially takes the place of Barabbas...The innocent is now dying

instead of the one that was clearly guilty. It's my thought that the third cross on the day Jesus was crucified was for none other than Barabbas.

Spiritually speaking Jesus did take the place of sinful man. The Bible teaches us that you and I are the ones deserving of death and damnation for all of eternity. The wages for our sin the Bible says are death...but there is good news and the good news is that Jesus took our sins upon Himself and paid the price that we could go free.

Over in Isaiah 53 again in verses 4-6 the Word says **Surely He has borne our griefs**

And carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed.

⁶ 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.

In the New Testament we are told the following in 2 Corinthians 5:21 which says **²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

And then finally listen to 1 Peter 2:23-25 which says **²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the**

tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Barabbas is a perfect picture of you and I and how Jesus took our place paying the price for us that we might go free.

The third thing I would like you to notice here is that this verse simply says that Jesus was scourged. I'm sure we are all probably familiar with this but to be scourged was similar to being whipped but in a much more aggressive fashion.

The idea was when someone was about to be sentenced that they would take them and scourge them or examine them by beating and what they would do is they would take a leather strap that had several leather strips attached to it and inside of the straps they would weave pieces of bone or metal.

And what they would do is they would take the criminal and they would generally kneel them over a post and stretch out their arms so their back was stretched out before them...they would then begin to whip the individual and as the bone and glass fragments would lash into the skin they would get stuck often times and they would rip away the skin as they pulled the whip back to get ready for another blow. It was not uncommon for a scourging to actually kill a man as it took place. So terrible was damage to the human body that it is said that bones and organs could be exposed.

This helps us understand what we learn in Isaiah 52:14 as it speaks of the Messiah and I'm just going to read it to you from the New Living

Translation **but it says** But many were amazed when they saw him. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.

As a person was scourged it was intended to be a way to find out the full extent of someone's crimes...the idea was that if you confessed your crimes the next lash would be lessened...if you refused to confess what you had done the blows would be magnified...I can imagine many people confessing crimes of all kinds before the beating even began...**and then I want you to think of our Lord, our Savior as He went through this**...the blows came down repeatedly and what did our Lord have to confess? What crimes had He committed? You can imagine the intense rage of the Roman soldiers who beat Him as He stayed silent having done not one thing wrong in all of His life.

Look with me as we move on here at verses 16-20 which say this
¹⁶Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. ¹⁷And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head, ¹⁸and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. ²⁰And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

The Praetorium would have been Pilate's residence when he came to Jerusalem and it was also the place that he passed judgment on legal cases brought before him...and so Jesus is led away to the hall inside and we then see that Jesus was mocked and ridiculed.

It says here that the whole garrison was called together and so the idea is that there are multiple soldiers that come together as this took place.

And really what they do is they dress Jesus up as if He were a king. The color purple was reserved for royalty and it was extremely expensive, this could have been an old worn-out or faded garment that they had...

and then we are told they put a crown of thorns on the head of Jesus, a king would often wear a crown of precious metals. It is interesting that we are told in the book of Galatians 3:13 which says this ¹³**Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)** That’s interesting to me because when you think about thorns how did those come into the world? We are told in Genesis that thorns were a direct result of sin coming into the world, it was part of the curse that came upon the man...and here Jesus bears the thorns upon His head...and surely they smashed this crown upon Jesus causing Him to bleed.

We also see here that they repeatedly said “Hail King of the Jews” It was common for the Roman world to say the phrase “Hail Caesar” and so again they are laughing at Jesus as they do this they are mocking Him they are making this a big joke as they beat our Lord.

After this we can see that they struck Jesus on the head with a reed and you could think of a long bamboo stick or solid piece of wood. Kings would often be given what is called a scepter (my wife has proven to me that I in the past have said this word wrong) which was usually made of gold or some costly metal. You can imagine they

dressed Jesus up as a king and then hit Him over and over with the reed they had given Him.

They also spat on our Lord...and that was one of the greatest insults you could ever do to another person in the ancient world...Finally we are told they worshipped Jesus. Honestly it just makes me mad they did this to our Lord. How dare they mock God, how dare they mock the one that loved them so much that He allowed these things to happen to Him.

Once they had finished their game with Jesus we are told they stripped the robe off of Him and put His own clothes back on Him. I don't want to be graphic here but have you ever had a cut that was somewhat significant and you somehow got some clothing on it or it dried with something stuck to it? And then you had to pull it off? In general what happens is the wound with dried blood then pulls off opening up the wounds once again.

I think we'll stop there for tonight in our study of Mark. Our Lord has been sentenced to the death of the cross. He has been scourged. Jesus was then mocked and beaten and now with His energy levels depleted and His body beaten to a pulp He will have to face the death of crucifixion.

I am always amazed by what the Word says over in Hebrews 12:2 when it says this ²**looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** I know that the joy Jesus experienced while going to the cross was the joy that you and I and all of humanity would have the opportunity to be right with the Father once again because of what

He was choosing to do...but I can't quite comprehend how incredibly torturous and awful the cross was.

To know that Jesus went to the cross with you and I in mind is mind boggling. To see that Jesus loved us so much that He laid down His life on our behalf is incredible. I can't help but have an ever-deepening respect for the love our Savior demonstrated on the cross. I can't help but have a deepening desire in my own life to honor Jesus as I look at all He went through on my behalf.

It's so sad to me that some who name the name of Christ seem to have such little love for Jesus even though He paid such a tremendous price that we might be free from the penalty of sin and have an eternity with the Father.

Today I have to ask you personally...have you received Jesus Christ in your heart for the forgiveness of your sins. Have you accepted that you deserved to die for your failures and that instead of you dying Jesus died to take your place and bear the penalty of sin upon Himself? There is no other way to be right with the Father but through the Lord Jesus...and so if you are here tonight and you know you need to receive the Lord in your heart I would just invite you to cry out to Jesus in your heart as we close in worship and if you need to afterwards come on forward and let me know that today is the day of salvation for your life and I would love to pray with you that you might receive the Lord Jesus in your heart.

Let's pray

Mark 15:1-20 "The One Who Took Our Place"

Cross References

Verse 1

Luke 23:1-5

Verse 2

John 18:33-38

Verses 3-5

Isaiah 53:7

1 Peter 1:18-19

Verse 15

Matthew 10:28

Isaiah 53:4-6

2 Corinthians 5:21

1 Peter 2:23-25

Isaiah 52:14

Verses 16-20

Galatians 3:13

Hebrews 12:2