

## Gospel of Mark 15:1-16:20 – Lesson 14

**We arrive at chapter 15 of the Gospel of Mark** where we will witness the strategic, prophetic fulfillment of God's redemption plan. Every move, from betrayal to burial, fulfills Scripture perfectly. It unveils the extravagant grace of God: Jesus suffered, was mocked, crucified, and buried so we could be fully forgiven, deeply loved, and eternally alive with Him. Jesus faces the world standing against Him. The path that takes Him to the Cross.

### **Mark 15:1-5:**

*"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. Then Pilate asked Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' He answered and said to him, 'It is as you say.' And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, 'Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!' But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled."*

Religious authorities had no legal power to execute under Roman law, so they manipulated the system. Prophecy was unfolding: the Messiah would be "cut off" (Daniel 9:26). Jesus allowed Himself to be handed over, not because He was powerless, but because He was determined to secure your salvation by grace, once for all.

Jesus affirms His kingship but refuses to defend Himself against political charges. He was indeed the King—but not the kind they expected. Grace reminds you: even when wrongly accused, you don't have to fight for your identity. Jesus stood silent because He knew who He was—and you can rest in who you are in Him.

Jesus' silence fulfilled Isaiah 53:7: *"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth."* His quiet dignity was itself a testimony. You don't have to defend yourself against every accusation. Grace frees you to trust that God Himself will vindicate you in due time.

### **Verses 6–8:**

*"Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them."*

It was customary for the Roman governor to release a prisoner at Passover as a political favor to the Jews. Barabbas, meaning “son of the father,” is a fitting counterfeit standing next to the true Son of the Father. Barabbas deserved punishment, yet he was freed. This is a vivid picture of grace: Jesus took our place so that we, the guilty, could walk free.

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### Verses 9–11:

*"But Pilate answered them, saying, 'Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them."*

Pilate recognized the corruption behind the charges but caved to political pressure. The crowd, easily manipulated, chose a murderer over the Messiah. Grace reminds us: people's approval is fickle. One moment they cheer; the next they accuse. Jesus stayed faithful, knowing your eternal acceptance was worth every rejection.

### Verses 12–14:

*"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?' So they cried out again, 'Crucify Him!' Then Pilate said to them, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, 'Crucify Him!'"*

The injustice intensifies. Despite Pilate's own doubts, mob mentality prevails. This was not an accident—this was God's sovereign plan unfolding. Grace shows you that Jesus bore the ultimate injustice so that you could be justified forever. His silent submission brought about your eternal redemption.

### Verse 15:

*"So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified."*

The scourging was brutal—Roman flogging often killed men even before crucifixion. Isaiah 52:14 said He would be marred beyond human recognition. By His stripes you are healed (Isaiah 53:5). Every wound Jesus bore was for our wholeness, health, and restoration. Jesus paid it all.

### Verses 16–20:

*"Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head. Then they began to salute Him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him."*

Purple symbolized royalty. The mocking robe and the crown of thorns are both ironic and prophetic: Jesus is indeed King, and He bore the curse (thorns from Genesis 3:18) for

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humanity. Grace shows that Jesus took the curse so you could wear the crown of righteousness. Even in mockery, God's love was at work, redeeming you from shame.

The soldiers' mock homage highlights humanity's complete misunderstanding of God's Kingdom. This was the Creator being abused by His own creation. Jesus allowed Himself to be mocked so that we would never have to fear rejection again.

Jesus covers your deepest wounds with the acceptance of the Father. The transition from mockery to execution moves swiftly. Every step fulfills the suffering Messiah prophecy of Isaiah 53. Grace teaches we that Jesus bore the shame, the ridicule, and the punishment so we could walk in honor, joy, and eternal life.

### Verse 21:

*"Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross."*

Simon was likely a North African Jew. Rufus is mentioned by Paul in Romans 16:13. Some link this Rufus to be Simon's son, suggesting Simon's family became believers. This divine interruption changed their destiny. Grace reminds us: what feels like an unwanted burden may actually be a divine appointment leading you closer to Jesus and His redemption.

### Verses 22–23:

*"And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it."*

The wine with myrrh was a mild narcotic to ease pain. Jesus refused it—choosing to bear the full conscious weight of humanity's sin without dulling His senses. Jesus held nothing back. He faced every sorrow and every burden fully awake, so you would never face life's pain alone.

### Verses 24–25:

*"And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take. Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him."*

Psalms 22:18 foretold this exact event centuries earlier. Every brutal detail fulfills prophecy exactly. The third hour (9 a.m.) was the time of the morning temple sacrifices. Jesus was stripped so you could be clothed in His righteousness forever (Isaiah 61:10).

### Verse 26:

*"And the inscription of His accusation was written above: **THE KING OF THE JEWS.**"*

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The Roman charge, meant to mock, actually proclaimed truth. Jesus truly is the King—not just of the Jews, but of all who believe. God now declares your true identity through Jesus: you belong to the Kingdom of God, bought by the blood of the King Himself.

### Verses 27–28:

*"With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'" (Isaiah 53:12)*

Jesus' position between two criminals fulfills Messianic prophecy exactly. He stood where sinners stood, bearing what we deserved. Jesus was placed among the guilty so He could rescue the guilty. No matter how far you feel, Jesus met you in your worst to lift you into His best.

### Verses 29–31:

*"And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.'"*

Their mockery twisted His earlier words (John 2:19). Ironically, it was by staying on the cross—not coming down—that Jesus was saving them. Salvation isn't about escaping suffering—it's about Jesus embracing it to redeem you. His love held Him on that cross, not nails.

### Verse 32:

*Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him."*

The leaders unknowingly confessed a deep truth: Jesus *could not* save both Himself and others. To save us, He had to give Himself. Jesus chose to endure every insult, every mockery, because His eyes were set on redeeming you—His beloved.

### Verse 33:

*"Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour."*

From noon to 3 p.m., supernatural darkness covered the land. This was not a solar eclipse. A solar eclipse is impossible during Passover. A solar eclipse is only possible with a new moon, not a full moon. Passover is always during a full moon. The darkness during Jesus'

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crucifixion was **a supernatural event**, not a natural eclipse. It was God's judgment falling on Christ.

### Verse 34:

*"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which is translated, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'"*

Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1, fulfilling prophecy and expressing the real agony of bearing sin. For the first time, He experiences the Father's forsaking because He bore your sin. Jesus was forsaken for a moment so you could be accepted forever. Grace means you will never hear God say, "I have forsaken you."

### Verses 35–36:

*"Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, 'Look, He is calling for Elijah!' Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.'"*

Misunderstanding continued even at the cross. Offering sour wine was mockery and cruelty disguised as help. It is hard for us to understand that even when people mocked Him, Jesus' heart burned only with love for them and for us. This is the truth.

### Verses 37-38:

*"And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."*

Jesus' final loud cry (not a whimper) shows His strength even in death. He chose the moment of His death (John 10:18)—no one took His life. Jesus didn't die defeated; He declared, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Every sin, shame, curse, and judgment was fully paid.

The thick temple veil separated man from God's presence. Its tearing from **top to bottom** shows that God Himself removed the barrier forever. Grace flung the door wide open. You now have full access to the Father's presence—not by your goodness, but by Jesus' perfect sacrifice. Jesus did all this alone without our help. He did not need our help on the Cross and He does not need our help now. It is all paid in full.

### Verse 39:

*"So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, 'Truly this Man was the Son of God!'"*

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A Roman soldier—trained in brutality—recognizes the truth before the religious elite. Even in death, Jesus drew hearts to Himself. Grace wins the hardest hearts. The love and power of Christ on the cross still transform lives today.

### **Verses 40–41:**

*"There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem."*

Women—often marginalized in society—remained faithful when many of the men fled. God honors their devotion, recording their names eternally. God honors faithfulness, not status. Jesus sees every hidden act of love and loyalty—and nothing done for Him is ever forgotten.

### **Verses 42–43:**

*"Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus."*

Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple (John 19:38). His bold action fulfilled Isaiah 53:9—that the Messiah would be with the rich in His death. Joseph stepped forward when others hid, showing that even secret faith can rise boldly when touched by Christ's sacrifice.

As a respected member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea risked his reputation and position by openly identifying with Jesus. Some scholars also suggest that, according to Jewish custom, the responsibility for removing and burying a body typically fell to the closest male relative. While this connection is not definitively proven, it is interesting to consider the possibility that Joseph may have been a relative of Jesus.

### **Verses 44–45:**

*"Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph."*

Pilate's surprise highlights the uniqueness of Jesus' death. Crucifixion victims normally lingered for days. Jesus dismissed His spirit at the precise moment. Jesus was fully in control—even over death. He chose the exact moment to finish the work of salvation for you.

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### Verses 46-47:

*"Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid."*

Every prophecy, every detail of love was fulfilled so you could have absolute confidence in God's faithfulness. The same Jesus who was buried in sorrow will rise in glory—and His resurrection guarantees your new life too.

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Now we come to the end of Mark's Gospel. We will witness the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as we go through chapter 16. The resurrection isn't just history—it's your new reality! God empowers you to live boldly, love deeply, and walk in the power of the risen Christ.

### Mark 16:1-4:

*"Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, 'Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?' But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large."*

These women intended to honor Jesus, still thinking He was dead. Their actions reflect love—but also limited understanding. They had forgotten His promise of resurrection. These women moved toward Jesus in love, and grace unfolded greater miracles than they imagined.

These verses highlight the unwavering devotion of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome despite the dangers and their grief. They prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body, demonstrating their deep love and commitment.

They worried about the impossible: removing the stone. Yet God had already moved the obstacle. While we worry about barriers, God is already working behind the scenes to make a way. An angel rolled away the stone (Matthew 28:2). Not to let Jesus out, but to let witnesses in. His victory is our victory.

### Verses 5-6:

*"And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.'"*

The "young man" is an angel. In Scripture, angels often appear at pivotal moments. His presence affirms that heaven had invaded history decisively.

This is the greatest announcement in human history: **"He is risen!"** The empty tomb is the foundation of Christianity. Jesus triumphs over death! Because Jesus is risen, our hope is alive, our sins are forgiven, and our future is secure.



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### Verse 7-8:

*"But go, tell His disciples—and **Peter**—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you. So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."*

Peter is singled out by name—a powerful message of restoration after Peter's denial. Jesus doesn't discard you when you fall—He calls you by name and invites you back.

Initial fear gripped them, but later bold testimony followed (Matthew 28, Luke 24). God often births courage after awe. Grace turns fear into faith. God's love drives out fear as you behold the risen Savior.

### Verse 9:

*"Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, **He appeared first to Mary Magdalene**, out of whom He had cast seven demons."*

Jesus' first appearance wasn't to political leaders or even His closest male disciples—it was to a once-broken woman, restored by grace. This highlights the deep, personal love of God. Grace honors the humble. Jesus delights to reveal Himself to those the world overlooks. No one is too broken for His love and calling.

### Verses 10–11:

*"She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe."*

Even Jesus' closest followers were crying and still struggling with doubt. They did not believe Jesus was resurrected. This is honest testimony—the resurrection wasn't wishful thinking but shocking reality. Grace meets you even in unbelief. Jesus doesn't shame doubters—He invites them into deeper trust and encounters with Him.

### Verses 12–13:

*"After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either."*

This passage refers to the encounter on the road to Emmaus described in **Luke 24:13–35**. According to the early Christian historian **Hegesippus**, Cleopas was believed to be the brother of **Joseph**, the earthly father of Jesus, which would make Mary of Cleopas the sister-in-law of **Mary, the mother of Jesus** (see **John 19:25**). If this tradition is correct, Cleopas would have been Jesus' uncle, making the Emmaus road encounter not just a resurrection appearance, but a profoundly personal moment within His extended family. Cleopas' story

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serves as a reminder that even in times of sorrow, doubt, and confusion, Jesus draws near to us. He walks with us patiently, opening the Scriptures and guiding our hearts from despair to joy. Christ still journeys with His followers today, leading them gently from confusion into the light of His truth and love.

### Verse 14:

*"Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen."*

Jesus lovingly confronts their unbelief—not to condemn them, but to prepare them for the mighty mission ahead. He believes in you even when your faith wavers.

### Verse 15:

*"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'"*

The Great Commission: global evangelism. The Gospel was never intended to be a private treasure—it is a global rescue mission. Grace gives you a mission filled with joy. You're not trying to earn God's favor—you're announcing that favor to the world through Jesus!

### Verse 16:

*"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*

Belief is the key. Baptism is an outward sign of inner transformation—not the cause of salvation, but a public testimony of it. Grace is received by faith alone. Baptism is a beautiful declaration of your union with Christ, but salvation is by grace through believing in Him.

### Verses 17-18:

*"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

These signs authenticated the early church's message, demonstrating the power of the risen Christ. Supernatural authority is part of God's validation. Grace equips you with the authority of Jesus' name. You walk in divine power—not because of your strength, but because of your position in Christ.

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### Verse 19:

*"So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."*

"Sat down" signifies finished work (Hebrews 10:12). Jesus' mission on earth was complete, and He reigns now as King and High Priest. Grace flows from a finished work. You are seated with Christ (Ephesians 2:6), fully accepted, fully victorious because He has already won.

### Verse 20:

*"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."*

The early believers stepped out in faith—and God confirmed their message with power. The Gospel's advance is unstoppable when partnered with heaven. Grace sends you out in confidence. You don't work *for* God's acceptance—you work *from* His victory, knowing He works mightily through you!