



THE CREED

WHAT WE BELIEVE



4/15/2022 - Good Friday

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Week 6 - "Was crucified, died, and was buried"

As we've studied through the apostles' creed, we've seen a bunch of truths so important that you can't deny them and still call yourself a Christian:

**I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

And tonight, we'll focus in on the truth that: he

was crucified, died and was buried; (in my short message)
he descended to the dead (in Cody's)

And it's strange that this dark truth, that the Son of God suffered and died and was buried, is the place we go for our highest joy. So we'll look at Mark 15 tonight where we'll see this death that brings us life, and this greatest of sorrows that God turned to our greatest of joys.

Because the cross of Jesus is the center of our faith, there's a lot we could focus on, and anything we zero in on means there are other facets neglected.

But tonight we are going to look at the words spoken about Jesus in mockery when he was being crucified. Because, though the mockers didn't know it, they were actually true.

They were the words DA Carson, in his book Scandalous, calls the "ironies of the cross" words they spoke to mock him are words that we speak about him in worship.

The things things they saw as shameful, we see as glorious.

The things that looked like failure to them we see as complete victory.

The things that looked foolish to them, we can now see as infinitely wise.

I. They Mocked the King - Mark 15:21-26

Mark 15 21 And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. 22 And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). 23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. 25 And it was the third hour when they crucified him. 26 And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."

When Jesus was on earth, kings were the most powerful people there were. In our days, most of the royals are just figureheads and symbols, but during Jesus's time on earth they RULED.

There were no constitutions, there was only the power of the king¹. The king was not a politician at all, He ruled over his people and it was unthinkable that the people would tell the king what to do. They were the weak ones and he was the dominant ruler.

So here's Jesus, who claimed to be this great victorious King, on a cross. Some victory! Just days before he had rode into town on his donkey, people were laying down palm branches, rolling out the red carpet if you will, to welcome the king, with cries of Hosanna! (Save us now!)

¹ Carson, D. A.. Scandalous (p. 18). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

The king was coming to town to finally destroy their oppressors and to rule. Or so they thought. But through a series of kangaroo trials, Jesus is condemned to die as the lowliest of criminals, not reign as a king.

So he couldn't be a king, not a victorious one. If he was a king at all he was a failed one, an ousted one.

So they mocked him.

And remember who he is. Jesus is God. He never ceased to be God. He is the one who is worshiped by legions of angels, and here he is being ridiculed by a battalion of soldiers.

In another Gospel, it says they put a scarlet robe on him, which was a way of dressing him like royalty to mock Him. This is the one who, when Isaiah had a vision of him, saw him as the one with a glorious robe, and the train of that robe filled the temple with glory. But he laid aside that robe to take this one.

And they put a crown of thorns on his head, all to mock his claim to be king.

And they said, "Hail king of the jews" and put this inscription above his head that said King of the Jews, to mock him.

But we know now that their words were true – He IS the king. They knew not what they were saying.

The crown they made WAS a kingly crown, that crowned the king of all other kings, who indeed came to be victorious over the peoples' greatest oppressor, their sin and the judgment to come.

They mocked him as the foolish king, but we know that because of the cross, he showed himself to be the infinitely wise king.

Next, they mocked his foolish claim:

II. The Mocked His Claim (Mark 15:27-29)

Mark 15:27 And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. 29 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

Jesus had made what sounded like a foolish claim. In John 2, Jesus had just gone into the temple and flipped over tables, and when they asked him what sign he could perform to show he had the authority to do those things, he said "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19).

This was a totally outlandish thing for Jesus to say. In Jesus day, a major construction project like the temple took more than one lifetime. When big buildings like that were built, the architect never lived to see them completed.

So his claim to be able to rebuild the temple in three days was a claim to power that just didn't exist among people in his day.

And here was the one who claimed to have such great power, up on a cross being crucified. He claimed to have so much strength, but there he was, hanging on a criminal's cross, with his strength draining away.

So what did Jesus mean by that claim?

In the Old Testament days, the temple was the meetingplace between God and man. You would go to the temple to pray, to offer a sacrifice to atone for sins, and at times, God was supernaturally present in the temple.

And because of what Jesus was doing on the cross to bridge the gap between God and man, he was establishing himself as that temple – that place where we could meet God.

And even though they were tearing his body down, three days later He would rise from the dead, to be the living temple of God - the meetingplace between God and man.

So the people are there mocking him, saying, "He said he would tear down the temple and raise it up in 3 days, he claimed to have so much power, and look at him now."

But little did they know that his power was on full display. It was the power to not love his own life, to allow men to torture and kill him, to lay down his life for us. The temple WAS

being torn down on the cross, and three days later, it was rebuilt when Jesus rose from the dead.

So they mock his apparently foolish claim to be a king. They mock his foolish claim to be able to tear down and rebuild the temple.

And they mock his foolish claim to be a conqueror who can save people from their sins

III. The Mock The Conqueror (Mark 15:30-32)

30 save yourself, and come down from the cross!" 31 So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. 32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe."Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

When you were on a cross, there was no hope of getting off.

The cross was designed to torture a person as much as possible and then kill them.

It is easy for us, 2000 years after the cross, with lots of exposure to Christianity, to see the cross of Jesus as a symbol of faith. But in Jesus day, the cross had not yet been given that meaning by Christ, it was an object of horror.

Crosses stood outside the city. They weren't on the roofs of buildings as decorations like they are today. You didn't want them anywhere near your kids, because they were not objects of beauty but of horror. The Roman Cross was a method of torture and execution that had been developed over the centuries to inflict maximum pain and maximum shame on their victims.

And for Jesus, the experience was no different. He didn't use the fact that he is God to diminish the pain, he didn't have any miracle morphine pumped through his veins.

He experienced all the pain, and people mocked saying, "Look, there's the SAVIOR!" He "Saved" all of these people – he healed blind people so they could see. He healed the deaf. He raised the dead.

But none of that could possibly be true because he couldn't even save himself.

And in a sense it was true: He couldn't save himself.

But it wasn't that he didn't have the ability. Jesus never ceased to be God. He could have called those angels that worshiped him and had them destroy those enemies. He could have jumped down off the cross or prevented it from happening. He didn't have to die. So he could have saved himself in that sense.

But Jesus knew that if he saved himself, he couldn't have saved others.

That death on the cross was where Jesus made the great exchange.

He became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. All of our sin and death was put on him, and all of his righteousness and life was given to us on the cross.

If he hadn't died, he wouldn't have been a savior.

His mockers thought, "You can't be a savior if you die." But Jesus knew he couldn't be one if he didn't.

So no, he couldn't save himself, not if he was going to save us.

If I brought one of my kids to the doctor and found out that they had an illness that would end in her death if she didn't get a heart transplant, and I had the option of giving my heart so they could live – that would be an easy decision, "Sure, I love my child, I'll die so they can have life."

Nobody would mock, "He claims to be able to save his kid, but he can't even save himself!" Because they would understand that NOT SAVING MYSELF was THE ACT of saving my child.

But as they mocked Jesus, they spoke some truth, but they knew not what they were saying.

And notice in verse 32 they say, "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe

Little did they know that if he came down from the cross, they would have had nothing to believe in. Sure they would have acknowledged his power as the true king of the universe, but it would have been hopeless – if there was no sacrifice, then there could never be a relationship with that king.

There could only be fear and waiting for his judgment. They said they would only believe if he came down the cross, but he was dying precisely so they COULD believe.

We'll read the rest of this passage, describing his death for us:

Mark 15:32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe."33 And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35 And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." 36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." 37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" 40 There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

Christ made a way - the divider between God and man was torn.

Christ was forsaken so that we wouldn't have to be.

Christ was crucified for our sins, so we could one day reign with Him in glory.

This is the news we need for the dark nights of our souls:

You might think that if God were with you, life would not have gone the way it has. Your career hasn't gone the way you planned. Your marriage hasn't. Your kids haven't. You're not where you would have hoped you would have been by now.

And its true – if we got what we deserved we would be forsaken by God. We have sinned and rebelled against him, we have been his enemies. We did deserve for him to ditch us and leave us to reap all the we’ve sown.

But when Jesus died on the cross, he cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,” so for all eternity we wouldn’t have to cry that.

He was forsaken so we wouldn’t be.

As Christians, we’ll have those “dark nights of the soul” when our doubts go deep – we wonder, “How could God love me,” and “Has God forsaken me”, but in those times we’re to look to the cross where God forsook his son so he could save us.

And this is good news when we know we are sinners.

Jesus uttered a loud cry, “It is finished” and breathed his last, fully paying for our sins.

He finished it for us - he paid the debt for us.

And in light of that, we need to reflect on the depth of our sin and confess that to Him. And we need to reflect on the weight of all he endured for us.

Let’s take some time now to pray silently - confessing our sins, and thanking Him for all He endured on that Good Friday for us.

<<Time of Silent Prayer>>

Prayer of Confession

Father, we are in awe that you sent your son to die for us.

Jesus, we know that on that day, every lash with the whip, the crown, the nails, and the blood were all for us. Forgive us for the sins that held you there.

And forgive us for ever believing that isn’t enough. That we aren’t fully forgiven. That you’re not now fully for us. That you don’t now call us friends, as if your cross were insufficient to pay for all of our sins. We confess that we often join our voices with the

voices of your mockers when we say that you haven't fully conquered, and that there is something we need to add to it: more guilt for us to carry, more penance for us to pay.

Spirit, use the truth of the cross of Jesus to save us. To reassure us. To give us hope in dark times of doubt. To remind us of your love. We believe all of this, so help our unbelief tonight.

Works Cited During the Apostles' Creed Series (This is a Work in Progress)

The Creedal Imperative by Carl Trueman

Christless Christianity by Michael Horton

Christian Apologetics by Cornelius Van Til

This book takes into account the “noetic effects” of sin. That is, sin corrupts our minds and our wills, so that scientific and philosophical proofs alone cannot lead us to God. The need is for the power of the Spirit to overcome the circular reasoning of the secular worldview. This book is a needed addition to the above books because it provides an explanation for how someone becomes savingly convinced of the faith.

The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way by Michael Horton

A unique and refreshing systematic theology that explains the major doctrines of the Christian Faith.

Christian Theology by Millard J. Erickson

This serious systematic theology textbook explores each of the main areas of theology, with a strong biblical foundation and fair treatment of opposing views.

The Deity of Christ edited by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson

To Everyone an Answer, edited by Beckwith, Craig, and Moreland

This book presents the case for God's existence, for Christ, and for miracles. It answers philosophical, cultural, and religious challenges to the Christian faith. 20+ authors each write in an area of their specialty in this edited volume.

The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer

Orthodoxy by G.K. Chesterton

Considered one of G. K. Chesterton's best works and a masterful apologetic, the British critic and philosopher makes compelling arguments here as to the rationale of belief and more. In its Preface, Chesterton writes that the purpose of this book is to "attempt an explanation, not of whether the Christian faith can be believed, but of how he personally has come to believe it."

The Reason for God by Tim Keller

This book answers a number of common philosophical arguments against the existence of God, including the problem of evil. Keller's intelligent and humble approach is helpful for those who doubt, for those who are skeptical, and for the believers aiming to help both see Jesus more clearly.

Reasonable Faith by William Lane Craig

This extensive work builds a case for the Christian faith starting with the existence of God, and then answering the problem of historical knowledge (which is important in proving the resurrection.) From there he explains who Jesus understood Himself to be, followed by an extensive historical proof for the resurrection of Jesus, and refutations of the claims against the resurrection.

Reformed Dogmatics by Harman Bavinck -

This is a four volume work on Christian Theology written by the great Dutch Calvinist theologian.

The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self by Carl Trueman.

This book explains so much of how modern people think of themselves. It expands on the corrupt way of thinking that jettisons the past and strives to find the true self in an unencumbered state of nature as opposed to in glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. This seeking after the self finds its expression in many facets of the sexual revolution, and explains why our culture is the way it is in our day.

Scandalous by D.A. Carson

Signature in the Cell by Steven C. Meyer

Westminster Shorter Catechism

This is one of the greatest summations of the Christian faith ever written by English speaking people.

What we Believe: Understanding and Confessing the Apostles' Creed by R.C. Sproul