



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Mark

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The Real Mission of Jesus

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We just sang our praise to the King of Kings, the King of heaven and earth, and now we are going to bring our offerings to him as we trust him to be the God who provides for all of our needs. Before we pass the buckets, ushers, I just wanted to remind our church that last Sunday was the conclusion of our Global Outreach emphasis. We sent everyone home with a commitment card to be involved in supporting world missions, taking the gospel from our church to the ends of the earth.

This little card was just a thing where we said, "Hey, go home. Think about it. Pray about it. Bring it back this week." I know some of you weren't here. Some of you may have forgotten these cards. They're in the bulletin today, actually. If you would desire to be involved in giving toward missions and global outreach, we want to give you a chance to express that commitment by just dropping that card in the offering as it goes by. We'll celebrate what God's going to do over the next 12 months.

Father in heaven, as we give, I pray that you would be pleased. I pray that you would allow us, God, to be a part of your grand scheme, your wonderful plan of redemption for all to hear and know. God, as we take the gospel to places in the world that have never heard it before, to people who have no access to a church, bible, or missionary. God, I pray that we would be used of you to bring Jesus to them. In his name, amen.

I'm going to ask you to open your Bibles as well to the gospel of Mark, chapter 10. That's what we're doing. We're going through the gospel of Mark, verse by verse. As I was getting ready for this message, I was reading an article this week on the topic of preaching. It was written by one of my favorite preachers. It was a short article and I was just curious to see what he would say, and it was encouraging.

He shared in this article the two things he wants everybody to remember every single time they sit under his preaching and teaching. He said something like, "There are two things I want our people to leave church with every single Sunday." He wants them to remember these two things, and that caught my attention.

I'll share the first thing with you. He said something like, "I want our people to remember what sin does to all of us and the depth of our need for grace." I just said amen to that. Although those of us who have placed our faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins are children of God, we understand that the power of sin is now broken.

We can say no to sin and yes to God through the power that comes from believing in Jesus. Yet the truth is that the presence of sin still remains, doesn't it? We live in a sin-broken, fallen world, and so we desperately still need grace.

Secondly, he said something like, "I want my people to remember the glory of God's provision in the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is no sin that is more powerful than his forgiving, delivering, transforming grace." I just thought, "Wow! That's exactly it! That's the gospel of Jesus." I want to adopt those two goals for my preaching and those two hopes for you every single time you come to church and we open God's Word. That is the good news of Christianity.

Yesterday, we had a men's breakfast right here in this room with a couple of hundred men at the church. Our pastor, Dr. Mark Wilson, spoke to all the men and he said something like, "Guys, I want you to remember a couple of things. First, I want you to remember that on your very worst day, you're still a child of God." That's so good. Then, he said something like, "Yet I also want you to remember this. On your very best day, you still don't deserve it." That's the gospel: the unfailing, unconditional love of God that we don't deserve.

I think our passage today allows us to focus on just that. It gives us an excuse, an opportunity to remember these truths about the love of Jesus Christ, and so we're going to turn right to it. We're going to ask you to stand for the reading of God's Word. This is God, speaking to us through his written, Holy Spirit-inspired Word, and so we stand out of expectation and regard for that. We're going to pick it up in verse 32, because we left off in verse 31 last Sunday.

"And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.'"

God, I pray that you would allow these words to come alive in our hearts. I pray, God, that you will show us what they mean. Show us, God, how they can make a difference in our lives every single day. Help us, God, to understand and know the real mission of Jesus Christ.

God, I pray for those in this room whose hearts are heavy, whose lives right now are just presenting incredible trial, turmoil, and tribulation. God, I pray that right now you would bring them amazing comfort. Wrap your arms around them, God, and help them to know that you are here right now and you love them. In Christ's name, amen.

Now, if you were keeping count, this is the third time so far in the gospel of Mark that Jesus predicts his death and resurrection. The question is, why is this so important for these disciples to get right? He has not only done it now three times; he's going to do it a couple of more times in the few chapters that are left in the gospel of Mark before he ever goes to the cross.

I think the big question for you and me is, why is this so important for us to get right? Why must we absolutely understand and know what the real mission of Jesus Christ was? I think, simply, it's important for us to know the real mission of Jesus because if we don't understand it, we can never appreciate the priceless grace of God that is in Christ.

If we don't understand the real mission of Jesus, we will always be caught off-guard by the incredible, devastating effects that sin has on our hearts and lives, and we will forget about the good grace of God that is available to all who believe. So, it is absolutely imperative that we understand what the real mission of Jesus is. Now, before we even get to that, I think what I see in this passage is what the real mission of Jesus *isn't*, so we'll take what it is *not*, and then we'll look at what the mission *is*.

1. *The mission of Jesus was not some random act of religious kindness.* Jesus wasn't just some really nice guy who came along and was just saying and doing some nice things for people, and then he just accidentally got martyred and killed on a cross. No. The mission of Jesus on that cross was the fulfillment of thousands of years of God's redemptive promises given to us in the prophecies of the Old Testament, going all the way back to Genesis, chapter 3, in the garden of Eden.

Don't overlook the hints here that are right before our eyes. They're subtle, but important. If you look in verse 32, Mark, the writer of the gospel, says they were going up to Jerusalem. In verse 33 we see Jesus saying, "**See, we are going up to Jerusalem...**" That is not just some random narrative navigation that Jesus is doing. He is saying that on purpose.

He was not on some random stroll, just walking along with the disciples one day, when they came to an intersection and there was a sign pointing to Jerusalem and he just said, "Do you guys want to go to Jerusalem? Yeah, why not?" That's not what happened. He knew exactly where he was going.

He wasn't going to be surprised at what was about to happen to him in that city. It would be the fulfillment of one of the greatest prophecies in the Old Testament, in Daniel, chapter 9. Jerusalem was absolutely vital to the fulfillment of his mission. He knows where he's going and he knows he's going there to die.

See, it's very important, you guys, that you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus gave his life. It wasn't taken from him. Please get that. That's so important that Jesus said it himself. He wants us to know. In John 10, verses 15 and 18, he says, "**I lay down my life for the sheep... No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.**"

So, the faith you and I have in the death and resurrection of Jesus is built on the foundation that the cross did not cut his life and ministry short. Our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus is built on the foundation that the cross did not stop him from his real mission. The cross *was* his real mission.

Now, I know that for maybe the majority of you sitting here, that's very obvious, and something that maybe you've never doubted, but it's something that's easy to forget. Jesus did not come to die his own death. He came to die our death, on purpose, not as some random act of religious kindness.

2. *Jesus did not come to impress us or to scare us.* If you notice, again, in verse 32, it says Jesus was on this walk to Jerusalem with his 12 disciples. It says, "**...they were amazed...**" We could imagine why. I mean, there had to be those times when the words of Jesus felt like just arrows of light piercing those dark corners of their hearts where their hidden sin was still there, just destroying or devastating them. They knew that when he spoke it was like he could see into their hearts.

Then, there were other times when Jesus spoke and his words just felt like a soothing salve on their anxious, longing hearts. They had never seen anyone like this. They had never felt anything like this. They were amazed, and yet this was not the mission of Jesus. No, he didn't come so we could all gather today and just feel all warm and tingly inside.

No, if that was his mission, he would have come and started a summer camp with lots of campfires and s'mores and an endless loop of "Kumbaya." He didn't have to die on a cross to make sure we all felt warm and tingly. There's nothing wrong with that, but no, he came for something way better than that.

It also says, right there in the middle of this same verse, verse 32, that while the disciples were amazed, there was this crowd following, and they were afraid. I don't think this was a fear based on their awe and respect for Jesus. You see, by this point now, there was always a crowd, and it was soon going to be a mob here in just a chapter or two. They're just following him, but they're kind of keeping their distance.

I think that's just primarily a fear based in their guilt. They're starting to realize he's not like them. He knows their hearts and minds better than they even know themselves. I'm sure when he looked into their eyes, it felt like he could see right into their very souls. You see, this fear they have of Jesus is that fear that says, "I don't want to get too close to him, because if he really knows my issues he's not going to want to have anything to do with me."

It's a fear that says, "I'll just keep my distance, because while I'm back here maybe he'll still love me, be nice to me, or accept me," or whatever that is. It's a fear that keeps a person from humbly coming to him for much-needed grace. See, Jesus didn't come to intimidate or to condemn.

Again, in his own words, in John, chapter 3, verse 17, he says, "**For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.**" Herein is where we begin to see and talk about his real mission. From his very own lips, he said, "I came to save."

The question is, saved from what? What did he come to save people from? This is what we have to remember. This is what we have to understand, know, believe, and cling to with our faith. I think, right here in this context we can see several things Jesus came to save us from.

1. *Jesus came to save us from our spiritual pride.* The real mission of Jesus is to rescue us from the debilitating effects of sin. At the top of the list is pride. In verse 33, speaking of himself, Jesus tells his disciples, "**...the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes...**" Jesus knew exactly who it was who was going to instigate his death.

Again, this was the fulfillment of another prophecy in Isaiah 56. It would be no surprise to him that the chief priests of the Jewish religion and the scribes, the teachers, the keepers of the Word, would be the ones to whom he would be delivered over. No surprise to Jesus, but can you imagine the shock to the disciples? Jesus just said he's going to be turned over to the very ones who are supposed to be the shepherds of God's people.

The lighthouse is pointing the Jewish people to their long-awaited and longed-for Messiah, and he is saying, "I'm going to be turned over to them." This was shocking to them! The people who had all the training, education, and religious upbringing necessary to recognize the Messiah would be the very ones who would see to his death. Wow!

I just thought this week, isn't it always shocking to us how the very people who you think should recognize God's love and grace in Jesus, the very ones who have every excuse to believe, are sometimes the very ones who, in their pride, will walk away from him and reject him? We see this all the time in our day, in our context.

These chief priests and these scribes are a lot like people all around us every day. I mean, think of the person who has had God, church, a Bible, and Jesus in front of them most of their lives. God has graced them and blessed them, sometimes, with Christian parents, grandparents, friends, teachers, neighbors, or coaches.

You name it; God has blessed them with every conceivable blessing of seeing and hearing about Jesus, but out of their sheer pride, they walk away and they say, "No, thanks. Jesus isn't enough for me. I'm going to go search for my own version of spirituality." Just like these chief priests and scribes, in their pride, they trample the very grace of God's saving grace, underfoot, this loving grace where God has put so many things into their lives to see him, know him, and recognize him, and they continually reject him.

There's another version of these priests and scribes in our day, isn't there? It's the person whom God has rescued from a life of total devastation. He has just rescued them from that life. They

know they should either be dead or in jail, and if it weren't for the mercy of God to spare them from their own terrible choices and ridiculous decisions, they should be dead.

I think this is what described me best before I came to faith in Jesus. There's no human explanation for why I should be standing here in front of you today based on the trajectory of my life before I came to Christ. I didn't see that. For some time, in my pride, I refused to recognize God's rescuing grace in my life. I would not admit that somehow it was God sparing me from self-destructing in my life.

Another version of these priests and scribes today all around us is the person whose life looks like a never-ending train wreck. Has your life been there? Do you know people who've done life their way, on their terms, and the result and consequences are nothing short of constant crisis and struggle for them? It seems like every decision they make, every corner they turn, and every path they take is a path that just brings chaos, craziness, and pain into their lives and the lives of their loved ones.

Yet the pride in the hearts of these very same people won't allow them to give up. It won't allow them to look in the mirror, surrender, and admit their wrong, that their way of life doesn't work. It's not working. Their pride won't allow them to ask God to forgive them and to save them, so they pridefully reject God's forgiving grace.

Sometimes, the very people who have the greatest reasons to believe in Jesus refuse, and yet there's still grace for this. God lovingly says, "Yes, I reject the proud, but I give grace to the humble." These chief priests and these scribes right here represent everyone Jesus came to save from their spiritual pride.

2. *Jesus came to save us from our spiritual blindness.* He came to rescue us from the blinding effects that sin has on the human heart. These priests and scribes were not only going to reject him, but look in verse 33. It says he was going to be delivered over to them, "**...and they will condemn him to death...**" They're going to accuse the sinless Son of God of being a sinner and deserving of death.

I think these are the people I've met who just hate Jesus. They hate him. They use vile language and cuss words to describe him when they talk about him and accuse him. Their hatred of Jesus is so intense you can almost feel it from these people. They would rather kill the very one who came to save them from the coming wrath and white-hot fury of God's judgment upon the sins of mankind than believe in him and let him save them.

It's amazing that they hate the one who loves them most. Is there any greater evidence of the blinding effect that sin has on the human heart than that? God's response to this is clear. In Isaiah, chapter 5, God says,

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! [...] For they...have despised the word of the Holy

One of Israel [Jesus]. Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them... For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still."

Church, even in this spiritual blindness, there is still grace. Jesus said, "If you won't believe me and my words, then at least believe the miracles." You see, everything Jesus said was backed up by what he did. The divine miracles, the signs and wonders of his life, are God's grace to the blind heart. If your heart is so hardened toward Jesus and what he says, then at the very least, look at what he has done, and you can believe. You can repent and be forgiven.

3. *Jesus came to save us from spiritual suicide.* I know that's a harsh word, but all week I just kept thinking that's the best word to describe what's right in front of us here. Think about what Jesus says next. He says he "**...will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles...**" to carry out their rejection and hatred toward Jesus.

Again, this is shocking to the ears of the disciples who are with him. These Jewish religious leaders of the people would put the fate of their very souls into the hands of the Gentiles. The Gentiles had no clue. They were completely in the dark about God's plan of redemption for mankind. They had no idea what to do with Jesus. When they handed Jesus over to Herod, he was so afraid of Jesus he handed him over to Pilate. Pilate was so afraid of Jesus he declared him innocent and tried to let him go!

There are people just like these chief priests and scribes all around us today. They're turning the fate of their very souls over to unbelievers, pagans, and even atheists. Think about this. Think about the person who will take the very holy Word of God, throw it in the fire, and turn to reading books by authors who live in the caves of their own imaginations and denials.

They'll pick up a book written by a mentally-ill philosopher who spins their minds into a vacuum of questions with no idea, completely unwilling and unable to provide an answer to man's dilemma, because when they hear themselves provide an answer to what they think is man's dilemma, it is evidence of their own lost confusions.

We have people all over our world, all throughout our lives, who will pick up some book and read a couple of hundred pages of some mentally-ill philosopher or atheist and put the very eternity of their souls into their hands. That's spiritual suicide.

Some won't even do that much work. Some today, sadly, will turn to cable channel documentaries, which we really should call joke-umentaries, when it comes to this stuff. They put the fate of their souls into a 30-minute TV program produced by these mental teenagers who have no integrity or accountability, and they think because they've produced a 30-minute show somehow that automatically makes it historical truth.

They'll do a 30-minute TV show about God, Jesus, the Bible, or the universe. In 30 minutes, they'll solve all of the questions about all of life and eternity, and there are people all around us,

whom we love who will watch one of those little 30-minute TV shows and decide, "That's what I'm going to stake my soul to."

If that isn't sad enough, probably the saddest of all are those all around us today who will turn to self-worshipping celebrities and talk show hosts to guide their souls. These narcissists who create some version of spirituality that only works for millionaires who live behind guarded and gated compounds...

These people whom our world makes into celebrities, who spend their whole lives and their money seeking peace, meaning, and approval that never really comes... They marry and divorce like they're exchanging recipes instead of vows and they destroy themselves with work, drugs, promiscuity, and plastic surgery, desperately grasping at self-preservation. Turning the fate of your soul over to such as these is spiritual suicide.

They are people who do not know Jesus and have no idea what to do with his words when he says to the world, in Matthew 11, "Come to me. Come to me, all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls." The effects of sin are serious, but there is grace even for this.

4. *Jesus came to save us from spiritual insanity.* The real mission of Jesus is to save us from going insane. The confusion and the craziness in our world... If it wasn't so sad it would be comical. It's just unbelievable what people proclaim, declare, and are willing to buy. The lies and the deception people will just latch onto... Verse 34 is insanity to its extreme. Jesus knew exactly where he was going and what was going to happen to him. He would be beaten beyond recognition, like a lamb being led to the slaughter (Isaiah 53).

We're told here that the mocking, spitting, flogging, killing, public humiliation, and beating of the very one who came to save you from the eternal pit of fire called hell, who came to save you from the place reserved for all those who refuse to repent, believe, and receive God's grace in Jesus, who came to save you from the place of eternal torment and punishment... You are killing him? This is spiritual insanity, right before our eyes.

The depth of our sin and our need for grace is infinite, isn't it? Yet even for this, there is grace. If you look at verse 34 and the last six words of Jesus in this little conversation, he says, "**...after three days he will rise.**" That is the key to understanding the ultimate, complete mission of Jesus, because in these six words lie all of our hope.

Jesus knew he came to die, but he didn't come to die his death; he came to die our death. He knew that in his mission of his substitutionary death, all of our sins would be punished and paid for. His death would serve and solve the justice of God, but in his resurrection is his power and authority over our death. In his resurrection is the proof of eternal life forever with God. He rises to live forever. In his resurrection is the promise that we have an Advocate before the judgment seat of God when he pours out his wrath upon the sins of mankind.

You see, without the resurrection, we Christians are to be pitied more than everyone else, but with the resurrection, we are to be envied above all. The Bible says, **"Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."** He is alive.

When Jesus said, "In three days, I will rise," he was saying there is no sin more powerful than his forgiving, delivering, transforming, resurrecting grace. This is the real mission of Jesus. When he said, "In three days, I will rise," he was saying, "There's nothing you can do to make me love you more, and there's nothing you can do to make me love you less."

If you're a Christian sitting here right now and you find yourself following Jesus but back in the crowd because there's sin, struggle, failure, fear, anger, disappointment, or just a miserable part of your life that you're ashamed of, and you just don't know if you could ever come near to God or if he'll accept you in your doubt or fear again, you have misunderstood the mission of Jesus.

He is alive so you will never doubt again how much he loves you. Anytime you ever doubt if Jesus loves you, you just look at that cross and you remember his mission. He died so you can come to him for grace.

If you're in this room and you're not a believer, I plead with you today. Would you consider surrendering the fate of your eternal soul to the one who loves you this much, who came to die your death so your sins could be paid for, forgiven, and removed, and whom God raised from the dead so you know you are putting your faith in the living Son of God, who lives forever and has conquered your death? You too will be raised to live forever with him in the presence of God. I just ask you, would you be willing to trust him with your soul?

I'm going to ask you to bow your heads right now so we don't rush off to the next thing before we consider those questions. If you would, just bow your heads and remain quiet, just for a moment.

Christian, if there's anything keeping you back in that crowd, afraid or ashamed, would you be willing right now to walk to the foot of the cross and see his open arms? Would you be willing to walk from there to the empty tomb to know he is alive for you right now? Bring your sin, failure, anger, disappointment, and fear to him and allow him to flood your heart with his grace.

Unbeliever, you may think you got up out of bed today and decided you were going to go to church. Let me remind you that while we make our plans, God directs our steps. He saw to it that you were sitting here right now, and he did that because he loves you.

I pray, if you are sitting here now and you have never stepped over the line to surrender your complete life, everything about you: your dreams, your plans, your future, your present... Hand it to him to have his way in your life, beginning with cleansing you from your sin. I would ask you right now, in the quietness of this moment, to go to him in prayer and ask him to save you. Let's be quiet right now and you talk to God as you feel led to right now.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the gift of this quiet moment. In a world that is so loud, crazy, and busy, you give us these minutes, Lord, just to be with you. I pray, God, that we would be a church filled with people who love, know, understand, and embrace the mission of your Son, Jesus, for our very souls.

God, may we be people who rejoice in the grace that comes from Jesus. God, may we be a people who see the constant attack of sin upon our world and upon our hearts, that we would run to you every day for strength, for power to resist temptation and to live in the goodness of your love and grace. God, we praise your holy name today. Amen.

Church, two things... If you're sitting here and you find that today you have truly just surrendered your heart to Jesus, you may not fully understand what that means going forward, but we want to help you understand that. At the end of this service, there are going to be some people up here who want to give you something to go home with, to take home with you to get you started in your new walk with Jesus.

If you are going through some tough times this morning or this week, and you just need someone to pray for you or with you, we want to do that as well before you go home. All right. God bless you. Have a great, great week.