

Series: **Gospel of Mark**
Today's Title: "**Crucifixion of Jesus**"

April 2, 2021 – Mark 15:16-41 (Also: Matthew 27:27-56; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:1-37)

Good Friday 2021

Objective: To help people that Jesus endured more than physical suffering as He gave His life on our behalf.

Turn to Mark 15:16-41

I heard a pastor say - and what he said is true - that the focus of the Gospel writers in recording the crucifixion of Jesus is not on the physical suffering and detailed descriptions of His crucifixion, but on the mocking, taunting and ridicule which was heaped onto Jesus as He was scourged and then crucified.

As Jesus hung on the cross - the Gospel writers don't describe His physical suffering as much as they describe the comments and ridicule of those who were watching.

I don't say this to minimize the physical suffering and torment Jesus endured.

Something to note which is vastly different from our modern society and system of justice.

Today, when a prisoner is condemned to death - if they ever get to the point of execution, every possible measure is taken to make sure the condemned does not experience any pain or suffering.

Our modern-day executions are intended to be pain-free / suffering-free.

Roman crucifixion was exactly the opposite.

The intent of crucifixion was to inflict as much pain and suffering as possible - for as long as possible - before death would rescue the condemned from their agony.

Much different from our justice system...worlds apart.

Tonight, I want to focus on 3 aspects of Jesus' suffering.

Suffering through mocking and insults. vs. 16-20

Read vs. 15-20

vs. 16 - Scourging was a terrible, brutal torture.

This was the beginning of the crucifixion process - for it would weaken the condemned and tear apart the flesh and muscles on their back - exposing the ribs and deep tissues - so when they hung on the cross and had to raise themselves up in order to breathe - their back would rub on the rough wood of the cross - causing excruciating pain with each breath.

The execution squad was excited for the opportunity to have a Jewish 'king' at their disposal.

This was fun for them.

This was too good to miss out...so they invited all the other soldiers - "the whole battalion" to watch, cheer, laugh, etc.

A battalion would be 600 men.

A purple robe - one of the mantles worn by Roman soldiers. This was not 800 thread Egyptian cotton. This would have been a very rough fabric - and they used it to mock Jesus.

The whole point of this entire crucifixion would be to make fun of Jesus - to mock His claim of being a king. A king must have a crown - so they make a crown of thorns - placed it on His head - and began to pound on it with a stick / reed.

Imagine the scene - 600 soldiers jammed into a large courtyard - Jesus being scourged with a whip which had up to 9 strands of leather - each strand embedded with bits of bone, metal or sharp stones which embedded into the flesh of the victim - and then was violently pulled away, tearing the flesh off.

- Each lashing to the sound of cheers.
- The blood thirst is hard to imagine.
- They salute Him - laughing - mocking.

The spit in His face - a form is insult in our own culture. Finally, it's time to go to the crucifixion site - the show is over.

They strip off the robe - no doubt reopening some of the wounds on His back where the blood had started to clot and bind with the robe - and now His blood flowed again as the wounds are ripped open again.

They put His own clothes on Him (vs. 20), put the cross beam on His shoulders - and lead Him away.

Read vs. 21-32

Suffering through crucifixion and taunting. vs. 21-32

vs. 21 - Simon of Cyrene - Cyrene was a city with a large Jewish population - modern-day Libya (North Africa).

Remember, it's Passover - and Simon would have been one of the thousands of pilgrims who made the journey to Jerusalem for Passover.

The scourging Jesus endured was severe - and He was likely too weakened to carry His cross - the cross beam - so to hurry things up the Roman soldiers grab a strong-looking man from the crowd to carry Jesus' cross.

Mark gives a unique detail here - "the father of Alexander and Rufus".

What's this about?

Mark is likely writing his Gospel to the Christians in Rome.

Turn to **Romans 16:13**

"Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well."

Simon obviously met Jesus through the experience of carrying the cross, and it is believed that later Simon became a follower of Christ, and then moved to Rome with his family - and later, when Paul writes Romans, in

the final chapter he recognizes Rufus - who was Simon's son - the man who carried the cross of Jesus - the Roman Christians knew Simon's son - Rufus.

What an amazing connection this was to the crucifixion of Jesus - the Roman Christians knew Rufus personally!

In Jerusalem, there are 2 locations which claim to be the place where "Golgotha" was located.

It may be difficult to know with certainty which of the 2 locations is the actual spot, what's important for us is what happened there.

The ridicule and mocking continued - through the entire time Jesus hung on the cross.

They tried to give him a drink - a mixture of wine and myrrh - which served as a mild pain killer.

Proverbs 31:6

"Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress..."

The Jews used this verse to convince the Romans to offer this pain-numbing drink to crucifixion victims.

However, Jesus didn't take this drink.

He was determined to take the full force - the full pain of crucifixion.

Jesus would take the full expression of the Father's wrath against sin.

vs. 25 - "the third hour when they crucified Him."

9:00 a.m. = "the third hour"

vs. 26-27 - The jokes and mocking continue.

The sign above Jesus, "The King of the Jews", is another form of mocking and taunting.

Jesus is crucified between 2 "robbers" which was a way of ridiculing - taunting the claim of Jesus as king.

This is your king - the Jewish king is no better than common thieves!

As Jesus hung on the cross - people taunted Him as they walked by.

'Save Yourself!'

'Come down from the cross!'

Suffering through a torturous and lonely death. vs. 33-41

Read vs. 33-41

"sixth hour" = Noon - Jesus has been on the cross for 3 hours.

It's at this time - at high noon - that darkness was "over the whole land".

This would last about 3 hours - until Jesus dies.

What is this darkness about?

It's the judgement of God.

In the Bible, God is often equated with light - light is often a metaphor for God.

But the Bible also talks of darkness as a sign of God's judgment.

One of the plagues of Egypt was darkness over the land.

At this point of Jesus' crucifixion, the wrath and judgment of God is in its full expression.

For the last 3 hours of Jesus' life, He is the object of intense, focused divine wrath.

Isaiah 53:10

"But it was the LORD 's good plan to crush him and cause him grief."

NASB = "But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief..."

What did this feel like to Jesus?

I have no idea.

I do believe this is what He feared the most - this is what was behind His garden prayers to the Father to

"Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will." (Mark 14:36)

After suffering through this divine judgment for 3 hours, Jesus "cried in a loud voice".

That's a significant fact.

"a loud voice" requires physical strength - and plenty of oxygen in your lungs. Crucifixion victims died from asphyxiation. The weight of their bodies - hanging on the cross - would compress their lungs. In order to breathe, the victim would have to push up with his legs - on the spike driven through their feet/ankle - and they would have to pull up with their arms - pulling on the spike driven through each wrist. Eventually, this pain and trauma would drain all of their strength to the point

where they would no longer be able to rise up to take a breath - and their lungs will fill up with fluid - and they would die of asphyxiation.

But Jesus - after enduring 6 hours on the cross - and the last 3 hours of divine wrath - still has enough strength to raise Himself up to get enough oxygen into His lungs that He can cry out “in a loud voice”.

After 3 hours of taking the full force of the Father’s wrath, there was a split in the bond - a separation in the loving fellowship of the Triune God.

For the first time in eternity, the 2nd person of the Godhead was on the outside - looking in.

As Jesus bore the sin of human history, He was separated from the Father - “forsaken”.

Forsaken = *to renounce or turn away from entirely*

(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/forsaken>)

As a result of this, Jesus - “with a loud voice”, cries out “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Jesus knows why - this is not a question seeking knowledge.

- It’s a question of desperation - of pain - of suffering.
- It’s a question that is asking when this will be over.
- It’s a question that yearns to be reunited - back in fellowship with the Heavenly Father.

vs. 35-36 - After taking a drink - probably to get moisture in His mouth and throat - so He could say something else.

vs. 37 - “And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last.”

Once again - He has enough strength to raise Himself up and take a breath.

Do we know what Jesus said in a loud voice? (Matt. 27:50)

What did He say?

see Luke 23:46 “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!” and John 19:30 “It is finished”

It’s important to note that Jesus still had strength in His body - and He was in control of when He died.

John 10:17-18

“I lay down My life that I may take it up again.

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.”

Jesus was in control of the events of His life - and when those events would take place.

It was no different on the cross.

vs. 38 - The temple curtain is torn in two - “from top to bottom”.

This was a huge - thick curtain.

The verb (divine passive) indicates the curtain was torn due to an outside force - it didn’t tear by itself, under its own weight.

What are we to make of this?

What does this mean?

Hebrews 10:19-20

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh...”

This curtain was 70-80 feet high - and the tearing of this curtain from the top shows it was God who tore it.

He tore it because now - with the death of Jesus - there was no longer any separation between God and humanity.

The death of Jesus opens up the way to God - through Jesus.

The death of Jesus is the means by which we can “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22)

One final detail tonight...

vs. 39 - The centurion - when Jesus died - and how Jesus died - made a massive impression in him. This man was a leader of 100 Roman soldiers - an experienced soldier - a man that had experience in battle - and was now the leader of an execution squad.

No doubt, he was a man hardened and calloused by the horrors of war - and the horrors of Roman crucifixion.

But Jesus broke through his rough and hardened exterior - and when Jesus died, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God.”

Matthew tells us it wasn't only the centurion who made this statement of faith in Jesus - but also "those who were with him". (27:54)

Luke tells us (23:39-43) that one of the criminals crucified with Jesus put his faith in Jesus.

Apply it...

The suffering of Jesus is beyond our comprehension - too large for us to grasp fully.

But we know enough - mainly, that He suffered for us. His love for us was the reason He suffered for us. His suffering and death are the entire reason for His incarnation - His birth!

He suffered by enduring human insult - mocking - ridicule and taunting.

He suffered by taking the full force of God's divine wrath against sin - as He became the sin-bearer for all of us.

If you've never put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, do it right now - in this moment.

If the love of Christ - His suffering and forgiveness was given to the Roman centurion and soldiers who crucified Him - to the criminal who was crucified with Jesus - don't you think He can forgive you too?

There is nobody He doesn't love - nobody whose sins He cannot forgive.

If you have already made that decision in the past, as you consider His suffering...

Renew your commitment to Him

Renew your obedience to Him

Renew your passion to worship Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Make this Good Friday...this Easter...the most important one yet.

Close in prayer

Instructions for what we're doing next.

1. Communion - The communion packets are on the table in the back - if you didn't pick one up when you came in tonight - you can get one in just a moment.

Tonight, you will take communion on your own - with your family - with some friends - others who are near you.

Pray before the bread/wafer - thanking Jesus for His suffering

Pray before the juice - thanking Jesus for His death which paid the price for our sins / forgiveness.

After you're finished with communion, please remain seated.

2. We will sing a powerful song: "Behold the Lamb" - during this communion time. Feel free to pray - admit your sins - seek forgiveness - sing - listen - reflect - examine.

3. I will extinguish the 7th candle - and in darkness we will hear 33 chimes - representing the years of Jesus' life.

4. The lights will come back on after the chimes.

Please dismiss quietly - it's a somber moment as we reflect and 'feel' the heaviness and darkness of the cross.

5. Crosses in the courtyard - continue in silence - pound a nail in one of the crosses...

As a way to confess your sins...

As a way to say 'thank you' to Jesus...

As a way to consider His suffering - what He endured for you...

I pray as you leave tonight...the suffering of Jesus will remain in your thoughts...

But I hope you will join us on Sunday morning - because the cross and suffering of Friday is not the end of the story. Sunday morning, we will gather together and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus - His victory over sin and death - and we will transform these crosses into *'Living Crosses'* during our worship Sunday morning.

“But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 15:57 - NLT)