

Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Mark 15:16-20a | The Mocking of the Roman Military
December 5, 2021

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Mark 15:16-20
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we met a different kind of Jesus.

Not Jesus the Christ, but Jesus Barabbas.

We learned that Jesus Barabbas is actually guilty of the crime of which Jesus the Christ is accused.

We read about one Jesus guilty of leading a real revolt, and the other Jesus accused of causing a fake revolt.

At the end of our study, we saw how the religious leaders and the laypeople in the crowd screamed and demanded Pilate release Jesus Barabbas and then crucify Jesus the Christ.

LW KEYPOINT

What Jesus The Christ did for Jesus Barabbas physically— is the same thing he did for us spiritually.

When we talk about Christ being the substitute for our sin—substitutionary atonement—this transfer of Christ taking Barabbas' place on that cross is a visible picture of what has taken place spiritually for you and me.

INTRODUCTION:

As I mentioned last Sunday, we are in the most gruesome part of what's called the Passion narrative.

It's called *The Passion* because The word *passion* is from the Latin *pati* (*paw-tee*), which simply means "to endure" or "to suffer."

Over the last several weeks, we have seen Jesus suffer and endure physical pain and emotional shame.

- starting in the Garden of Gethsemane
- through His arrest
- three Jewish trials
- three Roman trials
- And as we continue in our studies, we're going to see His Passion continues as Jesus is mocked and beat by the Roman Military.

I mentioned last week that this is my least favorite text to teach.

And it must have been similar for all four gospel writers.

They all do something similar with these brutal accounts of Jesus.

They refuse to provide the gruesome details of what Jesus physically endured when he was flogged and crucified.

There are several reasons for this.

1. The original audience for each Gospel knew precisely what they were talking about. There was no need to go into great detail on the horrors of flogging and the crucifixion.

2. The physical pain of Jesus was a secondary issue. It's an emotional pain that the Gospel writers focus on.

It's also important to know here that there is a purpose in all of Jesus's suffering. Jesus went through all this pain and shame as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world so that you could have a real relationship with Him.

A relationship that is so close, so true, *so real*, and vibrant.

A relationship not based on rules or religion, but forgiveness. *grace!*

Dear friends, there is nothing more important than your relationship with Jesus Christ.

My prayer for you today is the same as it is every Sunday—that you would experience God verse by verse so that you can experience Him day by day.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 15:16-20a CSB

Mark 15:1— As soon as it was morning, having held a meeting with the elders, scribes, and the whole Sanhedrin, the chief priests tied Jesus up, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

Mark 15:2— So Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so."

Mark 15:3— And the chief priests accused him of many things.

Mark 15:4— Pilate questioned him again, "Aren't you going to answer? Look how many things they are accusing you of!"

Mark 15:5— But Jesus still did not answer, and so Pilate was amazed.

Mark 15:6— At the festival Pilate used to release for the people a prisoner whom they requested.

Mark 15:7— There was one named Barabbas, who was in prison with rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion.

Mark 15:8— The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them as was his custom.

Mark 15:9— Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release the king of the Jews for you?"

Mark 15:10— For he knew it was because of envy that the chief priests had handed him over.

Mark 15:11— But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that he would release Barabbas to them instead.

Mark 15:12— Pilate asked them again, "Then what do you want me to do with the one you call the king of the Jews?"

Mark 15:13— Again they shouted, "Crucify him!"

Mark 15:14— Pilate said to them, "Why? What has he done wrong?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!"

Mark 15:15— Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them; and after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:16— The soldiers led him away into the palace (that is, the governor's residence) and called the whole company together.

Mark 15:17— They dressed him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on him.

Mark 15:18— And they began to salute him, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

Mark 15:19— They were hitting him on the head with a stick and spitting on him. Getting down on their knees, they were paying him homage.

Mark 15:20— After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his clothes on him. *They led him out to crucify him.*

PRAY:

*Help me understand your instruction,
and I will obey it
and follow it with all my heart.*
(Psalm 119:34)

EXEGESIS:

Mark 15:16— The soldiers led him away into the palace (that is, the governor's residence) and called the whole company together.

The Roman soldiers bring Jesus into either a courtyard or walled space where the Roman military has their headquarters.

This event possibly took place in the barracks area with the soldiers.

Mark 15:16— ...and called the whole company together.

Various Bibles translate this verse as the whole cohort, *(garrison, regiment)* or battalion.

In other words, there were a lot of soldiers guarding Jesus.

We're talking 600 men at full strength—the same number who came out to arrest Jesus.

Why so many men?

At this point in the narrative, it's as if Jerusalem were an ocean filled with blood—sending sharks into a feeding frenzy.

The Roman soldiers are still treating Jesus as a dangerous revolutionary out for Caesar's job...even though Pilate judged Him as innocent.

The Jews beat on Jesus, the Romans flogged Jesus, and now the Romans will continue beating, mocking, and shaming an innocent man.

+ Verse 16
Notice Mark's wording in verse 16—he's careful to point out that this entire brutal event took place within a palace.

A palace is an ironic place to beat and shame a king, let alone the King of kings.

How do the soldiers shame the King of kings...

+ **Mark 15:17**—*They dressed him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on him.*

This purple robe was most likely an old worn-out robe from a Roman soldier.

These robes were a dark red/scarlet red, but over time the sun faded them out—so it had a purple tint.

The color purple is the color of royalty.

Mark 15:17— ...twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on him.

Crown of thorns—They were trying to imitate Caesar’s wreath that you’ve seen on Roman coinage.

Jerusalem has plenty of thorny plants to choose from.

They grabbed whatever was near the palace—none of this was planned.

Certain kinds of palm trees have thorns.

Jerusalem has

~~They have~~ a palm tree called actually called a “Thorn Palm.”

The leaves could have been easily made into a wreath.

The thorn palms also have long spikes.

All that... -

The royal purple and the crown } were symbols of mock royalty.

color

Mark 15:18— And they began to salute him, “Hail, king of the Jews!”

Verse 18 is a parody of Caesar’s salute, “Hail Caesar, victor, commander.”

So just as the Jews mocked Jesus as a false messiah— the Roman soldiers now taunt him as a false king.

Hail, meaning “Rejoice,” was said with dripping sarcasm, while “The King of the Jews” was said with contempt.

In their view, Jesus was not a king— because kings have followings.

Kings have armies. Kings have power.

Jesus didn’t have any of this at that moment.

Mark 15:19— *They were hitting him on the head with a stick and spitting on him. Getting down on their knees, they were paying him homage.*

Here we see that the soldiers didn't simply place the crown of thorns on Jesus' head as if it were a costume—

But rather they beat it into His skull with their sticks acting as another device for torture.

I think it's imperative to note that in Mark 10:33, Jesus had predicted that He would be treated in this exact fashion.

I want to show you this again because all of these prophecies that continue to come true prove that Jesus is not a victim of circumstance.

Jesus is on mission.

He is in the palm of the Father's hand, completing what He said He would do.

Mark 10:33—*"See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death. Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles,*

Mark 10:34—*and they will mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him, and he will rise after three days."*

And here we are, watching Jesus' prophecies come true in real-time.

Every jot and tittle from the OT—Every prophecy spoken by Jesus fulfilled in Himself.

Looking at verse 19 again...

Mark 15:19— They were hitting...spitting...getting down on their knees... paying him homage.

All the verbs are imperfect. In English, we see the verbs with the “ing.”

This means that the soldiers did all of these things for a prolonged amount of time.

Let's not forget that there could have been 600 soldiers in the palace, with many of them wanting to have their fun.

KEYPOINT 1:

People mock what they don't understand.

When you share your faith, there are some people who will mock and scoff.

There's no need to get mad or defensive—they simply don't understand—just like you didn't at one time or another.

That's why the training to share your faith is so very important.

Just as Jesus trained His disciples, we too specifically train you on how to communicate the gospel with love, grace, kindness, and truth.

It's called the Three Circles—and we'll have another class start in March or April.

John's Gospel provides additional details to our story.

After the soldiers beat and mock Jesus, the soldiers brought him back to Pilate.

Pilate then brought Jesus out one more time before the crowd.

+ **John 19:4**—Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I'm bringing him out to you to let you know I find no grounds for charging him."

+ **John 19:5**—Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

Pilate brings Jesus out one more time in an effort for the crowd to have some mercy on him.

But they would not relent in screaming for His death.

+ **John 19:6**— When the chief priests and the temple servants saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate responded, "Take him and crucify him yourselves, since I find no grounds for charging him."

+ **John 19:7**— "We have a law," the Jews replied to him, "and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

+ **John 19:8**— When Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid than ever.

Why is Pilate afraid? It's important to note that Pilate is a Roman pagan.

In other words, Pilate had room in his theology for lots of gods.

Obviously, Pilate doesn't want to upset any of the gods that were rumbling around in his mind.

+ **John 19:9**— He went back into the headquarters and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?"

Pilate is not talking about Nazareth, either.

+ **John 19:10**— So Pilate said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to release you and the authority to crucify you?"

+ **John 19:11**—"You would have no authority over me at all," Jesus answered him, "if it hadn't been given you from above. This is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

+ **John 19:13**— When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge's seat in a place called the Stone Pavement.

+ **John 19:14**— Then he told the Jews, "Here is your king!"

+ **John 19:15**— They shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

Pilate said to them, "Should I crucify your king?"

"We have no king but Caesar!" the chief priests answered.

And the Jews have been paying the price for that declaration of allegiance to another king for the past 2,000 years.

+ **Matthew 27:24**— When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that a riot was starting instead, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. See to it yourselves!"

As we mentioned several weeks ago, Pontius Pilate was the governor of Palestine for over a decade.

During that time and his working with the Jews, he clearly picked up on some of their traditions.

So Pilate chooses to use a Jewish illustration to get his point across.

Pilate has said, "*I find no grounds*"—four times.

That's not working, so Pilate decides on an object lesson.

The washing of hands is a Jewish ritual.

In the OT, if the rulers of the city were not able to find or identify a capital crime like murder—

The Mosaic law gave them an out.

They were to wash their hands publicly and pray.

This provision in the law pardoned them of any guilt and responsibility regarding their inability to execute justice for a crime.

Pilate clearly communicates that he is officially resigning himself and his inability to execute justice for Jesus Christ.

In other words, Pilate is saying that he is not responsible for this mess—so he thinks.

Back to Mark's Gospel...

Mark 15:20— *After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his clothes on him.*

As you can imagine, just moments before, Jesus was flogged.

So he has all sorts of open wounds. on his body.

The robe had probably stuck to Jesus' wounds.

You, yourselves, know the minor pain when someone rips a band-aid off you.

Imagine the excruciating pain that Jesus felt when they stripped off that Roman robe from him.

They finally put Jesus' clothes back on Him and led him away to be crucified.

Now, it was Roman custom for the condemned to be led naked to the place of execution and to be flogged on the way. (Jos. Antiq. XIX, 269 [iv. 5]).

Jesus, however, had already been flogged.

There was no way He would have survived an additional beating.

Once a prisoner was condemned and sentenced to die via crucifixion, a Roman execution squad was assigned to the prisoner.

The squad consisted of four soldiers and was overseen by a centurion— who was the commander.

Jesus was assigned such a squad and was immediately led away.

Like the other Gospels, Mark's Gospel tells us very little about the act of crucifixion because everyone in the Roman Empire knew the details.

Mark 15:20—^{SQUAD}They led him out to crucify him.

And that's where we'll stop today. We'll pick it up here at verse 20 next Sunday.

Next week we'll discuss the first three hours of Jesus' crucifixion.

The following Sunday, we'll discuss the second three hours.



PREACH

I mentioned that it's important to know here that there is a purpose in all of Jesus's suffering.

As the prophet Isaiah says, Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. (Isa 53:5)

victim of His Law

Gossip Pain

→ Rebellion - Know the right thing to do but chose the wrong - Ignored God

Jesus endured all of this for one primary reason—to give you the opportunity to have a right relationship with God The Father.

By Jesus' suffering and death, He atoned for the sins of His people.

In other words, Jesus paid the price and brought humanity back into a right relationship with God the Father.

Atonement: Think "at-one." God and humanity together again at one.

Peace because of the Propitiation made by Christ - Dear friends, when God gives you a divine disruption/God intersection this week to share the Gospel with someone.

Satisfied Jesus Appeared God's Wrath for your sin

Please know that when you share that Jesus suffered, He suffered, died, was buried, and rose again three days later for that person you're speaking to!

→ started today

Engage in that conversation. They are suffering too.

Maybe, just maybe, God is using you to invite them to Church so that they can learn how their suffering is not wasted either.

Amen

PRAYER/BENEDICTION

Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice. (Romans 15:5-6)

Amen - Walk worthy

Now go serve your SAVIOR

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