

The Suffering Servant

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2026 Easter / Good Friday / Mark 15:16–26

Notes

03/29 Mark 15:16-26, Title: The Suffering Servant Subtitle: The King Who Was Stripped to Clothe His People, Supporting Scriptures: Isaiah 53:3-6; Philippians 2:8

The world sneered at a Savior who wouldn't save Himself. But His silence wasn't weakness—it was the sovereign majesty of a King securing our salvation. Join us this Sunday in person or online for, “The Suffering Servant.”

Scripture: Mark 15:16-26 (Palm Sunday/Good Friday Focus)

Title: The Suffering Servant

Subtitle: The King Whose Coat Was Taken to Clothe His People

Supporting Scriptures: Isaiah 53:3-6; Isaiah 50:6; Micah 5:1; Psalm 22:7-8, 18; Philippians 2:8; Ecclesiastes 10:1-4

Introduction:

Human history is stained with moments where the justice system fails—where those in power twist the law to crush the innocent. There is something deep within us that recoils when we see authority abused, when we see the defenseless exploited, or when the law is used as a weapon rather than a shield.

Yet, the greatest, most egregious miscarriage of justice in human history did not happen by accident. It was the sovereign plan of God.

"For the twelve hours leading up to our text today, Jesus Christ had been subjected to a complete inversion of justice. Yet, that corruption didn't just start the night before; it began all the way back in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve's sin set a trajectory of destruction that has echoed throughout all of human history, ultimately bringing us to yet another garden—the very moment Jesus stepped into the quiet of Gethsemane with His followers.

The arrest of Jesus wasn't a standard police detail. The men who were sworn to uphold the Law of Moses—the aristocratic chief priests and elders of the Sanhedrin—were so

blinded by hatred that they personally marched into the night to lead a lynch mob. They partnered with their own Temple Guards, and shockingly, with a Roman cohort—a heavily armed military battalion of hundreds of pagan soldiers. From the very first step in the olive grove, the justice system was entirely distorted, manipulated, and broken."

From there, they dragged Him through a trial that violated every rule of their own jurisprudence, bringing forward false witnesses in the dead of night. When they couldn't find a legitimate charge, they took Him to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Pilate examined Him and publicly declared, "I find no guilt in this man." Yet, the Roman legal system—the most sophisticated system of law in the ancient world—utterly failed. To appease a riot, Pilate not only had the power to, but also ordered an innocent man to be scourged and crucified.

Jesus has been stripped of His rights, stripped of His friends, stripped of any dignity, stripped of His strength, and even stripped of His clothing before all to see. He was physically battered to the edge of death. He was then handed over to the Roman soldiers, entirely defenseless.

But as we will see in our text today, the innocent Servant was not suffering this injustice because He was powerless; He is enduring it willfully to pay the penalty for the guilty.

Main Idea:

The King willingly endured humiliation and agony to secure the eternal inheritance of His people.

Jesus, who commanded the wind and waves, who healed the sick and lame, and who raised the dead, could have put a stop to them. He could have destroyed the rule of man and become the King. Instead, in obedience to the Father, He chose the path of obedience, even obedience that led Him to His death on the cross, as Phil. 2 explains.

This obedience was not a show of weakness, it was a majestic demonstration of forbearance and love, knowing that what He was about to endure would literally purchase back from sin's destruction, His creation.

I. The Silence of the Suffering Servant in the Midst of Mockery Revealed His Majesty (Mark 15:16-20)

To see this majesty clearly, we first need to step into the brutal reality of the Roman courtyard. As the soldiers gather around Jesus, Mark paints a picture of an empire that is completely unaware of who it is actually dealing with.

Before we look at what these soldiers do, we have to recognize what Jesus had

already endured. He actually suffered two distinct phases of abuse that night. Hours before He was handed to these Romans, He was beaten by the Jewish religious leaders. The Sanhedrin and the Temple Guards blindfolded Him, punched Him in the face, and mocked Him as a false prophet. Now, He is handed over to the secular world. The religious elite rejected Him as a Prophet, and as we are about to see, the political empire will mock Him as a fake King. The entirety of the world's systems united to crush Him.

A. Mocking the Sovereign was the Ultimate Display of Folly (Mark 15:16-18)

Mark 15:16-18 "16 The soldiers took Him away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium), and they called together the whole Roman cohort. 17 They dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; 18 and they began to acclaim Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!""

- The Roman battalion treats the Creator of the universe as a plaything, dressing Him in "purple" and a "crown of thorns."
- They perfectly illustrate Ecclesiastes 10:3, where a fool "demonstrates to everyone that he is a fool." They believe they are displaying absolute imperial power, but heaven views their mockery as the ultimate absurdity.
- Yet, this was no accident. Seven hundred years earlier, Isaiah 50:6 prophesied this exact moment, where it says: "I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting."

B. True Majesty was Wielded Through Silent Composure (Isaiah 53:7; Eccl. 10:4)

- His majesty shined not through retaliation, but through sovereign, silent endurance in obedience to His Father's eternal plan.
- Jesus Fulfilled Isaiah 53:7

"7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth."

- He absorbed their abuse without a word.
- He perfectly embodied the wisdom of Ecclesiastes 10:4:

"If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses."

- Facing the wrath, first of the Jewish Sanhedrin and then of Rome, Jesus refused to abandon His post, and His silent composure on the cross is exactly what put to rest the great offenses of His people.

It was exactly this unyielding, silent majesty that drove the soldiers to even greater extremes. In their blind arrogance, they decided to escalate their twisted game, completely unaware that their relentless mockery was actually staging the coronation of the universe's true King."

C. The World Unwittingly Crowned the King It Tried to Crush (Mark 15:19)

Mark 15:19 "19 They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him."

- In the original Greek, the verbs for beating (etypton), spitting (eneptyon), and bowing (prosekynoun) are in the imperfect tense, indicating continuous, repetitive action.
- They didn't just strike Him once or mockingly bow once; this huge gathering of powerful military men kept on striking His head, they kept on spitting on Him, and they kept on falling on their knees, mocking the idea that He had and power or authority over them or anyone. Jesus absorbed wave after wave of relentless, sustained physical and psychological abuse, and His sovereign silence never broke.
- In their attempt to humiliate Him, the soldiers actually fulfilled the role of a royal court. Every element of a coronation is: present-the robe, the crown, and the bowed knee. They even placed a reed in His hand as a mock scepter (the element that represented power and authority), only to take it from Him and instead, use it to strike Him over and over again.
- They were completely unaware they were fulfilling Micah 5:1 to the letter: "With a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek."
- The profound irony is that they were actively bowing before the One who was and still is in total, sovereign control of the very breath they used to mock Him.

D. The King was Willingly Degraded to Secure Our Glory (Mark 15:20)

Mark 15:20 "20 After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him."

- The "purple" they draped over Him was likely a faded, discarded soldier's cloak.
- Last week we saw the Roman Calvary Officer Martin demonstrate the same. While the world mocked the King's "ruined" garments, it was through this voluntary degradation and stripping of earthly dignity that Jesus directly served the Will of His Father as He got ready to ultimately secure our eternal glory.

II. The Humiliation of the Cross Secured the Salvation of the Lost (Mark 15:21-25)

The soldiers finally tire of their twisted game. They strip off the faded purple cloak, put His own clothes back on Him, and begin the grim march to Golgotha. It is here, on this dusty road, that we see the crushing physical toll of the morning, yet we also see a Savior whose mind is completely fixed on His saving mission.

Having endured the relentless psychological torment of the Roman battalion, Jesus now faces the brutal, physical march to the cross. In these next few verses, Mark shows us a staggering contrast: a human body pushed to its absolute breaking point, carrying a divine authority that refuses to bow.

A. The Creator's Creation Relieved Jesus of Carrying His Cross so He could fulfill His Mission (Mark 15:21; Luke 23:27-31)

Mark 15:21 "21 They pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross."

- Jesus' physical exhaustion was real. We don't need to diminish His physical suffering to protect His deity. The text says the soldiers "compelled" Simon. Not that Jesus didn't call for him, but that does not mean that Jesus had a plan through the acts of the Roman soldiers.
- The Greek word here for compelled is *angareuousin*, a Persian loanword that had become a technical Roman term. It specifically referred to the legal right of a king's courier to commandeer a civilian, their horse, or their property for the king's official business.
- When the soldiers grab Simon of Cyrene, they were invoking a royal prerogative. They thought that they were exercising the authority of Caesar to execute a criminal, but the sovereign irony is that Simon is actually being pressed into royal service by the true King of the Universe to assist in the culmination of redemptive history.
- Orthodox theology holds that Jesus' human body experienced the true, unmitigated reality of trauma. He wasn't faking the exhaustion to free up His hands; His human frame was legitimately failing under the weight of the beating, mocking, scourging, and the wood. But that physical degradation of Jesus' body didn't mean that Jesus was not in control. Note what Luke said about this in his gospel.

Luke 23:27-31 "27 And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him. 28 But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed

are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'
30 "Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills,
'Cover us.' 31 "For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen
when it is dry?'"

- Even though it seems likely that His body was succumbing to the abuse, His sovereign authority was entirely unbowed.
- A normal human being in the agonizing grips of hypovolemic shock and crucifixion protocol would be delirious, begging for mercy, or entirely focused on their own pain. Jesus is none of those things.
- The second the physical weight of the wood was lifted by Simon, Jesus demonstrated absolute cognitive and divine control.
- He did not seek comfort from the mourning women; He spoke to them as the Lord of History, prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- Even as His body was likely failing, His mind and His mission were unquestionably razor-sharp.
- In Luke we are told that He was still teaching, still warning, and still acting as the sovereign Prophet, Priest, and King.
- Jesus moved toward Golgotha not as a helpless victim, but with the focused, unyielding intent of a High Priest approaching the altar, the submissive lamb being led to the slaughter, and still the sovereign Lord of all creation.

B. The King Drank the Cup of Wrath Without Anesthetic (vv. 22-23)

Mark 15:22-23 "22 Then they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. 23 They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it."

- Notice that verse 22 says 'they brought Him' using the Greek word *pherousin*. This is the exact same verb used frequently in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) for bringing a sacrifice to the altar (like in Leviticus 2 and 4). The soldiers thought they were just marching a prisoner to a Roman cross, but under the sovereign inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the vocabulary paralleled the ultimate reality: they were actually bringing the Lamb to the altar.
- He was offered wine mixed with myrrh to numb the agony (v. 23), but He refused it. Historically, this wine mixed with myrrh was a narcotic offered to dull the unimaginable agony of crucifixion. Matthew's gospel notes that Jesus tasted it, recognized the numbing agent, and decisively refused it. Why? Because as our penal substitute, He had to bear the full, unmitigated weight of God's wrath.

- Jesus refused to dull His senses because the atonement required Him to actively and consciously absorb every drop of divine judgment.
- Furthermore, He kept His mind agonizingly clear to finish His priestly work — from saving the thief next to Him, to declaring with His final, conscious breath that our debt was paid in full.

C. The Stripping of the Servant's Robe Leads to God Clothing His People in Righteousness (v. 24)

Mark 15:24 "24 And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take."

- The "casting of lots" for His garments (v. 24) fulfilled the specific prophetic detail of Psalm 22:18, proving that even the callous greed of the soldiers was under the thumb of divine decree, just like the choosing of Simon to carry the cross and His refusal to drink so that He could finish His priestly work.
- As they divided His clothing, the King was stripped of every earthly comfort so that God might in turn, clothe us in the unblemished, royal robes of His own imputed righteousness.

Having stripped Him of His earthly garments, the Romans now sought to strip Him of any remaining dignity by nailing the official legal charge above His head. Yet, just as God sovereignly used the taking of His clothes to secure our righteousness, He used the sneering insult of the Roman court to preach the greatest truth of all time."

III. The Insult of the Accusation Proclaimed the Truth of the Ages (Mark 15:26)

Mark 15:26 "26 The inscription of the charge against Him read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS.""

A. The World Sneered at a Savior Who Wouldn't Save Himself

- The superscription-"THE KING OF THE JEWS"-was likely meant as a stinging, sarcastic jab by Pilate who had the power and authority of Rome in his hands, or maybe there was even a hint of wonder in his mind about this man that he talked face-to-face with. Either way, because of or despite the title nailed about his head, the crowd mocked.
- The Greek words epigraphē (inscription) and aitas (charge) reveal that this wasn't just casual graffiti; it was the official, legally binding decree of the Roman court.
- It perfectly captures the mocking spirit of all that were that that was prophesied in:

Psalm 22:7-8: "**All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 'Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him.'**"

- It seems that they meant it as an insult, scoffing at a King who appeared completely defeated.

B. A Local Insult Became a Global Proclamation

- While Pilate meant the sign to mock the Jewish leadership, it stood as the official, public vindication of Jesus' true identity.
- Pilate likely meant it as a sarcastic sneer, but because it was an official *epigraphē*, Rome had inadvertently legally certified His identity.
- Under Roman law, the charge on that board was an airtight, unchangeable legal decree. What was meant to be the legal justification for His murder became God's sovereign, legally certified declaration to the world: "This man is exactly who He said He is."
- Fastened to the cross in multiple languages, it served as the very **first global proclamation of the Gospel** for all the eyes there to see: **Jesus - is - King**.

C. The Cross was Not a Defeat, But a Coronation

- This title nailed to the cross above the head of Jesus was the "prophetic reality" for both Jew and Gentile.
- To the Jewish remnant, it was the fulfilled promise of the coming Messiah-King; to the Christian, it is the declaration that: The One who died is the One who reigns

Conclusion:

We began this morning looking at the darkest miscarriage of justice in human history—a kangaroo court that stripped an innocent man of His rights, His dignity, and His life.

But as we stand here at the foot of the cross, reading that Roman decree above Jesus' head, we see the profound truth: this was no accident, and He was no mere, helpless victim.

The King willingly endured this humiliation and agony to secure the eternal inheritance of His people.

He allowed the corrupt earthly court to condemn Him so that the righteous Heavenly court could eternally acquit you.

He was stripped of His garments so that you could be clothed in His righteousness.

So, how do we respond to a King like this? What does the reality of the Suffering Servant demand of us today?

Stop trying to clothe yourself.

If you have never placed your faith in Christ, stop trying to build a wardrobe of your own good works to impress God. The Roman soldiers unknowingly painted the picture for us: Jesus was stripped of everything so you could wear His perfect record. The call today is to lay down your pride, stop trusting in your own goodness, and surrender your life to the King who died to clothe you in His righteousness.

Maintain your composure when the world mocks you.

For the believer, when you face profound unfairness, when systems fail you, or when you are mocked for your faith, remember your High Priest. We serve a Savior who did not retaliate when the world spat on Him. You do not need to fiercely defend your own honor or seek revenge, because like Christ, you can entrust yourself to the Sovereign Judge who sees all things.

Remember what victory looks like.

The world defines victory through power, status, and comfort. Christ defined it through sacrifice, trust, and yielding to the Father's will.

This week, look for opportunities to lay down your rights for the sake of serving others and for the will of the Lord in heaven.

We end today not at the grave, but at the sign.

The cross was not the tragic end of a failed rebellion; it was the glorious coronation of the Suffering Servant who was truly, is, and will always be **KING**.