

April 10th, 2022
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: From Gethsemane to Glory
Sermon #2 Title: Between the Courtroom and the Cross
Sermon #2 Text: (Mark 15:16-26)

We are in our second stage of our messages on the way to Resurrection Sunday. Last week we were in Gethsemane, this week we are focused in, on a few short hours, between the Courtroom and the Cross.

We pick up the record of events on that day after all the trials have finished; after the Lord had been scourged; after Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate had finished all of their political bantering, - all of the “trials” are over, and it is time to make their way from the Courtroom to the Cross.

While all four gospels give an account of these moments, we will read through Mark's account; while we draw from the others as well.

We are dealing with a period of time in the day that covered about an hour of time. Our Lord was put on the cross at 9 a.m. So from that point we back up about an hour to verse 16.

Prior to this verse:

- Most likely the events and interactions between the Jews and the Romans officially began around daybreak. – 6-7 am.
- Jesus has not been to sleep since He woke up the day before.

- He has been arrested
- He has been physically, and verbally assaulted by the Pharisees.
- He has been through 4 different examinations
 - 1.) One through Caiaphas and the Sanhedren
 - 2.) One through Herod
 - 3.) Two through Pilate
- He has been scourged with the cat-o-nine tails
- He has been rejected by the Crowd, and finally come to the point where He is done with the counsels, finished with the examinations, and done with the scourgings. He is released to be crucified.

Examining this time between the Courtroom and the Cross, there are several things we could focus on, but today we are going to look at three:

Isaiah 53:8 – *“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”*

I. The Mystery of Cruelty We Must See – vs 16-19 – “And they smote Him on the head with a reed...”

*Note – Looking at these 4 verses here, there is not a lot of theology, not a record of divine wisdom; but these are the historical events the Lord God wants us to know about.

- He had these things written, so that we may know.
- Now this section focuses primarily on the behavior of the Roman soldiers. We have finished dealing with the Jews for now, but this section is all about “they”
 - “they called the whole band together”

- “they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns...
- “they smote Him on the head...
- “when they had mocked”
- “they” are referenced no less than 10 times in these 11 verses of scripture.

The Lord God wants us to KNOW what THEY Did.

A. The Mystery –

*Note – There are two aspects of Christ’s suffering here that we would do well to look at.

1.) First, just from the earthly side. – Why on earth was Rome so brutal in their treatment of their criminals?

- a.) Some say – for a deterrent, and that’s certainly for sure...
- b.) Some say out of pure enjoyment, and while that was true of some, it was not the predominant sense of all the people.

Every society has had its barbaric side, as well as its sense of human compassion. We certainly are told in the New Testament of Centurions and other Romans who were kind and compassionate people.

- c.) BUT there is a third reason, and while it is no justification for their behavior, it does shed light on an explanation.

*Note – It was a result of their false, pagan, philosophical religion in some cases that bred this kind of violence.

In his book “The Murder of Jesus” John MacArthur speaks of the Emperor Tiberius preferring Crucifixion as the main method of punishment as to others for one reason. They

believed dying was more of an escape than a punishment. So the true punishment, the true justice would be found in the suffering of the victim. Their suffering was their sentence, and their death was their escape.

*Note – In other words, Justice may only be served if the person SUFFERS greatly, before they are executed and removed from society.

*Note – When we look back through the Old Testament there is a little bit of mystery that needs to be cleared up; and that’s this.

2.) The Divine Side - Nowhere in the Old Testament do you find the High Priests, brutalizing the lamb before they sacrifice it.

*Note – Now we know Christ is the “Lamb of God” who taketh away the sins of the world. We know that the Passover lamb was the permanent picture of the substitutionary blood atonement, teaching us about the sacrifice for sins.

- If we could look back through the centuries the “Lamb” the picture of Christ was sacrificed year after year...

- They would be born in the shepherds fields
- Raised and nurtured by the priests
- Coddled, cleaned, and cared for, so that they would be without blemish.
- With all of that being said, “If the lambs were to picture Jesus, then obviously the picture only goes so far.” For if the picture were to be completely exact

- the priests should have shaved it naked of its wool, beaten it senseless, tortured it physically, and done all it could to incite fear and panic in it, just before they silently slit its throat.

- Now that being said the Old Testament picture of the lamb only goes so far. The picture may only go so far, but the scriptures go farther.

- The scriptures teach us that there is a divine reason, and saving efficacy for the suffering of Jesus.

Isaiah 53:3-5 – *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

...vs 7 – *“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”*

- Wounded for our Transgressions
- Bruised for our Iniquities
- Oppressed and Afflicted to make His Silence more difficult.

Suffering for our Sin played as much a role in our Salvation as did His death. – We can never forget the suffering!

B. The Mockery – vs 15-18 (READ IT)

Matthew 20:19 – Mockery was part of the promised process.

- “And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again.”

1.) When they called the whole band in to the Praetorium, if we have our history right, that was about 600 soldiers.

*Note – Don’t miss what they did in that room.

*Note – They setup a Mock Throne Room, and put Jesus at the Center.

*Note - For as much disdain as the Jews had for the Romans, the Romans shared toward the Jews.

- To these Romans, Jesus was a madman. The Romans thought it a fitting thing that a “Madman” would be the king of the people that the Romans despised.

- It is no stretch to think that what the Roman mob poured out on Jesus, was not primarily their mockery of Him, but of THEM. – Jesus was the representative Jew to the Romans.

- it would be a great insult to the Jews for the Romans to “Run with the idea that a Mad man was their King.” – The Jews despised the claim, and the Romans despised the Jews, therefore, the Romans maximized their insult of the Jews, by maximizing the misery and pain of Jesus.

- Jesus essentially meant nothing to the Romans, but He was a great sore spot for the Jews. It would be a source of dark and satisfying insult to show the Jews as much disdain for them as they could.

(Note – This is why they “put the robe on Jesus” and “why they took it off!” – For if Jesus had gone out dressed in the colors of a king, the fervor of the Jews would have been incited even

further against Rome. – They certainly threw a fit when Pilate wrote what he did on the placard above His head.)

C. The Misery – “the crown of thorns”- “the smiting on the head”

*Note – Now we must look at the misery inflicted on Jesus.

- No sleep in 24 hours to exacerbate everything.
- The shredded body with the maximum amount of pain having been inflicted.
- And here, all of the brutality is now concentrated on his head and face...

- a.) The thorns.
- b.) Smiting on the head.
- c.) Spitting in the face.

*Note – There aren’t enough words in the English language to accurately describe the sheer physical pain our Lord’s body was in.

- And we have not talked about His emotional state, or His mental state.

*Note – Listen to what Isaiah says in Isaiah 53:11 – “***He (God) shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.***”

*Note – It was the total convergence of the greatest amount of physical pain, the greatest amount of emotional pain, and the greatest amount spiritual pain, all meeting on the same man, at the same time, experiencing the maximum amount justice for sin, on the soul of Jesus of Nazareth. – When God saw that, in that moment, when it was all together in Him, and on Him – God was satisfied.

- I’ll tell you when I believe that moment happened.
I believe that happened right after Jesus cried out Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani...

- Because up till that point...

- a.) All the physical pain was there
- b.) All the emotional pain was there

- But when God turned his back on Jesus

- c.) All the spiritual pain was there with them, and God saw it, and as Isaiah said – “was satisfied”

*Note – Because right after that – Jesus said – “It is finished!”

*Note – Now we said all of that to show the Mystery behind the Cruelty that we must see.

II. A Man of Bravery We Must Note - Simon, A Cyrenian (vs 21)

*Note – What do we know about this man, and why and how did he become part of the events of the crucifixion?

- He is coming in from the country of modern day Libya
 - (He may have been a Jew coming in for the Passover – we don’t know.)
 - He was compelled, instructed, ordered by some Roman Centurion to come and bear the wooden load for Jesus.
 - He did. (We don’t know if there was resistance or not, but ultimately he did.)

*Note – Many different people have set in hand the effort to explain the Sovereign and Divine message God gives us in Simon. The problem is that the text of scripture never says WHY God involved him in the events of that day, just THAT he was involved. It is futile to assign a reason to something God

did not give. While we cannot know the REASON Simon was involved or some mysterious message Simon sends, we can see the RESULTS of Simons involvement.

A. He is a Testimony to the Condition of Jesus –

*Note – Simon’s presence and activity underscores for us that the Lord was in no physical shape, had no more human strength, and had been rendered incapable of carrying a hundred plus pound piece of wood.

- If there were ever a question as to the effects of all that suffering had on Jesus, Simon puts that to rest!

B. He Bore Indignity in Connection to Jesus –

- 1.) Romans made their criminals carry their own cross for the purpose of embarrassment.
 - When people saw someone carrying a cross, it was a message that this man was worthy of disdain, worthy of shame. He would experience the spitting and the shouting, and the cursing of the people. And for a period of time would be branded as a man not worthy to live!

*Note – He would wear the “unjust shame” of a cross!

C. He Left a Legacy of Conversion to Jesus –

*Note – We are not told of Simon’s immediate reaction, and response to the events of that day; but we have good insight into the long term effects.

- a.) Mark wrote this gospel in the mid-50s; and he wrote it with the Roman believers in mind.
 - he is the only gospel that names the sons of Simon.
 - Later on, in Romans 16:13- Paul wrote – “Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.”

*Note – For the most part, it is regularly accepted among historians that the Rufus in Rome, was the Rufus of Simon.

- Many think Mark included this in the gospel because Simon, and his wife, and his Sons were so influential in the early days of Christianity.

- Being from Lybia, it would not take 50 days later at Pentecost for the news to get to North Africa that Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified. And for certain if Simon was there for the week following Passover, he would know not only of the death of Jesus, but the resurrection as well.

- Talk about a story to tell to the nations!

III. The Matters of History We Must Hear –

*Note - This is not a theological passage it is a historical record. All that we are reading here is a historical account of the events that took place when Jesus went to the cross.

A. The Place Marked - The place of a skull

*Note – For the entire first generation of Christians, this was a known place, in a particular location.

*Note – Here is where the Bible always opens itself up to testing. When the Bible speaks of important matters, it gives verifiable information, like names, places, times.

- 1.) There is a linguistic connection back to the head of Goliath that David brought back to Jerusalem.

- By definition “Golgotha means Skull” – the Latin word is where we get the word “Calvary” from.

- Most of the time, we recognize the “place of the skull” to be that place in Jerusalem, near that hill side with the skull face looking out ominously from the rocks... and I believe rightly so.

- But there is another reason, some historians say it is called “the place of a skull.” And that is the tradition that it was on this hill, and in this area, that David buried the head of “Goliath.”

One writer asserts that “Golgotha is a combined form of the words, “Goliath of Gath.”

Now all through history the Lord has given “Circumstantial Pictures” to demonstrate Eternal Truths.

- The Flood – pictured Judgment
- The Lamb – pictured Christ
- The Jordan River – pictures man’s course from the heights of Hermon to the depths of the dead sea in judgment.

*Note – In short, God worked historical moments into his future plans to weave a clear and present message.

With Goliath’s head buried in the hill of Golgotha

- Every enemy of Christ, dies at the cross!
- Every enemy of Christ, can live through the cross!

B. The Pain Accepted – vs 23

- 1.) There would be no narcotics for Jesus
- He would receive the full amount of pain.

*Note – If you will remember, in the mock throne room, Matthew tells us that they put a reed in the right hand of Jesus – all that tells you is that “He held it.” – He didn’t throw it to the floor, or let it fall. – He accepted the mockery, He would accept the misery.

C. The Pathetic Sadness – vs 24- Gambling for Garments

*Note – There is probably no more of a pathetic picture of detached, disconnected, and desensitized people, than men playing games at the foot of the cross.

- (That could be the basis for an entire series of messages – Playing games at the foot of the cross!)

(How demonically ironic – “They’ll take his Robes, without His Righteousness. – That’s no different than someone wanting to wear the Robe of Righteousness, without the Righteousness of the Robe!) – no better than pathetic little gambler at the foot of Calvary.

D. The Prophecy Fulfilled - There, they Crucified the Him.

*Note – The centerpiece of the entire human drama. The fulcrum of history, and the pivot of every man’s eternal destiny . . . and it is only described with four words – “and they crucified Him.”

- No detailed description.
- No action by action retelling.
- With so many details prophesied, promised, and fulfilled, from the behaviors of men, to the course of events, to the timings, places, processes and people; - yet a strange sacred silence about the moment He was nailed to the cross.
- These were the Central Sacred Seconds of all Eternity; and they would not be flowered over with too many words. – Just the fact.

We have looked at The Mystery of Cruelty, a Man of Bravery, and the Matters of History...

Conclusion: Now preacher, WHY did you tell us all of this?
Because He wrote all of this!

What are we supposed to do with all of that? – What do you think you're supposed to do with it?

Why did the Lord tell you this – so you would KNOW. So this knowledge would land in your soul, saturate your mind, and clarify the magnitude of the crisis of life – whether you will be SAVED, or whether you will be LOST. – Whether you will LIVE in SUBMISSION to the Lord and His Word, or whether you will live independently from the Lord.

Some years ago, in a public park in Eugene, Oregon, a sand and gravel company erected a giant cross. They did not have permission to do so. However, through the years the cross became a symbol to the people of Eugene. Especially at Christmas, when the cross was lighted brilliantly and sent its rays of faith and hope shining through the city, did the people appreciate it.

But with the current feelings of anti-religion becoming more prominent, a movement to have the cross removed gathered momentum. A lawsuit was filed by a Unitarian minister and the court ruled that the cross had to be removed because it violated the principle of the separation of church and state. An appeal was made to the State Supreme Court.

The higher court ruled that the cross could stay because it was simply a symbol, universally accepted, and now has no religious significance, and thus does not violate the principle of the separation of church and State.

The Cross can Stay – because it no longer means anything. – the saddest thing is that is really is the case with so many people.