

Jesus Died

Mark 15:33-39

Let's walk through this passage together making **three observations and then some conclusions**. First we will observe what happened to Jesus, what Jesus did and what happened around Jesus. Finally, we will draw some conclusions about what it all means.

You have a handout that shows Mark 15 on the left and Psalm 22 on the right - you might keep that open in front of you, with your Bible open to the Gospel of Mark. In Mark 15:34 Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" That is the first verse of Psalm 22 - something Jesus, a Rabbi, would have expected his disciples to understand. By quoting that single verse, Jesus expected his followers to study Psalm 22 in order to understand the meaning of what was happening at that moment.

So that is what we will do today. We will listen to our Rabbi's dying scream and learn the lesson he to which he was pointing us.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest." Psalm 22:1-2

As Jesus was dying on the cross something much bigger, much greater, was happening. The curtain of the temple - the huge, ornate, impossible to tear, heavy purple curtain was torn in half - but **something else was tearing at the very center of the fabric of the universe**. This is the central moment of history. This was the whole reason that Jesus came. He came to die. But his death had a very specific, life-changing, world-changing purpose. We'll explore that at the end.

For now let's walk through **what happened to Jesus**. First, he was betrayed. Mark 1:15 shows that Pilate - the Roman representative of justice in Israel - was more concerned with the crowd than he was with the truth.

What happened to Jesus:

- **Betrayed**

*"So Pilate, **wishing to satisfy the crowd**, released for them Barabbas, and having **scourged Jesus**, he delivered him to be crucified." Mark 15:15*

But before he stood in front of Pilate, Jesus was betrayed by Judas - one of his 12 disciples. He was abandoned by the other 11 and denied by Peter, the leader of the group. Judas led the Jewish authorities to where Jesus was praying. The Jewish leaders led him through a farce of a trial, struggling to get two witnesses to agree on any charges against him. Finally, the one thing they could latch onto was Jesus' own claim -

The charge against Jesus:

“Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus said, “**I am**, and you will see **the Son of Man** seated at the right hand of Power and **coming on the clouds of heaven.**” And the high priest tore his garments and said, “You have heard **his blasphemy.**” Mark 14:62

They rightly interpreted that **Jesus was claiming to be God** and the high priest tore his robes and pronounced it blasphemy deserving of death. They couldn’t get any other charges to stick, for there was nothing else to charge Jesus with - He was the only truly righteous person ever to have lived.

So the greatest betrayal in Jesus’ trial was not Judas or Peter, or the High Priest or Pilate - the **greatest betrayal was Justice itself.** The only truly righteous person was condemned in violation of everything that is good and right and fair. The One who should have been in the Judge’s chair was judged worthy of death by proud, selfish, sinful men.

What happened to Jesus:

- **Betrayed**

“And they bound him and led him away and **delivered him** over to Pilate... So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, **released for them Barabbas**, and having scourged Jesus, **he delivered him** to be crucified.” Mark 15:1,15

The Jewish authorities delivered Jesus to the Roman governor. And the Roman governor who held the power to save or execute him instead released an infamous murderer and rebel named Barabbas. The one appointed to enforce justice in Israel condemned an innocent man and released a murderer. Jesus was betrayed by justice.

What happened to Jesus:

- **Betrayed**
- **Beaten**

“So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and **having scourged Jesus**, he delivered him to be crucified.” Mark 15:1,15

Pilate chose to satisfy the crowd instead of satisfying justice. And he handed Jesus over to the executioners who prepared Jesus for crucifixion through a process called **scourging**. I don’t think any of us appreciated that one word “scourging” until the film, **the Passion of the Christ**. We didn’t appreciate D-Day until Saving Private Ryan and we had no idea the severity of a Roman scourging until the Passion movie. This was **a gruesome, brutal, vicious form of torture.**

By the end of this whipping there were very few parts of Jesus body where the skin was still intact. His entire back was nothing but raw, bloody flesh and exposed nerve endings. The cat of

nine tails whip the Romans used reached around to his front and down to all parts of his legs, tearing whole sections of skin off with every wicked stroke.

Where was the blood that Jesus shed for us? It wasn't on the cross so much. Crucifixion was not a particularly bloody death. It was in his scourging that Jesus bled for us - and his blood would have drenched the floor of that room as the whip of punishment fell upon him again and again - the innocent One.

Jesus was betrayed, he was beaten. Look at Psalm 22 and how this poem by David so accurately predicted the sufferings of Christ:

“Trouble is near, and there is none to help... Strong bulls of Bashan surround me... I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; **my heart is like wax**; it is melted within my breast; **my strength is dried up** like a potsherd.” Psalm 22: 11-15

He was surrounded by powerful, dangerous beasts. His life was poured out like water. His very heart melted like wax within him and his strength was utterly exhausted. We see in Mark 15:21 that Jesus couldn't carry his own cross, **he was so weakened** by the scourging and other beatings he received.

On top of this, Jesus was mocked and stripped naked.

What happened to Jesus:

- **Mocked & Stripped**

“And **divided his garments among them, casting lots** for them, to decide what each should take. And those who passed by **derided him**, wagging their heads and saying... ‘**Save yourself, and come down from the cross!**’” Mark 15:24,29

The One most worthy of PRAISE was subjected to mockery, stripped of his clothing and exposed to **the public shame of crucifixion**. Listen to the specific form of abuse heaped on Jesus: “Save yourself! Prove it! If you are the King... If you are the Son of GOD... come on down from there!”

Oh, they thought they were so smart. They thought *they* were in control and Jesus was laid bare, weak and helpless before them. They scoff at the Savior, “Save yourself!”

Could any one of us have endured that mockery? Jesus, at any moment, could have said, “**Enough.**” He could have sent a whistle or a thought and 12 legions of angels would have descended from the clouds in an instant, wiping out the Roman soldiers, vaporizing the Jewish authorities and consuming all of Jerusalem in the holy fires of God's righteous fury. He could have.

But if he had responded to their taunts and gotten himself down from the cross, there would have been no Savior for any of us to believe in. There would only be a wrathful judge before whom all would tremble in terror and shame - with no hope whatsoever. Those taunts were actually temptations to forsake his mission and abandon all of humanity with it.

But our gracious and compassionate Savior would not rise to the bait. Instead of saving himself and condemning us he endured the mockery, ***suffering condemnation himself in order to protect us from judgment.*** For us, he was crucified, abandoned and sealed in a tomb.

What happened to Jesus:

- **Crucified, Abandoned & Buried**

“And **divided his garments among them, casting lots** for them, to decide what each should take. And those who passed by **derided him**, wagging their heads and saying... ‘**Save yourself, and come down from the cross!**’” Mark 15:24,29

Again, Psalm 22 predicted that his hands and feet would be pierced and his garments divided by the casting of lots. This is remarkable precision for a prophecy over 1,000 years before the fact.

What happened to Jesus:

- **Crucified, Abandoned & Buried**

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death... a company of evildoers encircles me; **they have pierced my hands and feet**— I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; **they divide my garments** among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.” Psalm 22:15-18

Jesus was crucified - hung on a cross, symbolic of the curse of God and representing Rome’s most shameful form of punishment. His disciples had long since **abandoned** him, scattering in every direction as soon as Judas and his company surrounded them. At the cross only a few of the brave women were there, and even they were gathered at a distance. And finally, Jesus breathed his last and was **buried in a cold tomb** cut into the rock, the heavy stone rolled into place with heavy finality.

That is **what happened to Jesus:** betrayed by justice, beaten beyond recognition, mocked and reviled, stripped of his clothes and nailed to a cross. He was abandoned by all but a few of his friends and sealed away in the tomb.

Now let’s look at **what Jesus did.** What is striking in Mark 15 is that Jesus did almost nothing.

What Jesus Did:

- **Quietly endured unimaginable suffering**

“And Pilate again asked him, ‘Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you.’ **But Jesus made no further answer**, so that Pilate was amazed.” Mark 15:3-5

Jesus was totally passive throughout his trials. In the face of the most grievous injustice in history, ***the innocent defendant remained silent***. He refused to defend himself - for to do so would be to accuse and condemn us. Having counted the cost of obedience in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus quietly endured the sham of a trial and humbly accepted the inevitable verdict of death.

As you read through this account, ***everyone is acting*** against Jesus and he just takes it. Listen to the verbs, starting in verse 15 - Pilate delivered him to be crucified; the soldiers led him away, mocked him, clothed him in a purple cloak, began to salute him, striking his head; then they stripped him and led him out to crucify him. They compelled Simon to carry the cross, the brought Jesus to Golgotha, they offered him a wine mixture and in verse 24, "they crucified him." Everyone is acting. Everyone is doing things *except Jesus*.

By my count there are 25 verbs of people acting from verse 15 through 32 and the only action Jesus takes is in verse 23 when he refused the wine mixture. After all, Jesus knew, ***there is no wine or anesthetic that can dull the pain I am about to endure***.

Jesus did not protest the verdict or the sentence. He quietly accepted the gross injustice of his condemnation and the result of crucifixion. More than that, as the soldiers mocked him and beat him bloody he did not lift a finger to resist. The most powerful being in the universe allowed weak, sinful men to pummel his body over and over - mocking him at every turn. That is like the strongest Navy Seal letting a band of 1st grade bullies beat him into the ground. And that's not even enough of a contrast. It's like a T-Rex or Carnosaur, huge and powerful beyond imagining, allowing itself to be slowly nibbled to death by a little colony of mice. Or, to follow C.S. Lewis, like the mighty Aslan the Lion laying down on the stone table and allowing his glorious mane to be shaved off.

Yes, Jesus quietly endured the suffering as the Lion of Judah became the Lamb of God who could take away the sins of the world. Then in the one moment of action from Jesus, he shouted. V. 34

What Jesus Did:

- **Shouted the agony of being forsaken by the Father**

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice... 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' ...And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last." Mark 15:34,37

In the quietness and darkness, in the writhing, gasping agony of three men being crucified, suddenly a cry rang out across the hill. It was in Aramaic, Jesus' home language - the language of family intimacy. But the words indicated brokenness, abandonment, desperation and separation. ***Jesus was forsaken.***

Consider quietly for a moment what that meant. ***For eternity past Jesus was in perfectly harmonious, loving relationship with the Father*** in glorious union with the Holy Spirit. The three-in-One Godhead were in an everlasting dance of mutual giving of honor one to the other. There was a change to this arrangement in the incarnation as the Divine Son had his infinite DNA woven into the human gene pool in Mary's womb. The relationship between Father and Son was not damaged, but it was changed.

But when Jesus hung on the cross, ***the relationship was suddenly, violently BROKEN***. Jesus expressed this in the emotional cry of **one FORSAKEN**. The pain we feel in a broken relationship corresponds to the previous health and strength of the relationship. Teenagers, if you date someone for 24 hours like I "dated" Maureen Shack in 6th grade you can't yet understand what it is to have a "broken heart." Ah, sixth grade romance. I mustered the courage to squeak out: "Will you go out with me?" heard her say, "OK" and then I bolted for the door and didn't speak to her until the next day when she said, "Sorry, Darin, it isn't going to work out." I was crushed by that loss but in retrospect, it was a silly thing to lose sleep over. There was no actual relationship there that I lost.

By contrast, some of you have been through ***the pain of divorce***. That is probably the closest thing we have in this life to feeling what Jesus felt. I've heard from numerous people that divorce is the most painful things a person can experience - worse than disease, worse even than the sudden, tragic loss of a child. And it is worse because it is a pain that someone **CHOSE**. They **CHOSE** to leave you. They chose to walk away from you. **They CHOSE to forsake you**. That is agony. That is a broken heart. In the depths of your being you scream: "WHY?" Why have you forsaken me?

The pain corresponds to the importance of the relationship to you. You made vows to each other. "For better or worse, richer or poorer, to love and cherish you as long as we both shall live." The person who promised to love and cherish you - and who maybe did love you for many years - suddenly rejects you, turns back on that promise and forsakes the one he promised never to leave in this life.

I'm sorry to open that wound for those of you who have been through it. But all of us have witnessed divorce as it is so common these days. Divorce is carnage. It is brokenness. It is despair, sadness, rejection and loss.

That is what Jesus felt as he hung on the cross. ***He was suddenly DIVORCED from his Father*** in heaven. He was crushingly separated from fellowship with the Spirit. The perfectly righteous Son of God was covered with the sins of mankind - past, present and future - and as those sins piled onto Jesus, ***the loving approval of God the Father for His Son was transformed into raging fury***.

Jesus was forsaken, rejected and condemned by the Father. The One to whom the Father twice said, "This is my beloved Son, with him I am well pleased," was - on the cross - the polar opposite of that. All of your sin and mine - every terrible, shameful thing people have ever done was applied to Jesus in those moments. ***The beloved one was abandoned.*** The righteous one was condemned. The perfectly pleasing child was judged to be utterly, wretchedly guilty and was cast into the outer darkness reserved for the devil and his demons.

That is why **darkness covered the earth** from noon until three (an event attested by Matthew, Mark and Luke plus three secular historians: <https://creation.com/darkness-at-the-crucifixion-metaphor-or-real-history>). This was the very middle of the day when the sun should have been at its maximum height. And just as the plague of darkness blotted out the power of **the sun God Ra** in Egypt, so the darkness during the crucifixion symbolized what was happening with **the Son of God.**

- Jesus' - the light of the world - was plunged into darkness.
- Jesus - the righteous one - was covered in sin.
- Jesus - gloriously worthy of worship - was condemned as guilty
- Jesus - the giver of life - was overcome by death.
- Jesus - in eternal harmony with the Godhead - was forsaken by the Father.

Picture Jesus holding the great bubbling goblet, brewing with ***the wine of God's righteous fury*** against sin. On the cross Jesus took that cup in his hands and drank it - every single drop.

When he passed the wine to his disciples on the night before you can imagine how his hand trembled to pass it. Yes, he thought, you will all drink this to remember my blood, shed for you. ***You will drink this and live.*** But I must drink another cup and die. Jesus drank the cup of God's fury so we could drink the cup of His grace - a New Covenant written not in stone but in blood. Jesus suffocated and died under the weight of our sin so that we could breathe in and live in the glory of His righteousness.

That is what Jesus did. He quietly endured unimaginable suffering and then shouted the agony of being forsaken by the Father. One more set of observations: look at **what happened around Jesus.**

Most people made fun of him - soldiers, passersby, religious leaders, even the robbers dying on crosses beside him. Darkness covered the land as the darkness of sin covered and extinguished the light of the world. And v. 37

What happened around Jesus:

- The darkness of sin covered the light of the world
- The dividing wall between God and man was ripped open

“And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And *the curtain of the temple was torn in two*, from top to bottom.” Mark 15:37-38

This grand, ornate and STRONG curtain separated the holy place in the temple sanctuary from the most holy place. It was the final dividing wall in the center of lots of walls of separation.

Do you remember ***the first dividing wall in history?*** It happened back in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned against God and ate from the forbidden tree. They were cast out of the Garden and an angel was stationed there to keep all people out - swinging **a flaming sword** that represented the justice and holiness of God who could not allow sinful people into the Garden of His presence.

When Jesus died on the cross, he walked under that flaming sword of God’s justice and was struck down by it. But when he absorbed that killing blow, the flaming sword was broken and the way that had been closed was suddenly opened back up! Those who had been cast out from the Garden of God’s presence now had a way back in! Jesus is that way! His death broke the sword! The curtain that kept sinful people out of the holy presence of God was torn in half from top to bottom. That means it was entirely God’s doing – torn down from top to bottom!

So – here are two conclusions about what this all means. First, it means that ***Jesus endured hell so he could open the way into heaven.***

What it all means:

- Jesus endured hell so he could open the way into heaven

“In you our fathers trusted... and *you delivered them*. To you they cried and *were rescued*; in you they trusted and were *not put to shame*.” Psalm 22:4-5

We are studying ***the Gospel of Jesus Christ*** - the Lord of heaven and earth. He came, born as a weak, helpless human baby. He lived the perfect life so he could become **the perfect sacrifice**. And here, on the cross, is the central truth of the Gospel - that **Jesus died for you and for me**.

His death does not just mean physical death. We will all still experience physical death unless Jesus comes back first. He died for us in the sense that he endured the spiritual death that we deserve. He suffered the condemnation for sin that should have fallen on us. He endured hell so we would not have to. He was forsaken by God so we could be accepted. He died so we could live. He let the sword of God’s justice fall on him so it would not have to fall on us. Praise the Lord for this majestically good news! Jesus endured hell to become the doorway into heaven.

Second, it means that Jesus accomplished our salvation completely. Jesus paid it all. There is nothing for us to add. Listen to Psalm 22:31!

What it all means:

- Jesus accomplished our salvation completely

“They shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, *that he has done it.*”

Psalm 22:31

Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1, but our wonderful Rabbi wanted us to understand the entire Psalm and read it to the end so we could appreciate all that He was accomplishing for us. “HE HAS DONE IT.” John records Jesus’ saying from the cross, *“It is finished.”*

Let that glorious Gospel truth sink into your heart and mind. Jesus has done it. It is finished.

Salvation was fully and completely and eternally accomplished right there on the cross.

There is nothing for you to pay for in the future because Jesus paid it fully in the past. Wrath and judgment do not await you when you stand before God because Jesus already bore the punishment for our sins. We are here in fulfillment of David’s prophecy in Psalm 22:31 - “They shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn.” We are those people who have now been born and are living to proclaim the righteousness, mercy and grace of Jesus Christ the Lord!

We profess the gospel that we believe - that HE HAS DONE IT. And we trust in Him alone. Only Jesus is worthy of our praise. Only Jesus deserves our trust. Only Jesus can satisfy our hearts. Only Jesus is the hope of the world. That’s another sermon waiting for you in the end of Psalm 22. Read it yourself. “In Christ alone my hope is found. He is my light my strength, my song.”

Let’s pray as we prepare to go to the Lord’s table to remember and give thanks for His death for us. This is the Gospel we believe. This is the Gospel we depend on and feed on every single day.