

## Jesus Died for Us

The sermon text is Mark 15, appropriate text there, Luke or Matthew, on the death of Jesus Christ. Mark 15, verses 15 and following, it's a larger section here, but shorter compared to the other books, in fact, of the New Testament. Mark 15, 15 and following, let us listen attentively to the word of God.

They worshiped him, and then they mocked him, and they took the purple off him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. Then they compelled a certain man, Simon of Cyrenean, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear his cross. They brought him to the place of Golgotha, which is translated place of a skull, and they gave him wine, mingled with myrrh to drink, but he did not take it.

And when they crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots for them to determine whatever every man should take. Now, it was the third hour, and they crucified him, and the inscription of his accusation was written above, the king of the Jews. With him they also crucified two robbers, one on his right and the other on his left.

So the scripture was fulfilled, which says, and he was numbered with the transgressors. And those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads and saying, Aha, you who destroyed the temple and built it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross. Likewise, the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save.

Let the Christ, the king of Israel, descend now from the cross that we may see and believe. Even those who were crucified with him reviled him. Now, when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabbath akhnaneh, which is translated, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And some of those who stood by when they heard this said, Look, he is calling for Elijah. And someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine and put it on a reed and offered it to him to drink, saying, Let him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come and take him down.

And Jesus cried out with a loud voice and breathed his last. Let us pray. In the reading of this, God, may our hearts be touched and moved that the Son of God came man and suffered ridicule, physical pain and punishment and scourgings and ultimately a slow, agonizing death for ourselves, for his people, for our sins, for our transgressions, that we deserve such torment and misery in our lives.

And God the Son said, No, I will take it upon myself. I will take the condemnation of my people and they shall have my righteousness. Our Lord God and Savior may continue to move our hearts and strengthen us, God, and indeed energize us by your Spirit with a growing heart of love and consideration of the greatness of the redemption that we have, the salvation, the saving of our souls and the person and work, the death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we celebrate this, this morning with the Lord's Supper, we pray. Amen. The Son of God, the second member of the Holy Blessed Trinity, came to earth in order to redeem us.

He had a purpose and a plan from eternity past. He took upon himself man's nature, his body and soul, and that without sin. And thus he had full identity or identification with his people.

The first four books of the New Testament testify to these facts and record his life for our sake, that we may believe, as John tells us at the end of his book, and in believing that we may be saved. They start with his life and end with the resurrection from the dead. The book of Mark is the shortest of these four books, being written in a tight, quick-moving format.

We see that here in these verses about the end of his earthly ministry. After a humiliating night of betrayal, loneliness and painful suffering, our precious Lord is walking toward the cross, fully aware of the coming pain and misery that he will experience, that he is voluntarily walking into. He is still alone and full of physical pain, but now the public ridicule and mocking are ramped up on top of everything else before his slow death.

His suffering in our stead does not end there, yet it finds its full fulfillment in his death on the cross, where he gives up the ghost and he breathes his last breath and he dies. A public humiliation along with a slow, torturous death is what he purposely did, intentionally did, because of his love for us. Our Messiah and Savior did all these things, brothers and sisters, and let us go a little more carefully through the text to see more, I hope, with clarity what he went through.

## **Jesus Mocked for Us**

It wasn't just words on a page. We get the sense more clearly in our hearts. Jesus was mocked for us, verses 15 to 20, although the mocking, of course, continued through the events.

These are parallel ideas, but I'm breaking up here for clarity's sake as we go through the verses, verses 15 to 20. He was scourged, so Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, because Pilate was what? A coward, an evil man, released Barabbas, a known criminal, to them and he delivered Jesus instead to the mad crowd who lusted after murder. What? When did he do this? After he had been scourged.

It wasn't enough to die in public humiliation and embarrassment on the cross. He beat him. The scourging, more precisely, and not a beating of the hands, typically we think of the word beating of the hand or a club.

It is described here, usually the process of scourging began by stripping the victim of his clothes and tying his hands. The victim was bent over a column or a stake to which he was tied, and this would have been done right in front of the praetorium, which is a large gathering place of leadership. Deuteronomy limits the number of beatings, of course, but that was Deuteronomy, not the Romans.

It was typically a cat-o'-nine-tails, it's called a leather thong, hanging off a stick with bones and pieces of metal, and so you would have that whipping effect while being ripped upon your skin. Roman scourging was so cruel that often people died from it. Mocking Jesus, verses 17 to 20 and they clothed him with purple and twisted a crown of thorns and put it on his head and began to salute him, hail, king of the Jews.

We know they don't really mean that. This is that irony, but irony of a terrible sort, a literary irony of using the words with the opposite meaning behind, the opposite meaning of hatred and of ridicule and despising him. And it's interesting that these, excuse me, that the soldiers who did this, they don't know who Jesus is, they're not fellow Jews, but they had that kind of hate in them.

Now here, verse 16, that the soldiers led him away and led him to the hall called Praetorium, it means common hall, or the general's tent or headquarters by practice often, and therefore the Roman governor's residence here in this place. So it's a semi-technical term. He was clothed with purple, which we know is a symbol of royalty, the color itself.

The crown of thorns, of course, again, another symbol of royalty, but here it's a mock crown, twisted a crown of thorns, bleeding upon his head, into his skin and his scalp. They saluted him, hail, king of the Jews, laughing at him and mocking him in their words. The ridicule of him and more physical abuse, verses 19 and 20, they struck him on the head with a reed and spat on him.

He was already beat with the cat o' nine tails, laughed at, and they strike him some more, and even spat on him. We recognize that today, people still do that when they hate or despise somebody or something, and they even bowed the knee and they worshiped him. Again, mock worship, it wasn't real or serious.

They were looking down on him, laughing at him. This is what endured for us, brothers and sisters, and it just gets worse from there. Verses 21 to 32, then they compelled a certain man, Simon, they carried the cross for him, and they brought him to the place of Golgotha, which is translated a place of the skull.

They gave him wine, mingled with myrrh to drink, and they crucified him and divided his garments, and it was the third hour. So the carrying of the cross here, Simon, this man was from Cyrene or the modern Tripoli, right? North Africa, port, founded during the Durian period of the Greek history, about 631 BC, so it wasn't a small, unknown place, and after the beatings, his physical beatings and the like, I'm sure he's exhausted, his body's about to fall apart, and the Roman soldiers recognized this, because they wanted to beat them down to the last possible element of strength before he died, so they let someone else carry the cross for him. Of course, that's a humiliating act itself, to carry your own cause of death through a crowd of mocking people, laughing and looking at you, ridiculing you, and spitting at you, and probably still beating you, grabbing at you, and throwing things at you, done out in the open, and through the middle of the town, you couldn't get away from it, everyone's gonna stare at you.

## Jesus Suffered for Us

Now, Golgotha, verse 22, they brought him to the place Golgotha, which is translated place of a skull, probably because of how it looked, a solemn place outside the city, but not too far away, a common and well-known place. His crucifixion, verses 23 and following, they gave him wine, mingled with myrrh there at the Golgotha, before they set him up on the cross, and crucified him, and divided his garments. Wine and myrrh, a common concoction as an opiate for victims, I guess it's a sort of kind of compassion.

What do we notice here about that? They gave him wine and myrrh, mingled together to drink, but he did not take it. He would take no relief, brothers and sisters, for you. Dividing the garments, why are they doing this, other than we clearly see that they just mean people, these soldiers, I mean, police officers doing this today, there'd be the media all over them, there'd be courts, and trials, and maybe even riots in the streets.

It was a different world, brothers and sisters. We are blessed in so many ways today. It was a different world.

It was part of the soldiers' pay, was looting the victim. So not unlike wartime, you invade a city, and you took whatever you got. That was your payment, because it's hard work, killing people, attacking places, marching and everywhere.

Other accounts we read, quote, they said, therefore, among themselves, let us not tear it, but cast it for lots. This is in the New Testament. Whose it shall be, that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, they divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots, quoting Psalm 22, 18.

Now the crucifixion itself here, Mark just simply says, and they crucified him. Not even a full verse, full sentence here, verse 24, because he knew, his audience knew what crucifixion was about, and how cruel it was. It's considered one of the most cruelest forms of death during that time.

We don't. So I'll read to you what they did. And this is from Dr. Koppos' book, More About Jesus, where he gathers all this data here, and the life of Jesus.

Quote, it required a hammer, nails, the cross, of course, the beams of wood, and food for the soldiers as they waited for the victim to die. And they sat there and waited, kind of had a little snack. Four soldiers were usually detailed for each crucifixion, and a centurion, that's their sergeant, headed up the party.

Hence, there were probably 13 Roman soldiers detailed for this particular execution. Next, the victim, stripped of his outer clothing, was placed on top of the horizontal piece, which lay on the ground. His arms were held up from his body, and bound to the bar.

A strong, sharp nail was driven into his right hand, and then to his left hand. Then the soldiers used ropes or ladders as they drew the victim up onto the vertical post, lifting him

up slowly, and the weight would, of course, pull down on his arms and his body. The weight through his arms and his hands nailed to the cross.

The uprights and horizontal parts of the cross were attached by ropes or spikes. The rest, or support for the body, to hold it up, was attached to the upright pole at the feet of the victim. Finally, the feet were extended, and a nail, or perhaps two nails, were driven through them into the body to support.

So, three to four nails, pounding after pounding, into his body. The victim would be a little above ground, with their feet a foot or so above it. So, it's not really as high up as we perhaps thought.

Verses 25 and following. Now, it was the third hour, and they crucified him. The inscription of his accusation was written above, the King of the Jews.

The third hour, as they counted time there, is about 9 a.m. The inscriptions are common to describe the criminal, so people know what the crime was. Of course, here Pilate gave the right title to Jesus. They were trying to use it ironically.

They, as we read other accounts, they didn't like that. No, you should say he thought of himself as the King of the Jews, and Herod said, I wrote what I wrote. Suck it up, buttercup, you're on your own.

That's how providence works, that kind of interesting irony there, that this wicked man did the right thing, entitling him the King of Kings, even the King of Herod. The King of the Jews, inscriptions are common. There, as I pointed out, the Jewish leaders wanted to take it down the cloak and the crown, and now the inscription of mocking of Jesus were real.

They're actual. He is the King. He will have a crown.

He will have a robe. In fact, this robe would be bathed in blood, we read in the prophecies of his enemies, and the great judgment to come. So, they show the truth that he is indeed the King of Kings, even though their intent and their heart was wicked, and exercising these things, and giving him the accoutrements of royalty.

The long-awaited promised Messiah was here for the Jews, for his people. Instead of receiving with open arms, they crucified him. They did the exact opposite.

They doubled down and tripled down in hatred, and spite, and bitterness against him, because he challenged all their lies, and their sins, and their misconceptions about who the Messiah really was. He was their King, and they killed him. Verse 27 to 28 describe his ignoble presentation in the public sphere here.

With him, they also crucified two robbers, one on his right, and one on his left. This is the company he died with. We want to die with our family and our loved ones.

He died alone with common criminals. The indignity that he faced in the public treated as a common criminal, when in fact they should have bowed down in royalty and in honor

before him. More mocking, verses 29 to 30, and those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads and saying, aha, you who destroyed the temple and built it in three days, save yourself.

Come down from the cross. The other Jews there for the celebration of the Passover took this opportunity to mock him. You have all kinds of Jews from all parts, four corners of the Mediterranean there, Jerusalem at this time.

They probably heard about him apparently, or they just participated in, you know, this crowd mentality, while all these other people are laughing at them. They're clearly criminals, and this guy's a criminal, that guy's a criminal, therefore Jesus must be a criminal. And what do we do with criminals? We mock them.

They mock Jesus. These particular ones, of course, knew about it. They heard about it.

You destroy the temple and build it in three days. He said that publicly. So they had heard about it either directly or sometimes indirectly, because word of mouth spread pretty quick back then, of what he claimed.

And so they thought that was funny. It's a joke. Look at that.

What a pathetic man. That's what these words mean, brothers and sisters. That's how they treated him, and yet that's how we deserve to be treated, because we are pathetic without Jesus Christ, who is our righteousness.

They didn't care to find the truth. They used it as barbs against him. You can destroy the temple? Who do you think you are? Save yourself.

You can't even build yourself. How are you gonna build it up in three days when you can't save yourself? Because they didn't understand what he was talking about. They had carnal minds.

Save yourself and come down from the cross. What kind of a God or a leader or Messiah are you? A prophet of the Lord God of the covenant. And there's some truth to that insofar as ordinarily we're like, I don't want to go to a failed doctor that shows that he's got terrible health.

He doesn't know how to take care of himself. What's up with that? But of course they're wrong here, because they misconceived the spiritual with the physical. They're expecting a material political king to conquer their Roman enemies.

Jesus is like, that's not why I came here. I came here to conquer your spiritual enemies, to save your soul. The saving of your body comes later.

That's called the resurrection, in which all the empires are destroyed, and you get to live in heaven with him forever with a better body and a better kingdom. They had mixed those things up. In fact, they didn't even think of the latter one.

They thought they're gonna have it now. You're supposed to deliver us now. Now is the time to give us this great kingdom.

Jesus said, no, you need salvation of your soul. That was the whole point of the Jewish system, was to point to me. The sacrifice is pointed to his death.

Here he is dying, and they didn't want to see it. They did not see it, and they hated to see it. All at the same time, is reviled by all, not just the ones in the know.

Likewise, the chief priests also mocking them themselves. So they were, of course, in on it from the beginning. Save yourself.

He saved others. Himself he cannot save. Again, what kind of a prophet leader is this? That's the Christ.

The anointed one is what that word means. That's the title of Jesus, of the Old Testament, the prophecies of a promised, anointed one, specially set aside by God Almighty, given this special authority and public office, and they expected something completely different. Something that's gratified and satisfied their flesh and their longings for an earthly kingdom.

Jesus came as exactly he prophesied in the Old Testament, and they would not see it. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, the so-called king of Israel, the supposed king of Israel. Who is this guy? He's not my king.

And unfortunately, people do that today. They want nothing to do with Jesus. And if they could, they would get rid of him as quick as possible.

They don't want to hear it. They run at us, gnashing the teeth, closing their ear, I speak metaphorically, and wanting to shut down the Christian church in our message. So it's not just the Jews of old.

It's everyone today, unfortunately, who has not him as their Lord and Savior. Even those who were crucified with him, the two common criminals to his left and one to his right, they also mocked him, ridiculed him, derided him. Verses 31 to 32 give us this, some details, and show us just a snippet.

It's not just the one thing they said, not just a couple of chief priests, all kinds of people at all kinds of times, through this motion of movement from one place to another, to the cross, three hours, nonstop. They cannot imagine a God in the flesh willingly suffering for us. Their view of God's mercy was twisted and rooted in legalism.

This is why they despised him, because he attacked the Ruther problem, saying to them, you think you are the children of Abraham. You have your whole edifice of religiosity added to, of course, God's true religion of the Old Testament. And in that they rested.

I am good. I am good enough to get to heaven. We are the children of Abraham.

Who are you to tell us otherwise? Look how special we are. And what was Christ's retort to them? God could raise up the rocks and stones and become new children of Abraham. What are you? You're nothing.

## **Jesus Died for Us**

And they carry that bitterness and hatred because they were publicly humiliated by him to death itself. Murder. Jesus, at the end here, verses 37, 33 to 37, died for us.

Now, when the sixth hour had come and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, but the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This horrible death. Sixth hour is noon. The ninth hour is three, 3 p.m. And thus it's a slow, excruciating death after a brutal whipping, beatings, and mockings.

The victim hung on the cross for hours or days sometimes before dying of exposure, suffocation, anguish due to the beatings, and or dehydration. The weight of his own body ultimately made it impossible for him to breathe because you can't hold yourself up anymore. It's just the nails in his hands and his feet.

Jesus Christ went through that for you. And this is why we have the Lord's Supper. It does not point to the resurrection, does it? It does not point to the ascension or the second coming.

It points to the past of his suffering, of his slow, agonizing death, of his public mockeries and ridicule that we deserve for eternity. And he took it upon himself here, the physical form of it, of course, and then the judicial form, which he was declared guilty in our stead, and we righteous because of him. He has personal pain here, brothers and sisters.

It wasn't as though he was a puppet and remote in heaven and nothing affected him, that is, as a man, but he became a man. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, the Messiah, the man born of Joseph and Mary, who is human, fully human, and fully God. Now, of course, God is not forsaking him with respect to his characteristic of being omnipresent.

God is everywhere. God is even in hell. It's his good, righteous, and merciful presence he speaks of, the judicial separation that he has, the guilt declared upon the Son of God, who is our advocate in heaven.

That's what he's talking about. And again, we read here of his willing death, verse 37, and Jesus cried out with a loud voice and breathed his last. Yes, they killed him insofar as they were morally culpable, and they had the intent in their heart, and they went through all the terrible actions of what it takes to go through a crucifixion to kill a man, but at the very end, he willingly and voluntarily died.

We read elsewhere he gave up the ghost. Jesus had cried out with a loud voice. He said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Having said this, he breathed his last. Death takes us, brothers and sisters, takes our family members pretty much against our will, although sometimes people suffer enough. They're like, I'm ready to go, but still, they wish they were a little more healthy and be around with their family.

It's human nature. Jesus said, I'm gonna die. This is it.

He willingly died. He was not forced, in other words. So I'm highlighting this.

He said, I will go, Father. Send me and give me the blessings of the Holy Spirit, and I will be the second Adam. And I will walk this earth and sleep and eat and be with my people and preach and teach them and heal them and guide them and eventually suffer and be beaten, humiliated, and die a slow, agonizing death.

The Lord's Supper. Represents that. All in physical form and simple form as well.

Just the food, that is the bread, and then the wine, that is representing the blood. And the food, the bread, represents the body of Christ. Body what? Broken.

The bread what? Shed, bled, broken. The bleeding of the bread and the breaking of the body is not just the cross itself, although that's the culmination of it, but he already shed blood in being beaten by a cat and nightingales. There's blood right there already and being smacked about.

More blood and bruises. The breaking of his body, the harming of his body. But he did it voluntarily, willingly, because he loved us with an everlasting love, brothers and sisters.

He loves you. That's why he gives us this sacrament, the sign and seal of the covenant of grace. The meal is for us because our faith is weak.

We struggle in this walk, in this world of sanctification that we're called to come like him, and our faith goes up, our faith goes down. Sin seems to go up, sin goes down by God's grace. It seems like it's always the other way.

But it matters not. Here, the Lord's Supper is to strengthen that weak faith, to give you something tangible, because we are physical, and he, in his gentleness, comes down to our weakness and gives us the sacrament. Praise be to his name.

Let us pray. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with this picture of the substitutionary atonement accomplished for us 2,000 years ago, may it remind us, Lord, of your everlasting love, how much love and compassion you have for us that you sent your only begotten Son to live and to suffer and to die for us, to satisfy infinite divine justice, to atone for our sins. And here in this sacrament, the sign and the seal that strengthens our fading faith, our Lord and Savior, may we have more of your spirit and more encouragement to know that you are with us and you are ever for us as you've shown in the death of your Son.

We ask these things by our Lord and Savior's great blessing and life and death for us. Amen.