

THE DEATH OF JESUS

Mark 15: 27-38

Intro: The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was the pivotal point, the central point, of all human history. No other event can surpass it in importance. Everything of real significance before it, anticipated it; everything of importance that followed it, rests upon it.

The words which I have just spoken to you, would be branded as insane by the majority of people in the world. And yet I am willing to be branded as insane for saying that because it is absolutely true. No person who was ever born into this world was of greater importance than the Lord Jesus Christ, first because of Who He was, and secondly because of what He came to do. No person ever accomplished more in His life than Jesus Christ did in the three years of His public ministry. And no one accomplished more in his death than Jesus Christ did because in Him, and in Him alone, rests the only hope of eternal life for anyone. He died as one of the worst of sinners because He died on a cross, and yet He never said an evil word, He never did an evil deed, He never thought an evil thought. He died that others would not have to experience eternal death. He died that others might be forgiven of their sins, and go to heaven. Now if there were other Saviors, then He would not be so unique. But there is no other Savior. He is the only One Who can bring us into full and eternal acceptance with God. When the Apostle Paul was preaching in Antioch of Pisidia in a Jewish synagogue, he said this:

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13: 38-39).

And if they could not be justified, declared righteous before God, by the Law of Moses, then no man could ever be justified in any other way because the Law of Moses was given to him by God. But God did not give Moses the Law so he could work his way to heaven; God gave him the Law to show him and everyone else that they were sinners, and needed a Savior. And God witnessed to His complete satisfaction with the work His Son did on the Cross, by raising Him from the dead. This is the Gospel; this is the good news of salvation. We are not saved by our good works because they are never good enough. Salvation is not a reward for what we have done; salvation is a gift of God which we receive by faith in Jesus Christ and the sacrifice He made on Calvary's Cross when He died

to secure the salvation of all who believe in Him.

We read back in Mark, chapter 8, and verse 31, after Peter declared to the Lord, “Thou art the Christ,” meaning the Messiah, that our Lord did this:

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again (Mark 8:31).

And then in the next chapter of Mark, chapter 9, when the Lord brought up this subject again, Mark tells us, “But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him” (Mark 9:32).

In Mark 10, as our Lord was making His final journey to Jerusalem, we read these words:

32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem ; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem ; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again (Mark 10:32-34).

Mark seems to indicate that His disciples ignored Him when He spoke these words to them. Matthew records one of those time when He spoke to them of His death that “they were exceeding sorry” (Matt. 17:23). The disciples were like many devout Jews in our Lord’s day, who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but they did not believe that He would die; they believed that He had come to set up His kingdom, and deliver them from Rome. So that is why we see these different responses to the Lord when He spoke of His death and resurrection.

But at the point we have reached here in Mark 15, we have learned how the Lord was arrested by the Jews, how they condemned Him and took Him to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate did not believe that Jesus had done anything that was worthy of death, but, due to the pressure the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people put him under, he delivered the Lord over to the Roman soldiers, who terribly mistreated Him, and then took Him out and crucified Him.

As our text for this morning begins, Jesus is dying on a Cross, with a writing on the Cross which spoke of why He had been crucified. It said, "THE KING OF THE JEWS." This would mean that He claimed to be the King of the Jews, but in the minds of the Jews they had charged Him with blasphemy because of this, and demanded His death.

The next thing that Mark tells us has to do with:

I. THE TWO THIEVES (Mark 15:27-28).

The Lord was crucified in the middle with one thief on each side. Mark does not tell us the good news about one of the thieves, who at first reviled the Lord like the people were doing. Mark mentioned this at the end of verse 32. But we all know, or should know, how one of the thieves afterward repented and turned in faith to the Lord for salvation. Verse 28 is generally rejected by the scholars, not because this part of the Lord's death was not predicted, but because the form of the quotation is not like Mark usually quoted Scripture, and also because there is hardly any reliable manuscript authority for it. But Luke did mention it in his Gospel even before he told about the Lord in Gethsemane. The Lord was speaking about His death, and this is what He said. You will find His words in Luke 22:37:

37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

The Lord was referring to the prediction in Isaiah 53:12 which says:

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Why was this done to our Lord? He was being humiliated enough in being killed by crucifixion. This meant disgrace not only for Him, but also for His family -- and for years to come! What part the Jews had in this, we do not know. But it obviously would have pleased them tremendously for the Lord to be crucified between two criminals, indicating that He was one of them!

We probably can't appreciate the humiliation that was heaped upon the Lord not only by the manner in which He was put to death, but by those

who were supposedly His companions in crime. But how graciously the Lord overruled what was done to our Lord when the Holy Spirit quite evidently brought conviction to the heart of the one thief who turned to the Lord for his salvation. It would be interesting to know the background of that thief. He had to know something of the Lord. And he was convinced of the Lord's innocent. He told the other thief, speaking of the Lord, "This man hath done nothing amiss." But he also confessed his own sin because he prefaced the statement about the Lord with a statement about himself and the other thief,

Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed just; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss (Luke 23:40, 41).

He related the Lord to God. He confessed that he was a sinner and that he was getting what he deserved. But he also knew that the Lord was His only hope for salvation. He believed that the Lord's death would not put an end to the hope of the kingdom of God, but that it was the way through which the Lord would enter into His glory. Did this thief have a godly father or mother, or both, who had sowed the seed of the Word in his heart. They may not have lived to see what happened to their son, but however he came to understand the truth.

(Read Spurgeon's comment for November 4 about "in Thy light shall we see light.")

We don't know how the Lord transformed this thief into a saint in the last moments of his life, but He did." Are you praying for a child to whom you have given the truth? Don't give up. The power of the Lord and the power of His Word is unlimited.

But let me move on to my next point:

II. THE JEERING OF THE CROWD (Mark 15:29-32).

What Mark tells us is designed to show how in the last hours of the Lord's life people did their utmost to humiliate Him and to mock Him. Their words were all designed to say, "If you are the Son of the Highest, if you are the Son of God, if you are the Messiah of Israel, *then what are you doing, hanging of a Cross of the deepest shame?*" They said, "If you were going to destroy the temple, and rebuild it in three days, prove your words by saving yourself and coming down from the Cross!" You can almost hearing people laughing Him in scorn as they said these words

over and over.

One thing they said was true, but not in the way that they meant. They said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” Doing the work that He came to do, those words were true. If He was going to save others, He couldn’t save Himself. He had to die in order to provide and secure the salvation of His people. But what they meant was, “You claim to be the Savior, but how can you save others when you cannot even save yourself from death on the Cross.” So they were saying that where He was, on that Cross, proved that He was a liar, and that He was not the Messiah nor the Son of God after all!!!

They said that if they could see Him come down from the Cross, they would believe. But that was a lie. But the world says, “Seeing is believing.” The Lord told Martha that believing is seeing. “If thou shalt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God” (John 11:40). The Lord had taught earlier that people would not believe even if one came back from the dead to tell them!

How hard and how cruel the human heart is! It is one of the marvels of the grace of God that any of us has ever been saved. The dear Lord Jesus is “the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2).

But I have three more points that I want to make briefly before I close. The first of these is in verse 34. The second is in verses 35, 36, and 37. And my fifth and last point is in verse 38.

First, verse 34.

III. THE DARKNESS (Mark 15:34).

Many have pointed out that this could not have been an eclipse of the sun because the Passover always was observed with there is a full moon. This was darkness that lasted for three hours, from the sixth hour to the ninth hour – from noon until three o’clock in the afternoon.

You know, I feel sorry for people who don’t believe in creation. They miss so much. You really have to be an idiot to believe in evolution, that all of the amazing things about this world just happened. You wouldn’t say that about your watch; why would you say it about yourself? I believe because the Bible says so, that God created the sun. And if He created the

sun with its light and heat and life-giving power, *He can shut it all down. He did it before in Egypt, and He is going to do it again. And He did it when our Lord was dying on the Cross.*

Why did He do it? There have been a number of suggestions about this. The darkness that came upon Egypt was certainly a judgment, and the darkness that came upon the earth, at least in that area of the world, was certainly a judgment. I related some words of the Lord Jesus to what happened when our Lord was dying on the Cross. Let me give you the words I have in mind. They are found in part of what the Lord told Nicodemus that ruler of the Jews who came to talk to the Lord one night. These are the final words the Lord said to Nicodemus found in John 3:18-21:

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The Lord gave the people of that day literal darkness to make them understand that what they were doing was the greatest display of spiritual darkness there could possibly be. There are no words capable to describing how sinful the acts of those people were, in jeering, mocking, ridiculing, and voicing their support for the death of God's Son. People love the darkness that sin is because they want to have their own way, to do their own things, but to have no place in the hearts for God or for His Son Jesus Christ. The consternation that those three hours of darkness caused was an expression of how totally displeased God was with the treatment that that crowd of Jews and Gentiles had given to the Lord of heaven and earth. It would have been good for the whole crowd if they had never been born. God was speaking that day in a very certain way, and He continues to speak today. We live in a world that is enveloped in spiritual darkness. People don't know where they are, and they don't know where they are going. That's why they live the way they live, and have no time or place for God. Our Lord prayed in Gethsemane, "Not My will, but Thine be done." Our world says to God, "Not Your will, but ours be

done.” Oh, for those of you who are here today, and those who hear this message over KPDQ or our website, don’t spend another day in rebellion against God. Plead with Him for mercy because of your sins, and ask Him to give you faith in Christ.

V. THE LORD’S WORD TO GOD AS HE WAS DYING (Mark 15: 34-36).

I have told you more than once that nobody has ever fully understood what it meant to the Lord Jesus to be born into the human family as One with us, except for sin. The Lord in contemplating not just His death, but His death for us, His death as our Substitute, dying in our place, taking the penalty for our sins upon Himself, sweat great drops of blood. Has that ever happened to you? I am sure that the answer is, “No.” It has never happened to me either. But it happened to our Lord. That gives us a picture of how intense His suffering was.

But here His words give expression to His suffering. I can’t expound what they mean as the Lord expressed them. We know that the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us. And the Father would not desert His Son. But the meaning of “forsaken” here probably means, “Why haven’t You helped Me?” Or, “Why aren’t You helping Me?” David prayed that prayer. We learn that from Psalm 2. Have you ever prayed like that? I have. Unanswered prayer can be a great problem to us. But none of us will ever experience it like our Lord did. The Father made the soul of His Son an offering for sin. And the sight was so terrible, that even God had to turn away. The people around so anxious to see if Elijah would come to help the Lord offered Him vinegar in the hope of extending His life a little longer. But just at that time “Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.” “Gave up the ghost” is the translation of a verb which means simply that *He died!* *Would you argue with me if I were to say that there never was such a cry heard on earth, or in heaven? The Father took from the death of His Son all that was required to forgive you and to forgive me of our sins. Who among us could possibly know the price? Once we understand what the Lord had to suffer for our sins, we will never mention to Him anything that we might add to what He did when He died for us. By His death our salvation was secured for all eternity.*

But let me close with one brief, but very wonderful word. It has to do with:

V. THE RENT VAIL (Mark 15:38).

There were two rooms in the Tabernacle which Moses and the children of Israel constructed in the wilderness. And when the Temple was built there were two rooms. The first room was called The Holy Place. The second room was called The Holy of Holies. The priests went into the first room day after day presenting the offerings of the people to the Lord. But into the second room there was just one man who was allowed in that room, and he could only go in there one day out of the whole year, on the Day of Atonement. It was in that room where the very presence of God was manifested in a glorious cloud, and it was over the mercy seat which was the lid on the ark of the covenant.

Between the two rooms, separating them, was, not a door, but a large curtain called a veil. When Jesus Christ died, it appears that God reached down from heaven, took hold of the veil, and tore it apart. In doing this He was indicating that now all of us have access into the very presence of God, not just one day out of the year, or one day a month, or one day a week (like on Sunday) – BUT EVERY DAY! The Book of Hebrews describes all of this for us. But let me give you just two verses from Hebrews which will explain to you what the rent veil, the veil that God tore apart, means for those of us who know the Lord as our Savior. You will find these verses in Hebrews 4:14-15:

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Concl: Who is our high priest, our great high priest? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Come with confidence to God through Him to obtain the mercy that you need, and to find the grace that is always sufficient, and more than sufficient for your needs and mine, whatever they may be.