

Our Champion

The Cross (Part 12)

Mark 15:16-20 (Mt.27:27-31) 12/10/2022

One of the most painful emotions the human soul can carry is shame. What can you do when feelings of shame continue to press down on you even after you've repented of a sin? In this passage, Mark teaches some things about the crucifixion that might change your whole perspective on why Jesus died on the cross.

Harmony.....	11
Introduction: Shame.....	1
King Shaming.....	2
The Whole Company.....	2
Shame Above Pain.....	2
Max Disgrace.....	3
Shame Matters Most: Defaced Glory.....	3
Defaced Glory.....	4
Bearing Our Shame.....	4
Designed for Degradation.....	4
How to Deal with Deserved Shame.....	5
The Valley of Repentance.....	5
Freedom from Shame.....	5
Elements of Kingship.....	5
Glory.....	6
Victory.....	6
Praise.....	6
Power & Authority.....	6
Honor.....	6
Allegiance.....	7
Jesus' Patience.....	7
Bearing the Curse.....	7
The Royalty of Christ.....	7
The Majesty of Christ.....	8
Craving a King.....	9
Big King.....	10
Conclusion.....	10
Summary.....	11

Mark 15:16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. **17** They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. **18** And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" **19** Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. **20** And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Introduction: Shame

When was the last time you felt shame? Maybe your answer is, "I can't remember the last time not feeling shame." We all have it to some degree. Shame about your past. Shame about something you've done recently. Your failures.

Some shame is deserved; some is undeserved. It's hard to say which is more painful. They both have their unique sting.

In our next study we'll learn from Jesus about how to handle undeserved shame... — embarrassment you feel when people look down on you, even though you didn't do anything morally wrong. If you struggle with worrying about what other people think of you, disapproval... , shame you feel because of your body... , your looks, your habits, social clumsiness... , dumb things you said or done... , if that's you, you'll want to be here next time because we'll cover that then. But for today the focus is on those times when we deserve to feel shame.

It's an important topic because whether it's deserved or undeserved, is there an emotion that's more painful and debilitating than shame? It's a gnawing, aching burden that saps your strength, your confidence, your motivation, your joy. It's like walking around in a dark cloud where you're experiencing yourself as defective or ruined. Damaged goods. And it can prevent intimacy with God because you feel like you have to keep your distance. What can be done about unrelenting shame?

King Shaming

The Whole Company

We're in Mark 15 and we left off last time at verse 15.

Mark 15:15 ... Pilate had Jesus flogged.

That's all we're going to hear about the flogging, but if you've seen The Passion movie, you know that at this point Jesus is half dead. Flesh hanging off in ribbons, blood everywhere. Pilate hoped that would satisfy the crowd, but they're bloodthirsty now. So Pilate finally gives the order, "Okay. Take him outside the city and crucify him." He says that in v.15; they don't do it until the end of v.20.

20 ... Then they led him out to crucify him.

What happens between v.15 when Pilate gives the order and 21 when it actually begins? Instead of leading him out of the city to crucify him, they lead him *in* ... to the palace!

16 The soldiers led Jesus away¹ into the palace.

This is Herod's extravagant royal residence. Why take him in there? What are they going to do? Whatever it is, it's going to require a lot of men.

16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers.

It took 4 soldiers to do a crucifixion. But here they call the entire company—probably hundreds of men. They needed everyone there in order for to accomplish what they wanted to accomplish, namely, the absolute, utter humiliation of Jesus. From here all the way to v.20 the only thing that happens is mockery.

Shame Above Pain

When we talk about the cross, we usually make much of the physical torment. The scourging, the spikes, the torture—preachers will give us unending detail on all that. But look at how much detail Mark gives us.

¹ All through this chapter Jesus is led away, taken here, brought there, seized, arrested, bound—this is what he meant when he prophesied that he would be given over in the hands of men. They just shove him around everywhere according to their whims. Like Isaiah 53:7 says, he was led away as a lamb to the slaughter.

We already everything Mark says about the scourging.

Mark 15:15 ... Pilate had Jesus flogged.

That's it. And what about the crucifixion itself?

24 And they crucified him.

Zero detail. That's Mark's style. The transfiguration—one of the most astonishing, spectacular events of human history, gets one verse. Jesus' baptism less than that. Stilling of the storm—one verse. The crucifixion—two words.

But the mocking of Christ takes up most of a chapter. We already saw the mockery in the Jewish trial and the trial before Pilate. Now here's our passage (this is what they do inside the palace):

Mark 15:17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" 19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Max Disgrace

It's all about humiliation, which is why they gather so many men. When you do something embarrassing, what's the first thing you do? Look around to see how many people saw it. If you trip and fall and once person snickers at you, that's one thing. But if it happens on a stage and hundreds of people are laughing at you, that's a lot worse. They want Jesus to feel the most degrading embarrassment and humiliation possible.

And that's not even all. There's another whole paragraph after they put him on the cross.

Mark 15:29 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!" 31 In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32 Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The gospel writers make a way bigger point about Jesus' shame than about his pain. That's the emphasis in OT prophecy as well. In Isaiah 49:7 the coming suffering servant is described as he "who was despised and abhorred by the nation."

Isaiah 50:6 ... I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

Isaiah 53:2 ...He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows ... Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

And you'll find the same thing in the epistles.² Why so much emphasis on the shame?

Shame Matters Most: Defaced Glory

I'd suggest two reasons. First, because the shame matters more than the pain. What's the most important thing about Jesus? His glory. What's the greatest thing that can ever happen in the universe? For Christ to be glorified. For his glory to be magnified—made more clear. For it to be unveiled, made more obvious and easier to see. So if that's the best thing, what's the worst thing that

² For example, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 2:23.

can ever happen in the universe? For his glory to be obscured or defaced. The shaming of Jesus is emphasized because the shaming of Jesus is the worst thing that has ever happened. What these soldiers did to Jesus in the palace was even worse than when they whipped him and pounded spikes through his limbs.

Mankind's job is to showcase Christ's glory. Marring his body is bad. Defacing his glory is the worst sin mankind can commit.

Defaced Glory

And it was also the apex of his suffering, because the more honor one deserves, the more painful the dishonor. Jesus deserved infinite honor, so it's impossible for any of us to even imagine how painful this dishonor was for Jesus. The gospel writers make much of Jesus' shame because that shame was the bitterest part of that cup he had to drink and the most theologically significant aspect of his suffering.

Bearing Our Shame

That's one reason. Here's another: What was Jesus doing on the cross? He was dying in our place to pay the penalty for our sin, which is what? Shame.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he ... carried our sorrows.

What kind of sorrows?

3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows.

The reason the Messiah would have to be despised and humiliated was that he had to suffer shame in our place.

Does sin also deserve physical punishment? Sure. That's why hell is described as a lake of fire. So the cross had to be painful. But just physical pain wouldn't have been enough. First and foremost, the most fundamental consequence for sin is shame.

Go back to the Garden of Eden before the fall. Of all the wonderful emotions Adam and Eve felt in that paradise, the only one we're told about was that they felt no shame. Then, as soon as they sinned, they hid themselves because, in Adam's words, "I was ashamed." Shame is the core consequence of sin. When God describes hell in Daniel 12, he doesn't even mention pain.

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

If Jesus is suffering in our place and the main thing we deserve is shame and contempt, then the main thing he had to suffer was shame and contempt.

Designed for Degradation

That's why Jesus couldn't die with dignity. It couldn't be beheading or stoning. Crucifixion was designed to be not only the most painful death they could inflict, but also the most degrading and humiliating and dehumanizing. So much so that the word "cross" was a swear word at that time. Cicero said, "Even the mere word, cross, must remain far not only from the lips of the citizens of Rome, but also from their thoughts, their eyes, their ears."³ If the people back then ever saw someone walking around with a cross necklace, they would think that person lost her mind.

³ Cicero, Pro Rabirio V. 16.

How to Deal with Deserved Shame

It's crucial that we understand that's what Jesus was doing on the cross so we know how to deal with our shame. I think there are a lot of Christians who understand Jesus suffered the physical punishment they deserve so they don't have to. But they don't understand he also bore their shame. They keep trying to carry their own guilt even after they have repented because they miss the central feature of Jesus' suffering in their place.

So should we feel shame for our sin? Yes, of course. We don't want to be like the people in Jeremiah 6:15 who forgot how to blush. Even the world recognizes that as a bad thing. Their word for it is sociopath—someone who feels no remorse. However, they only use that term for the most extreme cases. The truth is, all people are sociopaths to some degree. The only way a sinful person can live life without going out of his mind with guilt is to find a way to downplay his guilt.

That's what unbelievers do, but what about us? How are we to handle the crushing weight of deserved guilt? We start by letting it do its job. Instead of pretending it doesn't exist, we let it hit us with full force—the stronger the better—so it can do its job, which is what?

2 Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.

The Valley of Repentance

We can escape the shame, but only after it drives us through the dark valley of repentance. There's no way to bypass that. It's good to remember that in the moment of temptation. If I commit this sin, the only way back is going to be through the agony of shame.

Freedom from Shame

But when we take that path and repent, then we're free from the shame forever. But you say, "What if I'm not? I repent, but I'm still tormented by guilt feelings." That's a faith issue. Either you're not trusting that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was adequate, or you don't believe God when he says he credits Jesus' sacrifice to your account.

If you struggle with shame even after you've repented, it may be that you don't understand what Jesus did on the cross. Spend some time thinking about how much shame Jesus suffered in your place and how much emphasis God's Word places on that. He didn't do that for nothing. He certainly didn't do it so you could walk around trying to carry the load of your own shame.

When the enemy tries to rub your face in your past sin, just tell him this: "Why don't you go measure out exactly how far the east is from the west, then check back with me and tell me again why I should carry something Christ took on himself."

Elements of Kingship

Okay, so now that we understand the big theological picture, let's look at the details of this passage. The first thing you'll notice about this round of mockery is it all has to do with kingship—purple robe, crown of thorns, "Hail, king of the Jews." In the Jewish trial they mocked Jesus as a prophet. In this scene they mock his kingly role.

Glory

And they start with his clothing. They strip him naked in front of everyone⁴ they put this mock purple robe on him.

Why do kings wear royal robes? As a symbol of glory. The king had to be decked out in more glorious clothing than anyone else. So what they're doing is mocking Jesus for not having any king-ly glory.

Victory

Next came the crown.

17 They put a purple⁵ robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.⁶

A wreath type crown was very often a symbol of victory. Crowning him in a sarcastic way means they're mocking Jesus as a weak, pathetic king who has achieved no victories. Only defeat.

Praise

18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

The greater the king, the greater the praise he received. And so they make fun of Jesus with sarcastic praise.

Power & Authority

19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. This is to show Jesus' helplessness. Unlike a real king, you can do anything you want to him with no consequence.

Matthew gives a little more detail. They put a rod in Jesus' hand as a mock scepter. The scepter was a symbol of a king's power and authority. Then they took turns coming before Jesus, bowing the knee in mockery... , then spitting in Jesus' face and taking his scepter out of his hand and smacking him in the head with it. Then he'd put it back in Jesus' hand for the next guy's turn. Mark says this went on and on.⁷

Honor

So they mock his lack of glory, his record in battle, his worthiness to be praised, and his lack of power. And they do it in the most degrading way.

19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him.

Kings are worthy of the utmost honor. By spitting on him, they mock Jesus as a king who commands zero respect. They rip away every shred of dignity.

⁴ Matthew 27:28.

⁵ Matthew calls it red. It may have been an old, discarded mantle of a Roman soldier, originally red, but faded, dirty, stained, etc. Perhaps it still had enough color to it to suggest a purple shade, and that's what had significance for them because they were trying to mock him as a king.

⁶ TDNT: What the Roman soldiers did with the deposed Vitellius is an interesting par., Dio C., 65, 20 f. The soldiers treat him as they do Jesus. The incident is expanded in Ev. Pt. 3:7ff.: "And they put on him a purple robe and set him on the judgment seat and said, Judge justly, O king of Israeli And one of them brought a crown of thorns and put it on the Lord's head ... and some scourged him and said, With such honour will we honour the Son of God."

⁷ There are records of people doing this sort of thing to people who were mentally slow. Philo tells an account of a time when a crowd made sport of a lunatic named Carabas who lived on the street. They drove him into a gym and did a lot of these same things—put a mock robe on him, gave him a scepter, and bowed down before him then beat him.

Allegiance

19 ... Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him.

This is mock allegiance. The greatness of a king is measured by how many different nations and peoples swear allegiance to him. A king who is recognized by a small population in a tiny area isn't much of a king. But someone like Caesar, who commanded allegiance from many countries in a vast empire—now that's a great king. So they are making fun of Jesus as one to whom no one has loyalty. Even his little band of disciples abandoned him. Look at him—he's standing there helpless without so much as a right hand man at his side.

Jesus' Patience

Even in The Passion Jesus keeps some dignity. And he's got a loin cloth, he's not completely humiliated. I think if they made a movie that showed the real humiliation and degradation and disgrace of Jesus... , we wouldn't even make it through the whole movie, it would be so painful to watch.

Jesus owns the universe. He commands angel armies. But he just lets this happen. A little later when they mock him for not being able to come down off the cross. You know Jesus has to die, but you kind of want him to jump down off the cross... , walk over and slap them in the face, then get back up on the cross to finish purchasing redemption. But he can't do that because that would give him some dignity. He had to drink the whole cup—*especially* the shame.

Bearing the Curse

Think about the crown of thorns. What is the theological significance of thorns? Why do thorns exist?

Genesis 3:17 ... Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you.

Thorns exist as a symbol of the curse on this world because of man's sin. Jesus is crowned with the very curse of sin.

Someday the curse will be reversed—no more thorns, no decay, nothing broken. And that day is tied to our redemption. You can read about that in Romans 8:19-22, where it talks about how the elimination of the curse is connected with our salvation. It was all accomplished by Jesus on the cross. Remember, the reason the Jews wanted Jesus crucified was to bring upon him the curse of God, which it did. Cursed is anyone hung on a tree—Dt.21:23.

The crown they put on Jesus' head was a heavy crown—the heaviest ever placed on the head of any monarch. That crown pressed down on Jesus the full weight of the curse of God on the entire created order. He bore the curse in order to purchase redemption from the curse.

The Royalty of Christ

I'll tell you what I really love about this passage, is it teaches us how to think about the majesty of King Jesus. All through Mark 14 and 15 Mark is teaching us the truth about Jesus through irony. Irony is when the words a character speaks carry a lot more meaning to the reader than they did to the person who said them. In this case, it's the opposite meaning. Everything they say in sarcasm is actually right on. They do their worst in mocking Jesus and Mark says, "Honestly, I couldn't have said it better myself."

The Majesty of Christ

In this case, the soldiers give us a perfect summary of the meaning of royalty. If you want to know why Christ's role as king is important, just look at each element they mock. They mock him for having no glory, victory, praise, power, honor, or allegiance. Go down that list and consider the truth about Jesus. Glory? We saw Jesus' glory in the transfiguration. Instead of receiving glory from putting on fancy clothes like most kings, Jesus gave glory to his clothes. He had so much intrinsic glory that it turned his clothes dazzling white. *That's* real glory. Anyone can put on a robe.

How about victory? Jesus wasn't a military leader, so he didn't really win any victories against their enemies. Oh—except the enemy of disease. Sickness and disease was a worse enemy than the Romans, and Jesus healed everyone who came to him—thousands, instantly, completely.

Oh, and another enemy—demons. Think about *that*. Not even the entire Roman army could defend you against even one demon. But Jesus faced thousands of them and sent all of them running for their lives and begging him for mercy. Jesus even faced the Devil himself and defeated him.

Disease, demons, the devil, and the really big one—death. Jairus' daughter died and Jesus just took her by the hand, lifted her to her feet, and she was perfectly healthy. I think that family would say Jesus defeated a pretty significant enemy in their lives.

All in all, not a bad string of victories—disease, demons, the devil, and death.

What's next in the list? Praise. They mocked him as a king nobody praised, but the truth is when he came to Jerusalem the crowd shouted "Hosannah! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosannah in the highest." And that was just a sample of the day when every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

They mocked his lack of power, but I don't see any of those big, tough soldiers walking on water. And not just any water, but the sea, which was considered the realm of the forces of chaos that not even the gods could tame. Jesus tells it to shut up and turns the raging chaos into glass. He literally commanded nature. They were grabbing the scepter out of the hand of a king who had power beyond anything they could conceive of.

What display of power could be greater than the ability to control natural disasters? How about the ability to control human destiny? We see that in the way every one of his prophecies about what they would do was fulfilled to the letter. He controlled his own destiny and theirs.

They mocked his lack of honor, but twice God the Father spoke from heaven and called him his Son, whom he loved, and commanded that we listen to him. And Jesus was about to be exalted to the right hand of God where he would share God's sovereign throne.

What about allegiance? Nobody would ever seriously bow their knee to Jesus, right? When had Jesus ever captured any of his enemies or took anyone prisoner?

Imagine Jesus speaks up at this point and says, "Gentlemen, what if I told you that before sundown tonight, I will capture ... your commander?" That would get some laughs. They look over at their Centurion. No doubt a very tough, capable figure (commander of 100 men). Even with no protection the Centurion could easily handle Jesus. But here's he's surrounded with a whole company of armed soldiers.

But what happened? Jesus did capture that man by the end of the day.

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Jesus captured the toughest among them, but not by force. It's not that hard to capture a man physically, but it takes a real king to capture a man's heart. And now no human being has ever had more people bow the knee to him than Jesus has. And every one of us counts it a grand privilege.

I don't know of any theological treatise on the kingship of Christ that gives a more beautiful outline of what it means than what these soldiers gave us. Glory, victory, praise, power, authority,

honor, and allegiance. No human being has ever exhibited or received as much glory as the Lord Jesus Christ. No one has ever gained victory over more powerful enemies. No human has ever been praised by as many lips. No one has ever exhibited a fraction of the power and authority Jesus showed. No one has been honored more highly by God or man. And no one has the absolute allegiance of more hearts. Millions who would gladly die for him.

This half-dead, bloodied, weak, pathetic man they were mocking—he's the King of kings. Revelation calls him the Ruler of the kings of the earth, who recognizes no borders, laws, or anything else that might hinder his kingdom.

He said, "All authority is given to me. Therefore go and make disciples (followers of me) in all nations, teaching them to obey everything I commanded." He has established his church in every country, no matter how hostile, he sets up his churches right in their capital if he wants to. These soldiers didn't know it, but in just a few years Jesus would have a foothold even inside the very household of Ceasar (Php.4:22).

Craving a King

If you're going to love God with all your heart—really take delight in him... —it helps a lot to understand his kingship because God designed us with a need for a king who fulfills each of those elements of kingship for us, on our behalf. Go back through the legends and stories of just about every culture throughout history, including ours, and you'll see it over and over... —stories of awaiting the return of a great king, under whose reign everything flourished. That's a universal storyline around the world in ancient times and modern times.

Why? Why on earth would people keep on buying books with that storyline given the abysmal record of actual kings in real life? In real life, kingships almost always result in tyranny, injustice, slavery, and either defeat by an enemy or national decline. You would think people would hate stories about kings. But we love them because as bad a track record as kings have had in history, we have a deep need for a good king.

Our founding fathers broke from England and the first thing they said was, "No king!" Division of powers—checks and balances. We take pride in having no king, and yet, we can't help ourselves. We take billionaires, athletes, scientists, celebrities, and we turn them into kings. Go down the list of the elements of kingship that the soldiers mocked Jesus for not having. We invent kings who have each of those elements. We crown our celebrities, and we love seeing them decked out in glory, we give them our allegiance, our praise. We put them on TV and they give pronouncements on topics in which they have no expertise and the culture bows to it like a royal edict.

We can't help ourselves because deep within the human soul is a built-in longing for a glorious savior who will be glorious on our behalf. We want a champion. We want a king so we can ride on the coattails of his glory. God made us with an appetite for glory, but we're not glorious, so we will find someone who is glorious and then identify ourselves with that glory. We were designed by God to jump on board a glory train and ride.

So we invent our kings. Remember the last king of Colorado? You remember—a guy by the name of Payton Manning? What did we say after the 2016 Super Bowl? "We won! We're the champs!" *We*? Who's "we"? First person pronoun—that includes the speaker. Who won the Super-bowl? We did—me and Payton Manning. Did Payton Manning and Von Miller play a larger role than I did? You could argue that, but still, *we* beat the Carolina Panthers.

The NFL is a multi-billion dollar business not just because people like watching great athletes. It's because I want a champion who will defeat my opponents on my behalf so that I can ride on the coattails of his glory. That's what's happening when a stadium erupts in cheers. We even wear their jerseys.

We do it in politics. I want lower inflation, school choice, less corruption, less crime—all these big, national things that I don't have the power to do. And so I put a crown on some political candi-

date and sing his praises because he's going to be the white knight... —the powerful savior who will bring about all those things I don't have the power to do.

We can't help doing this. It's in our blood. We *will* put our hope in some savior. We will ride the coattails of whomever we see as most glorious. We're hard wired to do that because we need someone to be for us everything the soldiers mocked Jesus for not being. I need someone to be that champion on my behalf.

And so the more I see Christ that way, the more my eyes are opened to his kingship—the one who will win victories for me against my enemies... , a glorious leader I'm proud to be associated with... , unrivalled power and authority, breathtaking honor, dominant around the world... , a champion who never loses heading up my team... —the more I see all that and ride on the coattails of all that glory, the happier I'll be. Seeing the elements of his kingship is a huge part of loving God with all your heart.

Big King

Jesus fulfilled all those elements of kingship in spectacular ways, but they weren't impressed because he wasn't wearing a fancy robe. He wasn't wearing a fancy robe because he's not one of the little kings of this world. He's the big king.

Last time we talked about big life and little life. Little life is temporal—everything you lose the moment you die. Big life is the eternal kingdom of God. And the big King is the King who rules over the eternal kingdom of God. The reason the people preferred Jesus Barabbas over Jesus Christ is they cared more about little life than big life... , which means they preferred little kings over the big King. They cared more about defeating Rome than defeating Satan.

Imagine king David. His scouts come with news of a huge invasion by the Philistines. So he calls together an emergency meeting with all his generals to strategize a defense. He's got a map laid out on the table and he's developing a plan. And in the middle of the meeting, some kids come by.

“Hey David, if you're such a powerful king, give us all some candy.”

What's would David do? He won't be distracted from his planning because he knows if he doesn't focus and figure a way to win this battle... , those kids will end up slaves or burned as sacrifices. So he says, “Run along kids—I'm trying to save the nation here.”

So the kids start mocking him. “You're not a real king! You can't even provide candy—what good are you?” That's exactly what's going on here at the cross. They want Jesus to be like a little king, and he's busy saving the universe.

Conclusion

If your church is doing the Advent readings, you know last Sunday was the Bethlehem candle which highlights the kingly role of Christ. For hundreds of years the Church has devoted this week to fix our attention on Christ the King. As you attempt to do that, use this scene. It's hard to remember a whole list of abstract principles, the list of ways Jesus relates to us as king. Glory, power, authority, praise—all that. But it's easy to remember a scene from a drama. Remember the robe, the crown, the praise, the scepter, the spit, the homage—each one points us to another ray of the glorious splendor of the royalty of Christ.

And every time you're tempted to put a crown on some earthly person, your spouse, your dad, a politician, a celebrity—let that impulse remind you that you have a real King. Transfer all your hope from that little king to the real King and ride those coattails of glory.

Not only are you freed from carrying your own shame because he carried it for you on the cross... , not only are you freed from shame, but in its place you can bask in glory. It's not just that you no longer have to have your head bowed in shame, but you can lift it high in victory because with Jesus as your king... , you really can use that first person pronoun, “We are winning. Jesus Christ and me are dominating the enemy and will enjoy eternal glory.”

Harmony

Matthew 27:27 Then the **governor's** soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They **stripped him** and put a **scarlet** robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. **They put a staff in his right hand** and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and **took the staff** and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Mark 15:16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" 19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Summary

The Bible makes far more of Jesus' shame on the cross than on his physical suffering because the most important thing about Jesus is his glory. And because he was bearing the consequence of our sin. And while physical punishment is part of it, the most fundamental consequence of sin is shame. He was humiliated to bear our shame. Shame should drive us to repentance, after which we no longer have shame (if we trust him).

The elements of the soldiers' mockery outline the elements of kingship. Understanding those is important because we need a king to be a champion for us so we can ride the coattails of his glory.