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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at johnny@stoneharborchurch.org.

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherds heart,
Johnny

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

Date: November 29, 2009
 Series: Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters
 Section: Jesus on Mission in Jerusalem
 Topic: The Passion
 Message Title: Love Executed for Us to See
 Short Title: What Love Looks Like
 Text: Mark 15:16-47
 Key Words: Mockery, crucifixion, death, burial

Message Outline

Love Executed for Us to See

What Love Looks Like

- I. Jesus Enduring Mockery & Physical Pain
- II. Jesus Enduring Being Forsaken & Suffering Death
- III. Jesus Enduring Being Misunderstood & Abandoned

Related Scripture

1. Mark 15:16-47
2. Mat 27:27-61
3. Luke 23:26-56
4. John 19:17-42
5. Amos 8 (esp. v.8)
6. Psalm 22 (esp. v.18)
7. Isaiah 53 (esp. v.12)

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What is significant about the mockery Jesus endured?
2. In what way is love displayed in Jesus suffering physical pain?
3. What is the meaning of Jesus cry of being forsaken in v. 34?
4. What is the significance of Jesus death?
5. What are some of the many ironies related to how Jesus was misunderstood?
6. What do you make of the veil of the temple being torn as it was?
7. Having looked at Jesus love, what does it call forth from you?

Memory and Meditation Verse

“When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said,
 "Truly this man was the Son of God!"” *Mark 15:39 NASB*

Exegetical Idea

Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial reveal His identity as the Son of God; in Him we see love personified and exercised in redemption.

Homiletical Idea

In Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial divine love is personified and presented for us to see – We see the facts of history (that they happened) and with God's help we also see their significance (what they indicate and what they accomplished, i.e., Jesus is the divine Redeemer who accomplished redemption).

Goals of Message

- That we would better know Jesus and so better know God
- and as a result that we would enjoy the communion with Him that His suffering, death, burial and resurrection secured
- and that the joy of this communion would be expressed in genuine worship, thanksgiving and reciprocal love toward God and neighbor.

Love Executed for Us to See

What Love Looks Like

Intro

In a very real sense, today is Good Friday, at least at Stone Harbor Church, and in as much as we are concentrating on the passage of Scripture that records the bittersweet events of what has come to be called Good Friday. Our text is Mark 15:16-47.

Even though the word love is never mentioned in this passage, I have titled this message, “Love Executed for Us to See” and sub-titled it, “What Love Looks Like.” I’ve done this because I had to get my outline in on Monday this week and it was the best I could come up with given the short week. No. I’ve so titled the message because the passage is so full of meaning that it called for a title that meant more than was on the surface.

Love is nowhere directly mentioned by name, but everywhere present by action. Let me unpack the double meanings of the main words of this message’s title.

Love Executed for Us to See

- “Love” is both a noun and a verb. In this passage we will encounter love as a noun in Jesus who is the personification of love. We will also encounter love as a verb and we will see it displayed in **what Jesus endures**.
- “Executed” can refer both to someone’s death at the hand of another, as in the prison warden executed the man on death row; and it can also refer to an action being carried out, as an Olympic diver executing a complicated dive. In this passage we will see Love/love executed in both senses: Jesus as Love personified is physically executed and He executes all that is necessary to complete redemption.
- “See” can refer both to what we see with our eyes and come to know as to the facts, as someone who sees a crime might recount the facts to a police officer; and it can refer to an understanding of something that was before not fully understood, as in “Ah, now I see.” In this passage we will both come to **see** the facts of what transpired on the day of Jesus death, and we will also come to **see** with greater clarity or meaning what that says about Jesus and what He accomplished in God’s plan of redemption.

With the awareness that much is going on in this passage of Scripture and in the events of redemptive history they speak of, and with the further awareness that the Holy Spirit still uses these truths today in our lives to continue to bring us into a greater awareness of God and who we are in relation to Him, let’s give our attention to the Word of God in Mark 15:16-47. Allow me to read this passage with some explanatory comments so that we might understand Jesus crucifixion, death and burial in general and then we’ll take a look at the points I’d like us to focus on in particular, i.e. how Love is executed for us to see.

Hear the account of our Lord’s crucifixion, death and burial and hold in the back of your mind the questions, “What does this passage reveal about Jesus,?” who I regard as Love personified and “What does love look like?”

Explanatory reading of Mark 15:16-47

What does Love look like? Love looks like:

I. Jesus Enduring Mockery & Physical Pain

A. Mockery

1. Soldiers

a) Mark 15:16-20

(1) Words – “Hail, King of the Jews”

(2) Deeds – Read 16-20

b) Luke 23:36

(1) Words

“If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself” RSV

2. Pilate’s Inscription

a) The King of the Jews (26, John 19:19)

b) How is this mockery?

Even though Jesus Himself admitted this statement to be true, if not properly understood by Pilate, 16-20 argue that the Roman authorities saw it as mockery for if He were indeed the King, He would be commanding the situation so that He would be honored upon the throne not humiliated upon the cross.

3. Those Passing By (29-30)

a) Words – 29b-30

“You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross.”

4. Chief Priest & Scribes (31-32)

a) Words – 31b-32

“He saved others; He cannot save Himself. Let this Christ, this King of Israel, now come down from the cross so that we may see and believe!”

5. Those Who Were Crucified with Him

a) At least one of them was “insulting Him”

Who is Jesus? He is the One who endured mockery for you. He also endured...

B. Physical Pain

1. Scourging 15:15

The familiarity of Mark's first century readers with this brutal punishment allowed his brevity with greater impact on his readers than is had on us. Most here have never had a whipping of any sort. None here has experienced a Roman scourging. I will not get into the morbid details but suffice it to call to your remembrance the scourging scene from the movie "*The Passion*" which although criticized for its graphic depiction, as far as I know, accurately portrayed the horrific brutality of the punishment. It was a brutal whipping with leather strips embedded with peaces of metal and bone designed and effective at laying open the flesh of the poor soul scourged. It was not uncommon for people to die from Roman scourging.ⁱ

2. Cross-Bearing (Before Simon of Cyrene) (v. 21)

Can you imagine the pain of placing the rough wooden cross beam of the cross on which you would be crucified on the raw wounds of your back that had just been laid open by scourging? This too was the pain Jesus endured.

a) Implied in Mark

b) Explicit in John 19:17

3. Crucifixion (22-27)

Like scourging, crucifixion was so familiar to the first century reader that Mark felt no need to describe its horrors. You may again bring up the grotesque but realistic images from "*The Passion*" and be uncomfortably reminded of how Jesus endured pain. Here physical pain was probably attended by the likely added humiliation of Jesus being stripped naked according to Roman customary treatment of those crucified. Stripped of His flesh from scourging and cross bearing, Jesus was probably also stripped of His clothes (v. 24) suffering the added pain of this indignity.

a) Lane (p. 561)

"Death by crucifixion was one of the cruelest and most degrading forms of punishment ever conceived by human perversity."

It was designed to maximize pain leading to death.

b) Josephus (War VII v. 4)

"...the most wretched of all ways of dying"

4. Final Cry (37)

There is no hiding the pain of this final cry.

So who is Jesus? He is the one who endured both mockery and physical pain on His mission as Redeemer. What does love look like?

C. This is what Love looks like

- 1. Love endures mockery**
- 2. Love endures pain**
- 3. Love looks like Jesus**

What else does love look like? Love looks like...

II. Jesus Enduring Being Forsaken & Suffering Death

A. Forsaken (34)

We have already seen that all of His disciples fled when Jesus was arrested and even Peter did not stand with Him. But most grievous to Him was the fact that He was forsaken ...

1. By His Father, God

Remember that Jesus existed before He was born in the manger. He was in the beginning with God and created all that has been created with God and with His Holy Spirit (Gen 1, John 1). God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have lived for all eternity in the sweetness of perfect relationship, perfect love, perfect unity. Jesus was not *getting to know* and appreciate God the Father as we are. He **has always and perfectly** known Him and enjoyed fellowship with Him. With this in mind hear again...

a) Verse 34 from Psalm 22

(1) My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

(2) Lane sees Psalm 22 as an “eschatological psalm of suffering” p. 572

b) What It Meant for Jesus to be Forsaken by God

(1) Sinless Jesus somehow took the sin of rebellious humanity upon Himself

(a) Is 53:12 ...He Himself bore the sin of many...”

(b) 1 Peter 2:24 ...He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross...

(c) 2 Cor 5:21

21He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

(2) That Sin Forced Separation

That sin Jesus took upon Himself forced a separation between Himself and God the Father – a separation He had never before experienced. That sin separates God from man is seen in:

- (a) **Gen 3 exclusion from Garden**
- (b) **Nature of sin as estrangement**
- (c) **Is 59:2**
- (d) **On a human level: “What fellowship has light with darkness” 2 Cor 6:14**
- (e) **As water displaces oil, so light (God) displaces darkness (sin, Satan)**
 - (i) 1 John 1:5
“...God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”
 - (ii) Acts 26:18
“to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”

(3) So Estranged, God Poured out His Righteous Wrath – Just Judgment

This required Jesus’ ...

B. Death

1. The First Offering to God

Sacrificing life (death) as a means to the end of bridging the gap of estrangement between God and man has been a longstanding and developing story in the history of God and man. We see it first in the worship of Adam & Eve’s first two children, Cain and Abel, in Abel’s sacrifice of an animal from his flock (Gen 4 esp. v.4). Then soon after that, God advanced and developed the depiction of how that gap would ultimately be bridged by the unique story of ...

2. Abraham, Isaac and God

God’s required that Abraham sacrifice Isaac, his one and only son by his wife Sarah. Thankfully, God Himself provided a surprise substitute sacrifice of a ram. This more accurately prefigured and prophetically demonstrated God’s ultimate remedy for man’s estrangement. See Gen 22 esp. v. 13.

3. Under the Law

We see the covenant relationship between the people of God and God **established** with a sacrifice (Ex 24:1-11); and we see that covenant **continued** in the context of Israel’s continuing sin only by the sacrifice of animals killed as payment for the guilt of the people of God who did not, and apparently could not, maintain the requirements of the covenant (Ex 29; Lev 4:26, 31, 35...). We see the practice of redeeming life through substitutionary

sacrifice becoming an integral part of the Jewish life of faith (Ex 13:15, 34:20). God taught the people of Israel that life could be redeemed by the sacrifice of another.

4. In Our passage we see the ultimate sacrificial death of Jesus Christ

a) That He died is clearly stated

(1) 37 -- ...loud cry, and breathed His last."

(2) 39 -- ...He breathed His last...

(3) 43 – Joseph of Arimathea ... asked for the body of Jesus

(4) 44 – His death confirmed

(5) 45 - 47 He is buried in a tomb

Who is Jesus? He is the One who endured alone unto death for your redemption. What does love look like?

C. This is what Love looks like

- 1. Love endures being forsaken**
- 2. Love endures suffering even unto death**
- 3. Love looks like Jesus**

God's picture of love is further appreciated as we see...

III. Jesus Enduring Being Misunderstood & Abandoned

A. Abandoned

1. Disciples

- a) They had already all fallen away**
- b) All are absent from Mark's account of the crucifixion**

(1) Including Peter

(2) Except the Women & Joseph of Arimathea

- c) The other gospel's witness**

(1) John

*(2) Mary the Mother of Jesus***2. Significance of Abandonment**

Abandonment compounds suffering. It is one thing to endure hardship and suffering. It is another thing altogether, and an altogether harder thing, to endure it **alone, abandoned.**

Each of us has probably tasted at least a small sample of this: perhaps the time the rest of your team dropped the ball and you had to pick up the slack; the time your parents forgot you at school but picked up your other siblings leaving you all alone to wait in the cement tunnel on the playground as it got dark and scary; the time your friends ran and you didn't; the time they were invited and you weren't.

Some of us have done more than taste a small sample of abandonment. You have lived with its enhanced pain having been abandoned by a parent, or a spouse, or a valued friend or associate whose mutual trust you had enjoyed.

But none of us have been abandoned unto our death as Jesus was. Perhaps the taste we have had helps us go part way to appreciating the extent of the abandonment-compounded-pain which Jesus endured – for us.

Who is Jesus? He is the Christ, the Son of God who voluntarily endured abandonment so that you might live never abandoned by God and for all eternity in close communion with Him. That is love.

One more time. “What does love like?” Love looks like Jesus who endured being...

B. Misunderstood

Jesus was misunderstood by:

1. The Roman Soldiers

They considered Him only an imposter who claimed to be the King of the Jews. Therefore, as we have already seen they mocked Him as king and in feigned worship they exchanged respectful kisses for disrespectful spitting in His face, and honor due Him for beatings He did not deserve.

a) They misunderstood that Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews.

They killed the very King to whom they owed their ultimate allegiance, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (See again 16-21)

2. Those Passing By the Cross**a) Some Ridiculed Jesus**

(1) Read 29-30

(2) They misunderstood that He Himself was the ultimate temple – the ultimate place of meeting with God and that the temple He would rebuild was the temple of His body

In His presence there was no need for temple – in Him the fullness of deity dwelt in bodily form (Col 2:9)

The tearing of the veil gave evidence of this – the Designer of the temple as a temporary aid to worship has full authority and prerogative to discard what He never intended to be final.

(3) They misunderstood His Mission

(a) V. 30 “...save Yourself and come down from the cross!”

(i) Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34 – He must be killed

(ii) Mark 10:45 – Jesus came to die to ransom many.

b) Others Thought He Might be Rescued

(1) Read 33-36

(2) They misunderstood that Jesus was the ultimate once for all sacrifice who need NOT be rescued from death but who in that very death was rescuing mankind from the death they mistook for life

(a) Jesus did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life (die) as a ransom for many. See Mark 10:45

3. The Chief Priest & Scribes of His Own Israelite Community

a) Read 31-32

b) They Misunderstood the Nature of God’s Christ & King of Israel

They seemed to think that Jesus coming down off the cross and saving Himself would prove that He was the Christ and the King. But they misunderstood the nature of both the Messiah and the King of Israel. Had they eyes to see and ears to hear they would have understood what is evident to us on this side of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, i.e., that Jesus **stayed** on the cross **proved** that He was the genuine Christ of God the true King of Israel.

(1) Jesus is the Genuine Christ

The Christ of God’s intention came to **be Himself** the ultimate atoning sacrifice who would die just as Jesus was dieing.

(2) Jesus is the True King of Israel

The true king of the Kingdom of God would not rule according to the “procedure of the king” common to all the other kings of the world who use their position for private earthly gain. The King of Israel according to God’s intention was doing just what Jesus was doing. He was doing what only He could do for the glory of God and the good of God’s people. No death besides His own would satisfy the righteous wrath of God and save God’s people.

I would like to say, “I’ll never know for the life of me why those Chief priests and Scribes who studied the Torah with great intentionality didn’t understand this.” But the reality is I have missed some things that others understood long ago and could have rightly said of me, “I just don’t understand how Johnny could have missed that.” The truth is, even the most intentional learners of Scripture will still miss the full understanding of God. This is due to the nature of God’s greatness and our relative smallness. What do we do about that? We become life-long disciples of Jesus, learning God’s next lesson for us each day and every day for the rest of our earthly lives. Finally, this text reveals that Jesus was even misunderstood by...

4. Those Crucified with Him

a) 32b -- ...were also insulting Him.

b) They misunderstood Jesus ability to save

One does not insult THE One who can save your soul shortly before death unless He does not understand and believe in His power and propensity to save.

In fact one of the criminals being crucified with Jesus must have come to his senses for the Gospel of Luke records his much more respectful and prudent words of submitted faith.

(1) Luke 23:40-43

Trans. So this criminal being crucified is apparently the exception to the rule of people misunderstanding who Jesus is. Mark does give us a few more ...

5. Exceptions, i.e. those who understood more fully who Jesus was

a) The Roman Centurion (39)

b) The Women (40-41, 47)

c) Joseph of Arimathea (43-46)

d) All These are Unexpected

One would have expected to see Jesus male disciples being the ones who were in the know and properly declaring who Jesus was and standing by Him at the time of

crucifixion, death and burial. But here, unexpectedly we see instead a Roman soldier, His female disciples and one lone Jewish man (who was probably a dissenting member of the council of Jewish religious leaders) exhibit their proper understanding and appropriate faith in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God and King of Israel.

The spotlight is clearly on Jesus, but we must take note that the people one would think would properly understand Jesus were in His life time NOT the people who did in fact understand Him. At the very least may this keep you humble and sitting at His feet not relying on your longstanding history in the church. Apparently sometimes that doesn't mean a whole lot and in many situations can even be a hindrance causing you to misunderstand Him, because, after all, "I've been involved in religious activities for so long now that I'm very confident in what I believe."

Who is Jesus? He is the One who was misunderstood even by those closest too Him. What does love look like?

C. This is what Love looks like

- 1. Love endures being misunderstood**
- 2. Love endures being abandoned**
- 3. Love looks like Jesus**

Conclusion

Love looks like Jesus – He Himself is love personified; and His actions are love displayed.

Should you seek to know love, and you should, you best seek to know this Jesus who endured: mockery, pain, being forsaken, suffering death by crucifixion, being misunderstood and abandoned all to be the Son of God and the bringer of blessing to all the families of the earth.

Oh the greatness of God's goodness and perfect love towards us in Christ Jesus. This must call forth worship. We worship You!

Oh the delight in realizing that we are the beneficiaries of His love. This must call forth thanksgiving. We thank You!

Oh the honor of privileged responsibility of being His disciples. This must call forth reciprocal love for God and for neighbor. We love you Lord. We commit to loving each other according to the model of love You have given us in Jesus.

Endnotes

ⁱ See Lane p. 557 for more detail than you probably want.

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