

Jesus Messiah: Seeing Christ In The Gospel Of Mark

*“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
(Mark 1:15 ESV)*

*And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said,
“Truly this man was the Son of God!”
(Mark 15:38–39 ESV)*

The Suffering Saviour

June 10th, 2018

Mark 14:53-15:32

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Introduction:

Good morning. I want to invite you to open your Bibles this morning to Mark 14:53; that’s on page 851 in your pew Bibles. In a sense this is part 2 of the message that you heard last week. We are working our way through Mark’s version of the Passion. I mentioned last week that the word “Passion” refers to suffering. Mark is telling us about the sufferings of Jesus Christ and they begin right after the Lord’s Supper and they climax upon the cross outside Jerusalem. We’ll talk about that next week. This week we are looking at the trial and humiliation of Christ. Before we read the text let me remind you of what we saw last week. I told you that Mark is really slowing down here. He is telling this story in excruciating detail and so we are slowing down too. We’re covering it in three weeks and so it is important to keep track of what we’ve already seen. In terms of the sufferings of the Christ we have already catalogued and responded to three things.

We’ve seen Christ suffer the pain of:

1. Abandonment

They all said they would stand by him – Peter swore it up and down – but in the end, as Jesus predicted they all fell away.

We've also seen him submit to the Father's will.

2. Submission

We talked about how in a sense this was the greatest trial of them all. This was the moment when everything turned around. But it wasn't easy. Jesus prayed and asked God if there was some other way. He said:

"Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."
(Mark 14:36 ESV)

Jesus did the math. He counted the cost and he staggered before the price that would have to be paid. But in the end he submitted his WANTS to the WILL of his Father. He did what we could never do for ourselves.

And then lastly, we saw experience the horrible pain of personal betrayal.

3. Betrayal

Jesus was betrayed by a friend. By a disciple. By a member of his inner circle. Jesus was betrayed with a kiss.

We pick up the story at verse 53:

53 And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. 54 And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. 55 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. 56 For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. 57 And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" 59 Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" 61 But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" 62 And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." 63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need? 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death. 65 And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" And the guards received him with blows. 66 And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. 69 And

the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." 70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." 71 But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." 72 And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

1 And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." 3 And the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." 5 But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

6 Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. 7 And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. 8 And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. 9 And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. 12 And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" 13 And they cried out again, "Crucify him." 14 And Pilate said to them, "Why, What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him." 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

16 And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. 18 And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

21 And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. 22 And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). 23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. 25 And it was the third hour when they crucified him. 26 And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." 27 And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. 29 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, 30 save yourself, and come down from the cross!" 31 So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. 32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. (Mark 14:53-15:32 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God!

As I said, we are slowing down as we catalogue and reflect upon the sufferings of the Messiah.

The first thing that we see in this second part of the story is Jesus experiencing the pain of slander and false accusation.

The Sufferings Of Messiah:

4. Slander

The text says:

Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death... (v. 55)

many bore false witness against him... (v. 56)

some stood up and bore false witness against him ... Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. (vv. 57-58)

So the leaders were looking for people to testify against Jesus, they were soliciting slander and many came forward to provide it.

Can you imagine how that felt?

Have you ever been slandered? Have you ever had people conspire to say things about you that were not true? Have you ever had your words twisted and misrepresented by others in an effort to discredit you?

Jesus knows all about that. He was falsely accused and he suffered a significant injustice.

5. Injustice

Mark makes that point very clear. Everything about this trial was an injustice. It was a rush job. According to the Mishnah capital charges were supposed to be investigated slowly, with deliberation over a minimum of two days. This trial happened in one night. Capital trials could also not happen the day before a feast. They didn't want the judges to be in a hurry to get home. And, again, according to the Mishnah, witnesses at a capital trial were supposed to be warned about the punishments for slander and perjury. We just saw that far from that standard the judges in this case were actively soliciting false charges against Jesus. James Edwards says bitingly here:

“Nearly every detail of Jesus’ trial violates the rules for capital cases prescribed in the Mishnah.”¹

Have you ever had people in power break their own rules, violate their own policies and procedures in order to give your case or your point of view an unfair hearing? Have you ever

¹James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, Pillar New Testament Commentary. Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 443.

been the victim of bad process?

Well, Jesus knows all about that too. It was part of what he suffered on our behalf, on his way to the cross at Golgotha.

He also suffered the experience of rejection.

6. Rejection

That is the theological climax of this middle section of the Passion Narrative. Look carefully at verses 61-64.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” 62 And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” 63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. (Mark 14:61–64 ESV)

So the High Priest put Jesus under oath, to use our terminology and he asked him straight up: Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” Are you the Messiah and are you the Son of God? Those are the claims that Jesus has been making about himself. He has been saying through his deeds and his stories and his miracles that he is the ONE. He is the Son of David and the Son of God. And he OWNS that and DECLARES THAT right here.

You will sometimes hear Muslim critics of the Bible say that Jesus never actually claimed to be the Son of God. Well that just simply isn't true. Here is Jesus, under oath, in the highest court of Judaism asked in straight forward language to state his identity and claim and he does. This couldn't be any clearer and nor could the reaction of his accuser be any clearer.

The High Priest tore his garments – an expression of profound consternation and offense. The High Priest understood exactly what Jesus was saying and who he was claiming to be and instead of falling down in worship he rose up and tore his robes and condemned him for speaking blasphemy. You see friends, if you claim to be the Son of God you are either worthy of worship or worthy of condemnation.

And the leaders of the covenant community make their decision very clear. The text says:

And they all condemned him as deserving death. (Mark 14:61–64 ESV)

Jesus was rejected by the very people he came to save. All of the Gospel writers emphasize this aspect of his suffering. John puts in the very first chapter, he says:

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (John 1:11 KJV)

That hurts and that is part of the suffering that Jesus endured on our behalf.

The 7th thing we see in this story is Jesus enduring physical and verbal abuse.

7. Abuse

The text says:

And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with blows. (Mark 14:65 ESV)

They put a bag over his head and began to beat him and to mock him. “Prophecy for us God-boy! Who hit you this time? Who this time? And the guards received him with blows.

It’s hard to hear that isn’t it?

We almost wish that some of this detail was left out of the story, but it’s here and Mark wants us to see it. He wants us to know what Jesus suffered on our behalf.

Next there is a change of scene – and to a certain extent we’re thankful for it – but it is no less painful for Jesus in fact it is certainly more painful. Mark tells us now about the denial of Peter.

8. Denial

In a sense there are two parallel stories happening here. Jesus is in the upper room of Caiaphas’

villa and in the open courtyard below Peter is waiting and watching from a distance. Jesus is being very brave and honest and entirely true in the face of cruel slander and intense pressure from the leaders of the Jewish people. Peter is falling to pieces and denying his Lord before the accusations of a young servant girl.

The contrast could not be more jarring.

Mark tells the story this way; he says:

And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. 69 And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." 70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." 71 But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." 72 And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept. (Mark 14:66–72 ESV)

Upstairs Jesus is standing his ground before the forces of hell and the abuse and mockery of the Jewish leaders. Downstairs Peter is falling apart before the questions and accusations of a little girl.

Jesus is alone and he has no human helpers. As we said last week that is part of the agony and suffering that Jesus endured on his way to the cross.

Ninth and finally, we observe in this story the suffering of degradation and humiliation.

9. Humiliation

Having condemned Jesus and having decided that he must be executed in the most discrediting way possible the Jews transfer Jesus into the hands of Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. The Jews did not have the power to execute under the terms of their occupation so they concocted a charge of sedition in order to get him crucified by the Romans.

And so he was.

Jesus was killed in the most degrading and humiliating way possible.

Crucifixion was designed to shame and discredit the victim. It was a punishment given to slaves and to people we would today call terrorists. It was for the lowest of the low. A Roman citizen could not be crucified – that’s why the Apostle Paul was executed by beheading. Crucifixion was for the scum of the earth.

The process began with scourging. R.T. France says that this term:

“denotes flogging with whips normally made of leather and sometimes weighted with pieces of metal or bone, a brutal process which inflicted severe injury and could itself sometimes prove fatal.”²

The entire process was intended to break you down, physically, emotionally and psychologically. It opened you up; started the bleeding; overwhelmed the system. It left you completely vulnerable. In that condition they stripped you naked and nailed you to a cross.

That’s what happened to Jesus!

Hear that!

He was hung naked – nailed to a cross on the side of a busy road and they reviled him. Those are the closing words in the story:

those who passed by derided him (Mark 15:29 ESV)

So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him (Mark 15:31 ESV)

Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. (Mark 15:32 ESV)

The Son of Man was dehumanized. He was degraded, humiliated and despised. This was the suffering that Christ endured on our behalf.

So what in the world do we do with that?

² R.T. France, *The Gospel Of Mark*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 634.

These stories in the Bible are not just trying to knock us down they are trying to MOVE us in the right direction. When you see what Mark has just described – if the Holy Spirit is working in your heart – you are supposed to feel a desire to DO SOMETHING. This story is supposed to move you. So I just want to end by trying to figure where we should go from here.

I don't want to send you home shocked and overwhelmed – I want to point you in the right direction and thankfully I have a lot of help here. Peter obviously thought about the events of this night – probably more than any other human being who has ever lived. He had a front row seat. More than that he was an actor in the sufferings of the Lord. So Peter thought about this. Probably every day for the rest of his life – Peter thought about this and he told us how to respond.

Brothers And Sisters, What Should We Do?

He wrote a whole book about it. The first thing he says is this, in 1 Peter 3:18:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18 ESV)

1. Be reconciled to God through the sufferings of Jesus Christ

So Peter says that the reason that this happened – the main reason that the perfect, innocent, righteous Son of God suffered for sinners and liars and deniers like you and me is SO THAT he might bring us to God. So let's do that. Let's be reconciled to God through the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the DOOR – he said that in John 10:9. Jesus is the way back to God. His life is the life we owe God. His suffering – his death – pays the debt that we owe God. He is the way home! If we go home through the veil of his blood then we will be welcomed back as beloved and forgiven sons and daughters.

That's a good deal friends.

Take it.

Be reconciled to God through the life and through the SUFFERINGS of Jesus Christ.

And then Peter tells us another thing. It's in 1 Peter 4:1-2. He says:

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1-2 ESV)

Peter is saying here that in addition to calling us home to God the sufferings of Jesus send us out into the world resolved to suffer in pursuit of the will of God.

2. Be resolved to suffer yourself as you follow Jesus Christ

That's what he's saying. Be reconciled to God through the sufferings of Christ and be resolved to suffer yourself as you follow Jesus Christ. He is saying that the cross is an atonement FOR US and it is an EXAMPLE TO US. It is both. It does something for us but then it also shows something to us. It shows us what we should expect to experience in this world if we decide to follow Jesus.

Are you getting that?

That means that the whole list we just wrote about things that Jesus suffered FOR US – that list is also a prophesy of what Jesus is saying will happen TO US if we follow him and identify with him as our Lord and Savior.

Let's quickly look at that list again.

Peter says: since Jesus suffered, arm yourself with the same way of thinking. Servants aren't above the master, so EXPECT, RESOLVE, Peter says to endure some of the same experiences.

Resolve, expect to endure abandonment. If you keep following Jesus understand that not

everyone you love will come with you. And that will hurt.

Resolve, expect to have to fight with your own will, your own desires, your own comfort in order to do the will of God. It won't be easy. It wasn't for Jesus and it won't be for you.

Resolve, expect, anticipate that some of you will be betrayed. Jesus said this would happen:

Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (Matthew 10:21–22 ESV)

Since Jesus suffered in the flesh arm yourself with the same expectation. Expect to be slandered. Do not expect to be given the benefit of the doubt. Do not expect that your words will be taken in context or seen or read in the best possible light.

They will not.

Resolve yourself to experience that.

Resolve to experience injustice. To have rules and procedures overlooked, twisted or ignored in order to silence your voice and marginalize your participation.

Resolve to experience rejection. To have your claims discredited and your rights and dignity discounted.

Resolve to experience abuse – verbal, psychological and even in some cases physical. Resolve! Resolve means – be prepared; decide in advance. Pray for strength in advance. It doesn't that it will happen. It probably won't. It hasn't happened here in a long time – but it does happen in other places and it might happen again here in the future. We don't know. Peter doesn't tell us to know, he tells us to resolve.

Resolve to suffer denial – friends who know you will say that they don't.

Resolve to suffer humiliation. To be exposed. To be discredited. And even in some cases to be

killed.

Resolve to live:

no longer for human passions but for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1–2 ESV)

That is the way of the cross. That's the way of Jesus. And this is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let's pray together.