

Mark: The Way of Jesus

Sermon Text Discussion Notes – October 9th, 2022

Mark 15:1-15 – “His Life for Ours: The Exchange of the Servant King” by Drew Hunter

Overview

A crucifix was a powerful symbol long before Jesus hung on it. It was the most pronounced symbol of shame in the Roman Empire. Only the worst offenders and the most rebellious were crucified. Stripped naked, hung up on nails, picked at by birds, then thrown into a common grave. Crosses proclaimed the power of Rome and the folly of resisting their rule.

But that changed with Jesus. In the moment, it looked like one more example of the strength of Roman rule. A picture of shame and pathetic insubordination by a common religious peasant. But over time, the meaning changed: It shifted from a symbol of strength crushing weakness, to strength through weakness. It became a symbol of hope.

The text we're looking at this morning describes how Jesus is condemned by Pilate. But Mark is not just recording mere facts. Mark recounts this story in such a way that shows us what it means. He shows us the way Pilate condemned Jesus subtly communicates the true meaning of the cross. Here's what this story shows us: *Jesus is the true king who exchanges his life for ours*. Mark shows the way Jesus was condemned reveals the meaning of what's going on. And he shows us this, subtly as usual, by emphasizing three surprising aspects of the trial:

1. The Ironic Charge (v1-2)
2. The Strategic Silence (v3-5)
3. The Gospel Exchange (v6-15)

Discussion Questions

- 1) The Jewish leaders charged Jesus with blasphemy (cf Mark 14:62) and hence deserving of death. But they lacked the authority to execute him. When taking Jesus to Pilate as the Roman authority, what charge is levied against Jesus? Why is this charge ironic?
- 2) How did Jesus respond to Pilate's question asking if he was the king of the Jews? Do you think Jesus responded with intentional ambiguity?
- 3) In v3 we see that the chief priests were making many accusations against Jesus. Why do you think Jesus refused to defend himself against these false charges? Read Is 53:7. How is the silence of Jesus a fulfillment of prophecy from 700 years prior to his trial?
- 4) Have you ever been in a situation where you were being falsely accused? How did you respond? Now imagine being falsely accused in a court of law where your life is on the line.
- 5) Jesus taking on the guilt of sinners and give them his righteousness is at the very heart of the Gospel. How is the release of Barabbas a foreshadowing or marker of the full exchange Jesus was about to accomplish on the cross?
- 6) What is substitutionary atonement? Why is it needed? Does this atonement apply to everyone? If no, what must a person do for the exchange to be applied to them?
- 7) As you contemplate the Gospel exchange, what are some thoughts you have? What might be an appropriate response?

Quotations

Epistle of Diognetus

When our iniquity had come to its full height, and it was clear beyond all mistaking that retribution in the form of punishment and death must be looked for, the hour arrived in which God had determined to make known from then onwards His loving-kindness and His power. How surpassing is the love and tenderness of God!

In that hour, instead of hating us and rejecting us and remembering our wickedness... He showed how long-suffering he is. He bore with us, and in pity He took our sins upon Himself and gave His own Son as a ransom for us –

the Holy for the wicked, the Sinless for sinners, the Just for the unjust, the Incorrupt for the corrupt, the Immortal for the mortal. For was there, indeed, anything except His righteousness that could have [covered] our sins? In whom could we, in our lawlessness and ungodliness, have been made holy, but in the Son of God alone? O sweet exchange!