

The Crucifixion

Mark 15:21-32

Series: Christ our Focus

1. Introduction:

- a. As we read through Mark's retelling of the crucifixion we find a place not of pain but of a continual and unprecedented mocking.
- b. Mark's focus for us thus far has been on this mockery.
- c. Mark, painstakingly, uses language in his account that would cause the reader to think upon the Old Testament prophecy in regards to the Suffering Servant of the Lord.

2. Verse 21 – Simon the Cyrene

- a. We are introduced to this Simon of Cyrene as a man that enters the narrative and quickly exists it.
 - i. However, the role that this man played cannot be underscored.
 - ii. At a time of great need, compelled as he was, he aided Christ in the carrying of his cross to Golgotha.
- b. Compelled – *angareuō* – was commonly used of coercing slaves and animals in work.
 - i. The drafting of Simon was an example of the hated compulsory service that Rome imposed on subjugated Palestine. A condemned man normally carried his own—*patibulum*—the heavy crossbeam, to the site of crucifixion.
 - ii. Societally, this compulsion was supposed to be a dishonor for Simon. However, spiritually, Simon aides Christ as Christ performs the work of redemption.
 - iii. **Mark 8:34** And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.
 - iv. For Mark, discipleship is not a symbolic gesture, but concretely following Jesus.
 - v. It would seem that Simon's compulsion results in his conversion and the conversion of his sons.
 1. **Romans 16:13** Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.

3. Verses 22-23 – Wine

- a. In order to anesthetize him, Christ is offered wine mixed with myrrh.

- b. He does not rely on a narcotic to render his final act of obedience, but accepts God’s will in a fully conscious state.
4. Verses 24-27 –The crucifixion
- a. Verse 24 – Crucifixion and the division of garments
 - i. “And they crucified him.” The simple indicative of the verb and the utter austerity of the statement ground the central act of redemption in a historical fact.
 - ii. A quotation from Psalms about dividing garments identifies the fate of Jesus at the cross with that of the suffering righteous man of Psalm 22.
 - 1. **Psalms 22:18** they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.
 - b. Verse 25 – The third hour – 9 am.
 - c. Verse 26 – An inscription
 - i. Jewish and Roman custom required the charge against the condemned to be hung on their cross, hence the inscription.
 - 1. The inscription truly depicts who Jesus is.
 - d. Verse 27 – Two robbers
 - i. **Isaiah 53:12** Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.
 - ii. Let us look at the company of Christ.
5. Verses 29-32 – Derision
- a. Up to this point, Christ has been scorned and mocked by the Chief Priests, Pilate, and the soldiers, but at the crucifixion these voices merge in a larger chorus of scorn.
 - b. Bystanders join in as well.
 - c. According to Mark, the hurled insults are called derision, blasphemy.
 - i. Blasphemy is used almost exclusively in both Greek and biblical literature of evil speech against God; by implication, the derision hurled at Jesus is blasphemy against God—making the chief priest and scribes guilty of the very thing Jesus was condemned for by the Sanhedrin.
 - d. To everyone there, proof of Jesus’ messiahship could only be had if Jesus acquiesced to the temptation of saving himself.

- i. This demand for a sign is evidence of unbelief. Faith is not the result of signs and miracles, but the condition for them.
 - e. The taunt assumes that salvation of self is the greatest good.
 - i. Jesus, however, has not taken upon himself the mission of self-help and self-fulfillment.
 - ii. He will be a ransom for others.
 - iii. This is the same temptation of Gethsemane, that is, to avoid the cup of suffering. Jesus makes the costly decision which he now fulfills, to do the will of God rather than his own will.
 - iv. Jesus surrenders in total vulnerability to the malevolence and violence of the world in order to save it.
- 6. Benediction –
 - a. **1 Timothy 1:15-17** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. (16) But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (17) To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.