

An Unjust Death For A Just Savior

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I don't know about you but if you've been blessed by today's music, please say amen. Thank you to our worship team. And of course, as always, Ethan, thank you for your incredible witty stories. To all of our volunteers, thank you so much for our Sabbath School teachers. I'm completely blown away every week by just the generosity and the passion that this church has to not only serve the Lord but also to serve one another. Amen.

All right, let's pray. Father as we winding down our series, Lord, we have one more week after this but especially for tonight, today's sermon, Lord hearts and important passage that we need to look at. So be with us, give us wisdom, give us understanding. Help us, Lord, to take what you want us to learn to, not only will enrich our life, but it will help us to be better equipped, educated and empowered to serve you. In Jesus name, amen.

There's a story told of an older couple. And the husband was sick. So he went to his doctor, his wife accompanied him and his doctor after getting the results from the blood test and, and taking going over the procedure. He mentions to both the husband and wife he says Your husband is suffering from a very, very serious infection. And my husband who was hard of hearing and said, What did he say? His wife said you're sick. The doctor went on, but there is hope. You just need to reduce his stress. Each morning give him a hearty healthy breakfast be pleasant, nice and kind, and for lunch and dinner, maybe make his favorite meals. Don't discuss any problems with them. It will only make his stress worse. Don't yell at him or argue with them. And more importantly, just cater to your husband's every whim. I know some of the ladies here are starting to get rustled here. And if you can do this for your husband for the next six months to maybe a year, I think your husband will make a complete recovery. Switch the husband again said What did you say? His wife said you're gonna die. You're wondering, my wife is not here.

So oh, that man was on the path for suffering apparently. Today we're going to talk a little bit about suffering. It's one of the key themes that is actually found in the book of Mark. As we marched closer to the end of our series, we're going to look at some of the pivotal points in Jesus life. Today we're going to look at his arrest, his trial and even his own death. And all of this is going to come to the crux of what a centurion, a Gentile says, But before I'm not going to reveal that, maybe I think probably some of you will remember. But for those of you who don't, let's just wait. I want to remind us what does the very first verse of Mark one, one say, the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, amen.

We've been discussing we've been studying we've been diving deep into the good news, according to Mark on Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, we first began with the prologue. And talking about that Jesus, he there will be a messenger sent he would proclaim and, and Jesus would come, he would be baptized, he would also experience and challenges. And yet he was also in verse 14, through 15, the time has come, the kingdom of God has come near, Repent and believe the good news. Jesus brings good news, the gospel. And from there we talked about the fact that Jesus, he began his first Ministry of calling the disciples educating, equipping and empowering them. And he goes on and he goes through

Galilee and he begins to heal people. He talks to them, he listens to them. As he eventually expands his ministry, Bill did a great job in helping to explain that Jesus, he crossed the sea of Galilee he not only ministered to the Jews, but also the Gentiles and those in the Decapolis, we find that Jesus also is intentional about making disciples. And then he also points out three times in chapters eight, nine and 10, that he was going to die, he prophesized that today we're going to get a little bit into that. And then chapters 10, through 13, he changes and he shifts his focus more specifically 11, 12 and 13. He focuses on his ministry in Jerusalem, before it was kind of a secret, he was kind of secretive. But now all bets are off, he is revealed who he is, and what he plans to do.

Last week, we talked kind of a bit about the perspectives of the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, the scribes, and the case of also the disciples. And also what did Jesus have in mind, I hope that those of you were here, appreciated that we may or may not do that sometime again in the future. And then, in chapter 13, Jesus is with his disciples, as he's leaving the temple, one of his disciples asks, or says to him, What massive stones what magnificent buildings referring to the temple, and Jesus says, you see all of these great buildings, not one stone will be left on one another, everyone will be thrown down. And he's talking about the eventually the destruction of the temple and the signs of the times. And eventually, he points out that we don't, you know, we don't know when the Son of Man will come back, only the Father, but be on guard Be alert, much like we are today. As followers of Jesus as his disciples, we are waiting. And hopefully, it will be soon that he will return. Amen.

So, the crux now of today's lesson, we find that in chapter 14, it begins with Jesus being anointed. It was the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. We're only two days away and the chief priests, however, behind the scenes, what are they trying to do? They're trying to plot. We're already last week, they're trying to figure out okay, how do we get rid of this guy, we need to get rid of him to the point now we got to kill them. And so they're secretly things are ramping up, we got to get rid of this guy even faster. But they point out, we can't do it right now. Because everyone, all of the people are here, and they've heard about this Jesus, and if we kill them, it's gonna look really bad on us.

So eventually, he reclines while he's in Bethany, he's in a home of Simon the leper. And there's a woman who bravely comes in with an alabaster jar of expensive perfume made of pure nard she breaks the jar, and she pours it on his head. And some of them of course, you know, the the peanut gallery is kind of talking maybe amongst in their heads or in the back. Why is this woman here? What? Why is she wasting this perfume? You know how much that costs? And Jesus is, becomes indignant, they rebuking her. And he says, Hey, leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She was anointing him, preparing him for his death. It's a beautiful thing. As he points out, she will be remembered for this act, something that we remember her for even today. And then Judas leaves and he goes, he goes to the chief priests, and confirms and agrees to betray Jesus, they were delighted to hear about this. They promised to give him money. And so at that point, he begins to look for opportunities to betrayed Jesus. And then right after that is the Last Supper. We talked briefly about this. Earlier, in the month when we were at communion, he sends a couple of disciples ahead, to make sure that there's a place that they could go and meet up and everything is set, they participate in the communion, and essentially, Jesus reveals somebody is going to betray me. Everybody's like, what who's gonna betray you, Jesus? How could You're the Messiah. Of course, we know the story. Judas eventually leaves And he goes, and he brings back the leadership, the Jewish leadership.

Before that, though, Peter, faithful Peter, willing to do anything for Jesus tends to speak, or no, sorry, he tends to act and then thinks about, oh, wait a minute, I should have thought about that. Peter is emphatic, though. I will not abandon you. And what does Jesus say? Get behind me. In fact, also, you will deny me how many times? Three times before the rooster crows, and it's here that we find in chapter 14 and 32 through 42. He's in the Garden of Gethsemane and he pours his heart out to God. He says, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. He agonizes, he knows what is coming. already. He's thinking about what lies ahead. If any of us were in his shoes, would we have reservations? Could we go through what he's about to go through? I think most of us would probably say, No thanks. But he goes in, he calls his disciples, some of them to go with him. And when he is praying, he's pouring his heart out. What are the disciples doing? Sleeping? Three times this happens. Jesus is sleeping. And then finally, in verse 43, Jesus is arrested. Judas, and you have to think about a Judas how long he'd be, he'd been traveling with Jesus. Three years, roughly three years. Jesus knew who Judas was. You can't spend three years together and not get to know one another. Learn their habits, maybe their mannerisms, the way they laugh, they respond to things, how they think. And he appears, with him to him with a crowd of armed people with swords and clubs sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders and the betrayer. Judas had set up a special signal. The one I kiss the man arrest him and lead him away under guard. And so he goes to Jesus. And he says, Rabbi, and he kissed him. What a mark of betrayal. Somebody that he had spent three years with, goes and betrays him. I don't know how close Jesus had gotten to Judas, but I'm sure it probably broke his heart. And you're he's suffering already. Betrayal. The men see him and arrest them. One of those standing near drew his sword and cut the servant of the high priest cutting off his ear. And Jesus responds, Hey, am I leading a rebellion? Oh, you've all come out with swords and clubs to capture me. And yet I was with you every day in the temple. Basically saying Why don't you come and get me then I was there. And you have to think about it. They're coming or they're under the cloak of darkness. We're not many people are going to know about eventually they would find out. But they had a time it where it could be done in secret. And yet Jesus responds with but the scriptures must be what? fulfilled.

And the crushing part the next verse, then everyone would desert him. Ever been abandoned by your friends, those that you thought trust and had your back? These men had spent time with them, sleeping in the same place, sharing meals, being stuck on a boat, in storms and Jesus calms the storms, they'd seen the miracles. Peter had said I will not abandon you three times. And yet when push came to shove, they all fled. They were fearful. Jesus is placed before the Sanhedrin they take Jesus to the high priests and all of the chief priests, the elders of law come together. Now Peter hadn't completely deserted him, but he stood off in a distance to where hopefully he wouldn't be recognized. Although Peter couldn't completely abandon him, in a way he still did, he couldn't just not know what would happen to him. They accuse Jesus. And they say, Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One? And Jesus? He says in verse 62 of chapter 14, I am and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the mighty one, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

And then what does the high priests do? He tears his clothes, because in his eyes, that is what blasphemy. How dare you. Because it is if Jesus was what, but a man, he could not recognize that the one that he had been waiting for, that the Israelites had been waiting for, for how many years was standing before him, but he was so blind, that he could not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. And then he says, Do we need any more witnesses. And finally, verses 66 through 72. Jesus, I'm sorry, Peter is finally confronted. And three times he denies his relationship to Jesus. And finally, the

rooster crows. And he broke down and wept. Peter, as well, was feeling this inner turmoil that would stay with them if you read John's account. So Jesus is placed before Pilate very early in the morning, and the chief priests and everybody, all of the leaders are gathered together the teachers a lot, the whole Sanhedrin, they all made their plans as far as what they were going to do with Jesus. And so they led and they handed him over to Pilate, because they weren't necessarily an authority to be able to kill him. So let's just try to let the state do it. And so they bring Him before Pilate, and Pilate asks, Are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus responds, you have said, so the chief priests accused them of all kinds of things. They misinterpret what he has said, to try to twist it to, hopefully, it would be able to sway Pilate over to their side. But Jesus doesn't say anything in Pilate. He's amazing. These guys are saying all these horrible things. And yet he's Jesus is standing his ground. And the crowd came, and they asked Pilate to do what they usually did. Do you want me to release the kingdom of the Jews? Knowing that it was out of self interest that the chief priests had handed over to pilot recognize what they were doing? They were sending up an innocent man to be murdered. But Pilate fell to the temptation of peer pressure in the crowd. He wanted to please, he knew Jesus was innocent. And so rather than releasing innocent men, who did they release? Barabbas. Well, what shall I do within the one whom you call the King of the Jews? They cried out, they shouted, Crucify him. Yes, what crime what crime is he committed? He's only disagree with some of your theological tenants. I mean, today in today's age, we think that's crazy. Right? Crucify Him, Crucify Him, Crucify Him. And a verse 15, one to satisfy the crowd pilot release Barabbas. To them he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. And so the soldiers lead Jesus away to the palace, also called the Praetorium. And they placed together a whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, you know what purple means? In Jesus time. royalty, a purple robe. And they're mocking Him. They give him a crown, but it's a crown of what? Thorns, not exactly very comfortable. And they begin to say Hail King of the Jews in a mocking tone. And again, and again, they struck him with a staff. They spat on him and falling on their knees, they paid homage they worshipped Him but in a mocking tone, and they took off the robe. They put his own clothes back on him and they let him out to be crucified. In a verse 21, it says, A certain man of Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander Rufus, was passing by and they forced him to carry Jesus Christ. us, they went to Golgotha, which means the place of the school and they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he didn't want to take it.

And it's there that they crucified Him and to be crucified was not a pleasurable thing. It was it was you essentially, when you're crucified, do you know how you really die? You suffocate, and you don't just suffocate immediately. You could be up there for hours, maybe a day or two just hanging there. You're exposed, shamed. Rome knew how to send a message, and they were sending a message with Jesus. And it was nine in the morning that they crucified Him. And they wrote a sign that said, the King of the Jews, and they crucified him with two rebels. They said He saved others, but he can't save himself. Let this Messiah the King of the Jews come down now from the cross and may see and be believed. And they continue to hurl insults on him. If I were to describe this scene, it would be a sack of suffering, but also, humility. Also, ultimately, love. And here we find were at the crux. Verse 33. At noon, darkness came over the land until three in the afternoon, and at three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" , which means Oh, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? When some of those standing nearby heard, who did they think he was calling out to? Elijah because Eloi Eloi sounds similar to Elijah. Someone ran, fill the sponge with him with wine and vinegar, put it on his staff and offer Jesus to drink. Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah can come down to take them down. As they continued to mock him. The curtain at this point, though, in the temple was torn from top

to bottom. And when the centurion, who was the Centurion? He would be the equivalent of a captain in the army, he probably is in charge of maybe 100 to 200 soldiers. He's a Gentile. And he says something extremely profound. He says, surely, this man was what? The Son of God this is something that Mark is intentionally putting, because what does he start with the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of what God, Mark was making a point here. He was saying, this is Messiah, the Son of God, and even a Gentile a Centurion can recognize who Jesus was. This was not lost on Mark in the first people who were listening or reading this passage, for the very first time. And then some women were watching from a distance among them, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James younger, of Joseph and Salome, and Galilee, these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women to come up with him to Jerusalem were also there. And they were wanting to be there. But yet they had to keep their distance for their safety. Where were the rest of the disciples. We don't know. They had gone, they had fled. Jesus had suffered a very painful death. But what drove him there? Ultimately, who was that of loss? Love for you, to you, to all of us, to all over the world. It was God's love that brought him to the cross, to fulfill a promise, all the way back in Genesis 3:15. Where the serpent would ultimately be defeated, Amen.

Now Mark 8:34 through 37. It says, Lenny call the crowd to him with his disciples and said, whoever wants to be my disciple. And what does the disciple mean? Of follower of Jesus or follower, but in our context follower of Jesus must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. The way to Jesus is through the cross. Daily, seeking the Lord. faithfully following Jesus, the lessons that he left behind the words that are found in this book, being together as a community, to uplift one another, to pray for one another, and ultimately to share the Good News of Jesus. And one day soon, waiting for one day, soon that return of the Son of God.

NT Wright says the resurrection completes the inauguration of God's kingdom. It is the decisive event demonstrating that God's Kingdom has really been launched on earth as it is in heaven. The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled and Jesus Christ, that you are now invited to belong to it. Jesus desires that not only that he extends the hand the gift of salvation, but wants you to be a part of the community, that kingdom and to participate in the sharing of that good news. But Basil Hume also says the great gift of Easter is that of hope, Christian hope, which makes us have that confidence in God in his ultimate triumph and in His goodness, and love. The cross? When you think about it, what does it mean to you? My first initial thought was suffering. Earlier this week, I went on a bike ride. I mentioned this earlier and Sabbath school. And I decided that I wanted to add a little bit of extra mileage, a little extra time, only 15 minutes. But in that 15 minutes, I started going uphill, and it started getting hotter. And when I finally got the top, I started going downhill. But as I was going downhill on a trail, the headwind kept hitting me. And I hadn't been very consistent in my exercise. And so I was having to work harder. In order for me to be able to, to lose weight, and to be more fit, sometimes means it's going to hurt a little bit, right. And I thought, Oh, I'm suffering. It's so hot. And I was feeling miserable. And then I realized, but this is nothing. This is not the cross. I'm choosing to do this. I'm choosing to get fitter. For Jesus. The cross was love that drew him there.

There's a story told of a survivor who was shipwrecked washed up on a small uninhabited island, he cried out for God to save him. And every day he scan the horizon, but nothing, he could see nothing and he was exhausted. And eventually he was able to build a hut and put a few things that he had been able to scatter and gather. But one day after hunting for food, he he arrived home to his little hut in flames. And smoke was going up in the sky. And the worst thing that had happened, everything that he had was

burnt, and lost. He was stung with grief and anger and frustration, why God have You forsaken Me? But early the next day, a ship drew near to the island and rescued him. How do you knew did you know I was here. He asked the crew and they responded, we saw your smoke signal. What smoke signal? There was no smo..... Oh.

My friends, sometimes you may be going through an experience. Let's translate now to this act of suffering and hardship. Maybe you're going through something right now that may be uncomfortable. It's hurtful. You don't want to be experiencing this. But it also may be an opportunity for you to grow and ultimately to come out, better equipped, enabled and empowered to serve the Lord, but also to grow your faith. We don't always know why things turn out the way that they do. But in hindsight, our God is a God of love. It will not put us through anything that we cannot handle. And ultimately, Jesus loved us so much that he would rather die and to live without us. To me the cross is sacrifice or suffering, but that of love. Ultimate love. Have you ever heard another child say I love you but you have to do this? Moms are laughing because they've heard that before. I remember hearing a family member say to another one was younger than the other, I'm hungry. And so this individual sibling said, Alright, fine, I'll make you lunch. But you have to do this. To me in my head. I was like, I'm watching this play out. I was like, Dude, this person is hungry. Give them something to eat. They're not equipped to be able to make dinner yet. God's love has no attachments. The only thing that God asks is to say, open your heart, that I may come in, and allow me to be able to work on your heart. May the Holy Spirit be able to shape to mold and equip you to not only serve, but to be loved and accepted by the one who will never leave you or abandon you.

So, my friends, what does a cross mean to you? This week, I want you to reflect, write down one thing about Jesus that you're grateful for him? Maybe even in light of what does the cross mean to you for Jesus on the cross? May God bless you, leading guide you, and maybe a little homework. Read up on chapter 16. It's a doozy. We're going to tackle a challenging subject. Father in heaven, thank you for your great love, your infinite mercy. You are good and your mercy endures forever. Lord, we give everything to you, our dreams, our hearts, desires, but also the things that paint paying us and also hold us back. Help us to break free of those bonds. And may we live a life that is in you full of trust, and when there are challenges and hardships help us to navigate them to see clearly and to trust in You. All these things we pray in Jesus precious name, amen. Grace and peace, everybody.

God bless you all.