

The Substitute

Mark 14:22-42; 15:21-41

"The entire Bible pivots on one weekend in Jerusalem about two thousand years ago." (D.A. Carson)

We are going to take a journey to the cross today. Before we get to Golgotha, we are going to the Guest Room, and then into the Garden. I want to look at the last days of Jesus on earth in chapters 14 and 15 of Mark's (short but powerful) Gospel.

Spurgeon said that this journey to the cross "is worthy of an angel's tongue. It needs Christ himself completely to expound it. May God, by his own Spirit, explain it to your heart."

I'm not an angel. So I feel my inadequacies. I'm inadequate to do a lot of things. (I can't sing. Write. Dance. Construction. Certainly not car Mechanics cars [check washer fluid!]). But I feel even more incapable of expounding these amazing paragraphs. So, we need help. The hymn writer said:

*Oh, make me understand it,
Help me to take it in,
What it meant to Thee, the Holy One,
To bear away my sin.
--Katharine A. M. Kelly*

We need help, friends. May the Lord help us to "take it in."

Luther said: "I feel as if Jesus Christ died only yesterday." You feel that when you study these chapters.

The passion narrative begins at 14:1, with the plot to kill Jesus. We then see the anointing of Jesus, Judas' agreement to betray Jesus, and the Guest Room prepared, and Jesus makes the prediction of betrayal (20-21). Then we come to the parts of the story that will occupy most of our attention today: the "Last Supper," and Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane.

- 1/3 of Mark's Gospel is devoted to Jesus' last few days
- 1/6 to his last 24 hours.
- In ancient biographies many believed that *how a person died revealed a person's true character.*

As we consider the brutal death of Jesus, we are confronted with a question – not just a spiritual, faith question but an obvious one.

Who seeing this story or hearing this story would say: “**This is the message for me!** This is who I want to follow! That’s my spiritual leader!”? Who would say this?

- Confucius, Mohammed, Buddha, Moses – founders of major religions all died in *old age* – mostly in *comfort & triumph*.

Jesus died alone. Young. Stripped naked. Mocked from inches away. Spat upon. Crying in agony, “Why have you forsaken me?”

Yet, His death completely changed the ancient world.

Why? How? It changed lives because people understood the meaning of Jesus’ death. They embraced this message (or him) by faith.

Here’s why what we are looking at is so important:

Jesus reveals the meaning of his death at this meal and in this garden.

He had been telling them about the cross. But they didn't get it. In **Mark 8** Peter rebuked him for predicting his death on the cross. Jesus told them not to tell anyone because they didn't fully get it. They didn't have a cross in their message. So Jesus said, if you don't have the cross, you don't have a message.

Guest Room and Garden

The two scenes that precede Jesus' crucifixion are so important *because they prepare us for his death; they **interpret** his death.*

If you only read the crucifixion you might say, "Okay, it's a sad story." Or "It's an inspiring story." After the **Passion** of the Christ came out, many unbelievers were even sympathetic to the movie.

But you know a lot of people were crucified in Jesus' day. But this was no ordinary man. This was no ordinary crucifixion. In these stories, Jesus explains his unique, life changing death.

In a word, his death means: **Substitution**.

- When talking about the gospel, we must talk about substitution (1 Cor. 15:1-ff). "Lives changed by the gospel." Lives changed by Christ who gave himself up for us.

3 Parts to today's message. We will spend most of our time on the first two:

1. Substitution Announced
2. Substitution Anticipated
3. Substitution Accomplished

I. The Last Supper – Substitution Announced (14:22-25)

Jesus makes the most astonishing announcement in this text T what's called "The Last Supper."

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Lord's Supper has changed the world.

We don't recognize the full impact of it today because people have grown so familiar with it. But that's not the meal's problem, that's our problem.

It's like living by a train – after a while you don't notice it; familiarity can kill astonishment. Let's hear the train: **Read 14:22-25**

2 Parts

- Jesus as the Host, as the Sacrifice, as the Substitute
- How His Death Can Transform Your Life

A. Jesus as the Ultimate Host – We see this in his explanation

They are eating the **Passover** (Notice: v. 1, 12, 14, 16).
A few thousand years precede this meal.

When Jesus wanted to explain the meaning of his death, he didn't just give a lecture. He chose a particular time: Passover.

Thousands of lambs were slaughtered in Jerusalem at this time. They were drained in the Kidron valley.

What was Passover?

- Passover was an annual meal that commemorated the defining moment in the history of Israel (Exodus 12).
- They were enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. God delivered them. Saved them. Redeemed Them. Transferred them. They took this meal to remember it.

The Form of the Meal (not all the details)

4 cups of wine –At four different times, the Host got up and said something.

- This seems to be the third cup of wine (v. 22). The fourth cup of wine including the singing of a hymn, or psalm (verse 26). It was probably Psalm 115-118. *Imagine Jesus singing a hymn just before being crucified!*
- So Verse 22 begins at the third part of the Passover. The host would get up during the third cup, after the meal was mainly eaten, or almost eaten and he would:
 - Bless the elements (bread, herbs, lamb)
 - Explain the symbolism of elements (Deut. 16)
“This is the bread of our afflictions which are fathers ate in the wilderness.” Only Jesus doesn't recite the Script...

B. Jesus as the Ultimate Sacrifice

Jesus got up to bless the elements, but then reinterpreted the elements. The first one was the *bread*. “This bread is my body”

He was saying:

- “This is the bread of my affliction.... my suffering”
- “I am going to lead the ultimate Exodus.”
- “I am the ultimate Moses”
- “This is the ultimate suffering”
- “I am going to bring the ultimate salvation”

- “My death is the ultimate moment of the history of the world.” My death is the most important thing that has ever happened.
- "All the other deliverances were pointing to me."

What is also astonishing is that the Passover was taken **the night before** God redeemed his people; Jesus takes the meal the night before God is going to redeem his people.

Then we see Jesus taking the cup. This points to blood being shed. Sacrifice. Slaughter - which the Prophets spoke of.

C. **Jesus as The Ultimate Substitute**

The Passover was mini-picture of **judgment** day. God didn't say that "When I execute justice, "you guys will be fine." No. Because Israel was not sinless.

Because of our sin, we are all guilty. The only way they could survive was if they

- kill a lamb,
- eat it that night,
- and put the blood on the doorposts.

They had to take shelter under the blood of the lamb. That lamb was their substitute.

- Your hope in escaping God's just judgment is not in your morality, your resume, your looks – *it's only your faith in a substitute.*

That night, in Egypt, in every home there was either a dead son, or a dead lamb (Ex. 12:30)

You were saved on your faith in a substitutionary sacrifice.

By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them (**Heb. 11:28**)

Why does a sacrifice of a lamb give you exemption from judgment, and pardon your from sin? Why would the death of a furry little

animal save you? It couldn't - not ultimately. The lamb was not really the answer. It was a pointer, a pattern, a message....

When Jesus got up that night to bless the Passover, it was the most unusual Passover the disciples had ever experienced because none of the Gospels talk about a main course.

- **There's no mention of a lamb being there. What kind of meal is this? Why?**

The lamb was not on the table because the lamb of God was at the table. (Ht: Keller)

Jesus was the main course. That's why John the Baptist said the first time he saw Jesus,

"Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."

Why would he call a human being a *lamb*? Isaiah did! (Isa 53).

An animal can't substitute for the sin of a person, only a person can. So he says 53:4-7

"This is my blood that is poured out" (Mark 14:24) he is identifying himself with the suffering servant in Isaiah. "I am the lamb that all the other little lambs pointed."

*"Christ our Passover lamb has been slain" (1 Cor. 5:7)
"Worthy is the Lamb"*

This is the meaning of his death. His death is a substitutionary death.

His death is an act of substitutionary sacrificial love without which we cannot be saved.

- **Judgment is coming: Either Christ dies in your place on the cross, or you receive God's just judgment.**

What do you call this act of substitution? Mercy. Grace.

Incomparable love. "We know love in this – he laid down his life for us"

This is why we sing about him not ourselves. Essence of sin - we substitute ourselves for God; essence of salvation: God substitutes himself for us.

Paul says this ... Is of "**first importance.**" Not that other things are insignificant, but that this is most important. Paul knew a lot of things! You may know a lot of things! But this is the most important thing. He then says "you believed."

Do you believe in this message?

- I'm sure that some in Israel put the blood on the doorpost with some measure of **doubt**. Others were greatly **confident**. But you know what? Regardless of how "strong" one's faith was, both were saved – the one with little faith and the one with great faith. Why?

Because you aren't saved by the **quality** of your faith, but by the **object** of your faith.

Have you put your faith in God's ultimate substitute: Jesus the Lamb of God? Find shelter under the blood of the lamb, and be spared from the wrath to come.

How This Meal Can Transform Your Life

I've had some wonderful meals lately....

You can have a wonderful meal, and have it all laid out, and still starve to death if you don't do something. What's that? You have to **eat it!**

- This is why Jesus says, "**take it.**" Jesus is our salvation. **Take him!**

How to Take it:

A. **Take it with Dependency** – verse 24

Jesus says, I'm going to make a covenant with you. A covenant is a relationship. He makes a promise: "I'm not going to eat or drink until the kingdom."

"I'm going to bring you into the father's kingdom" he says.

Peter tries to make an oath in verse 31. But Jesus says "you are going to fail me" – "but I'm still going to pick you up on the way to Galilee." What grace!

"You will fail!" "But I will not!" he says.

Jesus is saying essentially, "Your salvation depends not mainly your **commitment to me, but upon my commitment to you!**"

Jesus makes this oath with blood. Oaths were made normally with blood – sprinkled, or cut an animal in half and walk between it – very vivid. It was serious.

- "If I don't fulfill my promise, may my blood be spilt"
- But those oaths were never made by the Master, they were made by the inferiors, not the superiors. (Keller)

The Lord's Supper is designed to massage this grace into your heart. That your salvation is based upon Jesus' work, and *you need to take it in – depending on him.*

Do you believe this? My relationship depends not on my past but on Christ's past, not on my *record but his record?*

- Are you building your life on what people think about you?
- "Jesus' commitment to you is the food your heart needs" (Ht: Keller)– then you wouldn't be so scared, so upset, so depressed.

B. **Take it in Community**

Passover was a meal for the family. But Jesus pulls them out of the family and takes it with them (Keller). Why?

If you believe in Jesus' as your substitute, your Savior, then you have a new family and it has a stronger unity than your own family.

- Your class doesn't matter; race doesn't matter. There's something stronger than all this: his blood.

What binds us together is that we have been loved by Jesus Christ, and we now love each, as he has loved us.

- What the church is not// What the church is: not an event, not a building. It's a community of brothers and sisters living life together on mission.

C. **Take it with Expectancy**

- The Lord's Supper is a look into the future.
- This is the **oeuvres**. It is a reminder of what's coming to those who trust in Him. He says to believers: "No matter how awful you feel right now, I'm going to get you to the table." (Keller)

"There are two days in my calendar: This day and that Day."
(M Luther)

Receive Christ by faith– taking this today won't save you, but if you understand the message of that is contained, it is the power of God unto salvation.

Will you receive Christ by faith? Depend on His substitutionary work. Enter into a new community. Expect to eat it again.

I hope you've heard the train.

II. The Garden – Substitution Anticipated (26-42)

The Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus **often went there** (Luke, John).

- It means "olive press" – Here we see the Savior pressed.

2 Parts

- Understand His Suffering (Primary emphasis)

- Understand Your Suffering (I'm following CJ's outline)

#1: Understanding His Suffering

A. It Involved Abandonment (26-31, 37, 50, 51, 66-72; 15:33-34).

He's abandoned by his disciples

V. 27 – Prophecy. “you will fall away.” Zech 13:7... “the sheep will scatter.” And they do.

V. 28 – Promise. “I will go before you to Galilee.” I’m coming to get you. Despite your failure and falling away, I’m committed to you.

V. 29 – Peter. Jesus’ suffering is not the only thing on display; Peter’s arrogance is also on full display.

- Even though Jesus says “you will all fall away”
- Even though He quotes Scripture saying they will all fall away;
- Peter disagrees with Jesus! Peter is not impressed, with the promise, the prophecy or the one giving it – he argues with Jesus.
- He doesn’t argue that some will fall away, he says that *there’s one exception: you are looking at him!*

v. 30 – Jesus’ rebuke.

v. 31 - Peter’s protest. “emphatically.” And “they all said the same.

Prophecy Fulfilled

- **V. 37** – *they fall asleep*
- **V. 50** – *they all fled*.
- **V. 51** – *Mark flees*. Nakedness is a picture of
 - Embarrassment – I ran away from home. “You can’t be showing me off like that. I’m not a side show.”
 - Shame
 - Fleeing. Mark says, “I did too.”
- **66-72** – Peter does deny him.

Mark wants us to know: The Savior went to the cross **utterly alone!**

Have you ever been alone?

He poured into the disciples for three years, and then went it was time to die, they were gone.

He's Abandoned by the Father (15:33-34)

Jesus quotes Psalm 22 here. In some mysterious way, the *Father looked away*.

The Father had been his source of comfort and joy. *But the Father cannot look on sin*. Jesus suffered alone.

Gethsemane meant for him, *abandonment*.... But next,

B. It Involved Agony

V. 33-34 – He is “**very sorrowful**” or “**distressed**” His soul is “**troubled**.” One translation says he began to be gripped by a “**shuddering terror**.”

The term “distress” can be translated, “**astonishment**.” Nothing did this to him before.

There is nothing like this in ancient literature. That's why it has the **ring of truth** to a skeptic.

How do you know the stories aren't made up?

- Several reasons. But for one, You would have nothing to gain by writing this! Greeks and Roman rulers died cool and dispassionately. **Socrates, drinking hemlock and cracking jokes; Jews in contrast, died passionate and fearless** – Jesus is doing something totally different. If you want to start a religion, and make up a story, you wouldn't write this – unless it happened. The hero saying, “I don't want to do this mission.” (Ht: Keller)

This was no ordinary man. This was no ordinary death.

Read Luke 22:43-44. Angel, Agony - ancient/modern examples

•Prior to this time, there is no "distress or deep trouble."

•**WHY NOW! WHY THE AGONY? WHY THE DISTRESS! WHY THE BLOOD SWEAT. WHY CAN'T HE STAND UP? WHY NOW!?**

Consider all that he has done in Mark:

- *forgiving sin*
- *healing the sick*
- *transforming a tax collector*
- *cleansing lepers*
- *making the lame to walk*
- *giving sight to the blind and making deaf hear*
- *casting out demons*
- *raising the dead*
- *walking on water*
- *calming storms*
- *feeding thousands* with a sack lunch
- Being briefly *transfigured*
- *astonishing people at his teaching*
- *cleansing the temple*
- *riding into Jerusalem as humble king*
- *boldly confronting the religious hypocrites*

He has been compassionate, authoritative, fearless, and passionate.

But the garden is different.

Was he *surprised* that the cross was coming? No!

- He has been telling them that the "hour" is coming.

•3 Predictions. He has been leading the way to the cross. (8,9,10)

•In the upper room, *they sing!* But in the garden.... He is sorrowful until death!

Why?

In the garden, the Savior began to anticipate and experience the agonizing reality of what it means to be the sin bearer, what it means to be the substitute. "bear our sins in his body on the tree."

- As C.J. says, **It's impossible to illustrate this.** I can't draw from my experience. I can't draw from your experience. I have never been there and done that. Only one has been there!
- Even an illustration about another martyr **is insufficient.** Because they faced death more calmly, **like Polycarp.**
- They were not enduring what Jesus was enduring.
- Some might look at Jesus, and say, "What's the deal?" Why is he falling to the ground? **People die Jihad happily.**
- **Luther** said, "**No one feared death like this man**" Why?

He was enduring something greater than physical torture...
physical suffering was the least of his suffering.

"**began** to be greatly distressed" - He sensed something that sent him reeling. He got a *foretaste of what is death involved.*

It's one thing to know something is hot; it's another thing to begin *feeling it's heat.*

What was it that made him be so "distressed?"

V. 36 Jesus mentions **the cup.** He is agonizing over "the cup." "**the hour**" - **The Cup dominates this story.**

What's up with the cup? What's in the cup?

The "cup" is a metaphor for the **wrath of God** against human evil (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 49:12).

You see this is different than just a martyr. Jesus just wasn't a martyr.

He was the sin bearing substitute that bore the Father's wrath in our place!!

He drank "it to the dregs."

He took our cup of wrath so that we could drink his cup of grace.

- Jesus looks into this cup and he stares at the horrific reality of his death. He can't even stand upright.
- Praise God, Jesus took the cup. When we stand before God we have only one answer before his judgment:

Christ died in my place.

36 - Jesus cries out, in his humanity, "if it is possible take this cup from me." But there was no other way.

- He is alone. He is shuttering. He is falling to the ground. He is staggering. He is bleeding.
- He is sweating. He is looking into the cup and asking "**Is there an alternative?**" Silence.
- He ultimately died the death we should have died.
- He drank the cup, turned it over and said, "It is finished."

#2: Understand Your Suffering

A. **Realize His love for you.**

In the Garden, we're reminded of the appalling nature of our sin.

"It was *my sin* that held him there.
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished."

- This is what my sin required. This is what had to happen because of my sin.
- *It should cause us to fall to the ground.*

- We should stand here and behold what our sin, our pride, our selfishness, or idolatry, our perversion; this is what it required.
- You cannot accompany Jesus in the garden and walk away unaffected by your sin... but...

In the Garden, we're also reminded of the amazing grace of the Savior.

v. 36 – *not what I will, but what you will.*

- He drank the cup to the last drop, so that we don't have to drink a drop.
- *We keep drinking from this cup of grace.*
- We live in a day of pervasive unholiness; people redefine sin, rename sin, minimize sin, manage sin, blame others for their sin. We need a sin-bearer. We need someone to forgive our sin. "Who is this that can forgive sin?"

*Oh, wonder of all wonders,
That through Thy death for me,
My open sins, my secret sins,
Can all forgiven be.*

-- K Kelly

- **This cup should be thrusts in our hands!** He says to us, "I drank it for you." "I have drained it for my people." "I have secured your salvation." "I am going to change your life." I am going to make you new.
- **Propitiation.** *Christ removed God's wrath from us by his death; he absorbed it in our place. He satisfied God's justice. Rom. 3:25,* "God put forward as a propitiation"; 1 John 2:2. – **"he the propitiation for our sins"**
- Stand amazed at his grace.

For God so loved the world, that *HE was silent* when the Son appealed for an alternative!

B. Receive His care for you.

- Live long enough and you have your own dark hour.
- We must insert, however, that while we go through dark times, we will never go through Gethsemane like Jesus.
 - We will never have to drink this cup – the Father will never abandoned us. He will not forsake us, even though we feel alone – Jesus was alone.

Our greatest problem has been dealt with already.

- Our suffering and affliction is real, and sometimes awful but it will never be this. Further, in our suffering we have help. His suffering becomes our source of comfort, since he has suffered in a greater way, he can comfort us.
- Because Jesus went through Gethsemane, we can be assured that Jesus understands our weakness, and our dark hours.

God sent him an angel to strengthen him;
he sends us the Savior himself! (Ht: CJ)

- When you go through those unexpected announcements
 - *The test came back, I have cancer*
 - *We lost the baby*
 - *My husband left*
 - *I lost my husband*
 - It is a fallen world, we will all suffer

You feel abandoned? You facing something heavy?

- **READ Hebrews 4:14-16** –
- The first doctor to die of the Aids virus in the UK was a young Christian. He contracted Aids while doing medical research in Zimbabwe. He suffered to the point of being unable to

communicate with his wife. He struggled with great difficulty to express his thoughts to his wife. She couldn't understand. On one occasion, his wife could not understand his message. He wrote on a notepad, the letter "J." She went through her mental dictionary of words beginning with the letter to no avail. Finally she said "Jesus." (HT: CJ) That was the right word. He was with them. That is all either of them needed to know. HE IS ENOUGH!

- **Regardless of how dark the day becomes, regardless of the severity of our suffering, He is always present, and he is always sufficient.** Receive his care if you are going through suffering today. The Savior knows and the Savior cares.

C. **Respond to His counsel to you. (37-42; Prayer)**

Jesus didn't take the three for support! Crazy. He took them because he cared for them & was teaching them. They had all boasted about their commitment - They needed to know about the need to watch and pray.

Jesus' Example to the Disciples (and Us)

- **Jesus enters his darkest hour in prayer (32).**
- **Jesus prays to "Abba" (36).** Jeremias says, "no Jew before Jesus used this term to address God." It was viewed as disrespectful. Not childlike, it was also for grown children; intimate.
- **God is not distant; remote; he is near, he is personal.**
- **Just as Jesus cried out to Abba in his darkest hour, so we cry out to Abba in our darkest hour.**
- **We cry because we have a Father! (example: orphanages)**

Jesus' Warning to Them (and Us) (37-38)

- **In hours from this experience, they will face horrific temptations.**

- Failure happens when you neglect our private time with Abba.
- Unless we watch and pray it will happen to us.
- *“Be sober-minded, be watchful”*

Jesus' Experience: Transforming Effect (39-42)

Look at him praying three times, alone, he is agonizing, but then look at **verses 41-42** – he rises to do the will of God.

He emerges from Gethsemane & *trembles no more!* Rise! Let us go!

“Here comes my betrayer.” We are not going to wait for them – let’s go to them! Hardly, a troubled soul. He is not a weak, effeminate Jesus of Christian art, but the conquering Son of God and Son of Man.

“no one takes my life; I lay it down” (John 10:18)

What explains this transformation? How do you go from falling on your face because you don’t think you can endure? To, “rise let us go.”

- You watch and pray. You spend time with Abba.
 - Three times Jesus was tempted in the Garden, and he combated it with the Word of God; three times here, he prays.
- Prayer has a transforming effect. Though the Father was not sending another way, *he gave strength to endure. God does the same for us. .*

He is about to endure what no person in history ever has - what are you facing? You face it w/ the Savior & like the Savior!

Mark's Audience

- **Suffering Christians in Rome.** They were used as torches, falsely accused, thrown to wild beasts. They needed to know of their suffering and conquering Messiah.
- **Suffering Christians at IDC.** We need to know that the way we endure trials, temptations, *suffering, is through the Savior.*
- *Will you realize his love for you? Our Cup-Drinking. Savior.*
- *Will you receive his care for you? Our Sympathetic Savior.*
- *Will you receive his counsel to you - watch and pray? Our Praying Savior.*

*Man of sorrows, what a name;
for the Son of God who came;
ruined sinners to reclaim;
hallelujah, what a Savior.*

-- Philip Bliss

III. The Cross – Substitution Accomplished (15:21-41)

Now we see how Jesus accomplished this mission. I'll simply read it and make a few comments...

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.

This man carries the cross, as it was allowable by Roman law. Cyrene was a region in North Africa with a large Jewish population. He had likely traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. Because Jesus was scourged so severely, he was unable to carry the cross, which weighed 30-40 pounds.

The mention of Alexander and Rufus has led many to believe that they were members of in the early church in Rome during Mark's writing. (Rom 16:13). They were eyewitnesses.

22 And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull).

According to Jewish and Roman custom, the criminal had to be taken outside the city wall to be crucified. It was called Golgotha either because it was simply the place of execution, because it was an

area with many tombs, or because it looked like a skull.

23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

Jesus refused this mixture, which created a numbing effect.

24 And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.

Jesus' hands were nailed above the wrists to the cross, or this horizontal beam. His feet were placed with one on top of the other, and nailed to a vertical beam.

It was considered horrific to Jews, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on the tree." Josephus called crucifixion the "most wretched of all deaths."

It was widely believed to be the worst form of death. There was great difficulty in breathing, which is why many think Jesus died of asphyxiation or shock. The amount of pain one would have to endure to try push one's self up to breath would have been excruciating. Eventually, the victim would give up, if he had not already died from the physical trauma. The pain was so horrendous that we have words derived from it. The term "excruciating" literally means "from the cross."

The casting of lots may have indicated the type of game they were playing. Regardless of why they were doing it, it most definitely fulfilled prophecy. (Ps 22:18)

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."

This was posted above his head to give grounds for why he was treated this way. In writing it, Pilate justified himself, and also threw a punch at the Jewish authorities, who wanted this to say, "This man says he is the King of the Jews" (John 19:19-22).

27 And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.

This also fulfilled prophecy “he was numbered with transgressors” (see Isaiah 53:12). Remarkable detail.

Luke adds that one of these two repented and placed faith in Christ (Luke 23:39-43).

This guy was in no position to **do anything for his salvation**. Yet, he cries out for mercy, and Jesus granted it. What a promise.

The Savior dies at his side, bearing his sin, and the thief was receiving Jesus’ righteousness.

He goes **from eternal punishment to eternal paradise**, because he was willing to say “remember me.” For some this is too good to be true. He is one of the most evil men on the earth.

Catholics say that you would go to hell for a bad sin, or to purgatory for not so bad; purgatory is kind of like going to the airport and missing your flight – you stuck and you really can’t go anywhere, you have nothing to do. You just wait. “Like Tom Hanks”

He didn’t say, “today, you will be in purgatory” – where you try to work your way out of debt or you come back to try to pay God back in carma.

We believe that Jesus either pays it or you pay it forever separated from God.

What is paradise?

Ukraine Joke: Ukrainian wife, English house, Chinese food, American Job. What is hell? American wife, English food, Chinese house, and a Ukrainian job.

(1) Moslem idea: Fruity drinks and many women; (2) JW’s – 2 class, 144,000 in heaven, the rest, paradise on earth; (3) Mormonism – three stories of heaven

For us: To be with Jesus. “You will be with me.” And notice, Jesus said “today” this will happen.

To be in a place with no sin. To be with people we love. To reign over the earth. To enjoy everlasting communion with God with a new body and new affections. Oh, don't you want to go to paradise?

App: There is one way to paradise friend. It is through Jesus Christ alone.

Spurgeon said, **"This dying thief was our Lord's last companion on earth and his first companion through the gate of paradise...and "Jesus said to all of heaven, "I bring a sinner with me; he is a sample of all the rest."**

*"The dying thief rejoiced to see, the fountain in his day,
and there my I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away"*

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!"

Jesus was crucified publicly. People would have seen him. It would have been in an area like a mall, for all to see.

The "wagged their heads," another allusion to Ps 22:7.

Jesus actually never said he would destroy it (Mark 14:48), but it happened. There's no need for the temple, because we have Jesus.

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.

They admitted he saved others, but they thought all of his power was nailed to the cross.

The revile him. Peter says that Jesus did not "revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly." (1 Pet 2:23).

33 And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried

with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1. These are some of the most mysterious words in the NT. In some mysterious way, fellowship with God was interrupted because he was bearing the sins of his people, enduring God's wrath.

Because he was abandoned, those who believe will never be.

In quoting Psalm 22, Jesus may have in mind the whole Psalm which is a cry of victory (22:21-31).

35 And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah."

The previous cry in Aramiac sounds like Elijah in Hebrew.

36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."

This was probably intended to quench his thirst and prolong his agony.

37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

This loud cry must have been awesome. It was probably a cry of victory, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

He literally said one word "**tetelestai**." - full of meaning. Spurgeon said **you will need every word every spoken to explain this one word** and its significance; It did not mean simply that his life was over, it meant that ***his atoning work was finished.***

Jesus looked like a pathetic victim, yet he was actually celebrating an amazing victory.

- He had fulfilled for us, everything the law required.
- He had made full atonement.
- He had paid the ransom.
- He satisfied God's justice.

Therefore, nothing needs to be added to the work of Jesus.

We sometimes call Christ's work "**vicarious atonement**." You know this idea of living vicariously.

When we watch our favorite team we say, "we won!" Or "we lost." Well, you didn't play! Nope, but I am identified with that team, they represent me. We live vicariously through them. Christ represents us, we have salvation because He won! This is our cry of victory as well. We are identified with him.

That's why the Bible calls it good news. *For some it is; for others it is not. Ghandi said "His death on the cross was a great example to the world, but that there was anything mysterious or miraculous virtue in it, my heart could not accept."*

The cross is foolishness to those who are perishing; it is a stumbling block for the Jews; but for we who believe, it is the power of God.

After this cry, and Jesus' death the mocking ceases.

38 *And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*

Jesus' death removed the separation from the holy place to the most holy place. Now, access to God is provided by the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The temple sacrifices are obsolete.

We don't come to a temple, we go to God, through Jesus.

39 *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!"*

As this man observes the death of Jesus, he recognizes the power and glory of Jesus. He rightly says, "This man was the Son of God."

Like the thief who believed, so it seems that this man also believes.

40 *There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41* *When he was in Galilee, they followed him and*

ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

This was Friday. But Sunday is coming.

How do you respond?

- **By repentance and faith, trust in the finished work of Jesus. Trust him as Your Savior.**
- **Don't ever lose the awe of the cross.**
- **Realize that every spiritual blessing we enjoy is owing to the cross, including the Spirit's indwelling and the body of Christ.**
- **Make this message known to everyone.**

Remember next week is Easter. Invite someone to worship with us. Un-churched people are more likely to attend an Easter service than any other time of the year.

