

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 22ND–23RD, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

CRUCIFIED (MARK 15:21–24) THE WOODEN BEAM

A certain man from Cyrene, located in northern Africa, was probably in Jerusalem on a pilgrimage for the Passover. He was forced to carry the crossbeam for the Savior of the world. **Who wouldn't have done the same if given the opportunity?**

- Even though this may have been his first interaction with Jesus, it transformed his life, as we see with the mention of his sons.

GOLGOTHA

We don't know exactly where Jesus was crucified, but it was most likely just outside one of the city gates along a public highway. **This was intended to instill fear of the Roman rulers in witnesses.**

- **Crucifixion was the cruelest and most painful form of execution.** The original readers were familiar with the horrors of death on a cross, so there was no need for detail.

PAIN KILLER

Wine mixed with myrrh was an ancient remedy that would help dull the pain. According to tradition, it was offered by the women of Jerusalem.

- Yet, Jesus chose to refuse the wine, **embracing the full weight of His suffering on the cross, willing to endure this pain in order to redeem both you and me. What are we willing to endure for Christ?**

CASTING LOTS

As Jesus was crucified, most likely naked, He lost the right to even His own clothes, which the soldiers cast lots for. Casting lots was a means of making a decision by chance.

- **Remarkably, this act which sought to humiliate Him was prophesied in Psalm 22, highlighting a profound divine plan in the face of suffering.**

MOCKERY (MARK 15:25–32) "THE KING OF THE JEWS"

At around 9:00 am, Jesus was crucified with a sign above His head proclaiming the "crime" He committed.

- This sign probably held two purposes: It stood as a warning to anyone who might rebel against Rome, while also allowing Pilate to express his disdain for the Jewish religious leaders.

"COME DOWN NOW FROM THE CROSS"

With all of the mockery and ridicule Jesus had suffered, Satan was still at work to try to tempt Jesus to come off of the cross.

- The chief priests wanted to see a visible display of Jesus' power to believe in Him. **What they failed to understand was that Jesus' decision to remain on the cross was, in fact, the greatest demonstration of power. His willingness to stay on the cross is the very reason we believe today.**

TAUNTED BY THOSE BESIDE HIM

Not only was Jesus insulted by those passing by and the chief priests and scribes, but He was also ridiculed by the two criminals beside Him.

- However, one of them experienced a change of heart by the end of the day, as we see in Luke's Gospel. Even in his final hours, he was transformed by the love of Christ. **It is never too late for any of us to come to Jesus!**

TORN (MARK 15:33–41) A DARKENED SKY FOR THREE HOURS

We see a strong correlation between this moment and the 9th and 10th plagues in Egypt. **There was a period of three days of darkness, followed by the death of the firstborn on the first day of Passover.**

- In both instances, the darkness was a sign of judgment. In the case of the cross, it represents God's judgment on His beloved Son, **who selflessly gave His life for the sins of the world.**

PSALM 22

In this moment, we hear Jesus cry out, expressing **He has become the object of God's wrath. Imagine never having sinned and then suddenly bearing the weight of all sin—past, present, and future—at once.**

- This moment is a powerful reminder that it was prophesied 1,000 years earlier. **Even in His final moments, He proclaims that all of Scripture beautifully points to Him.**

WINE FOR A SHOW

Someone, likely a soldier familiar with the ancient Jewish legend that Elijah would come to aid God's people in times of distress, along with others, mistakenly thought that Jesus was crying out for Elijah. As a result, he offered Jesus vinegar wine.

- This may have been the soldier's attempt to join in the mockery, hoping to prolong Jesus' life to see if Elijah would indeed come to assist this so-called "King of the Jews."

A LOUD CRY

After six long hours on the cross, Jesus offered His last breath with a powerful cry **that defied the agony of the crucifixion.**

- While this punishment often led to unconsciousness from exhaustion and suffocation, Jesus remained fully aware until the very end. **His triumphant cry proclaimed that the work of salvation was accomplished.**

THE CURTAIN IS TORN

As tangible evidence of the full price paid for our separation from God, the curtain at the entrance to the Holy of Holies was torn in two. This sacred space was where the high priest would enter to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people.

- **The curtain was ripped from top to bottom, illustrating that through Christ's death the barrier between God and humanity was forever removed.**

THE CENTURION

Now we come to the climactic moment of the cross for Mark—a moment that many spectators, especially those who professed to love God, could not grasp. It was a humble Gentile, a Roman centurion, who boldly declared, **"Truly this man was the Son of God!"**

- Are we like the centurion? **Have we recognized the evidence around us so we can boldly proclaim to the world that Jesus is the Son of God?**

FAITHFUL WOMEN

There are three women mentioned by name: Mary Magdalene, another Mary, and Salome. They supported Jesus throughout His ministry. Remarkably, while all the disciples promised loyalty to Jesus, it was the women who stood by the cross and visited the tomb.

- **Though their means to actively fight for Jesus were limited, they seized every opportunity to serve Him. Are we so focused on what we can't do that we overlook what we can do for Christ?**

BURIAL (MARK 15:42–47) A BOLD ASK

With only a few hours before the Sabbath began, Joseph of Arimathea courageously approached Pilate, seeking permission to give Jesus a proper burial.

- This honorable member of the Sanhedrin and secret disciple who feared the opposition demonstrated remarkable courage by risking everything to take action.

- **Are we ready to embrace that same boldness in our lives?**

DID HE REALLY DIE?

Pilate was surprised to learn that Jesus was already dead, so he had a centurion confirm it.

- Many deny that Jesus actually died to challenge the resurrection, but we are blessed with the testimony of countless witnesses who observed His death. **We can be confident not only in His death but also in His miraculous resurrection. God has always been in control of our salvation, down to the last detail.**

ENTOMBED

Joseph buried Jesus with dignity and care, illustrating that not all prominent Jews stood against Him.

- Additionally, the two Marys observed where He was laid, acting as witnesses to His death. They followed so they would know where to return with spices after the Sabbath.
- **This sets the stage for the greatest event of all time: Jesus' resurrection.**

PRIDEFUL

- We witness the pride of the religious elite, those who trusted in their own gods, and even casual spectators.
- **Their pride blinded them to the truth that was right before them.**
- How has our pride interfered with our ability to see and act upon the truth?

TRANSFORMED

- In the midst of opposition to God, we can see transformation in individuals like Simon, the thief on the cross, and the centurion.
- **No matter how hopeless a situation may seem, God is still at work.**
- **Are we ready to see God continue to transform lives? It is essential not only to share this message with others but to remind ourselves of it.**

FAITHFUL AND BOLD

- Even in the pain of the cross, we witness extreme faithfulness and boldness from some of the most unlikely characters.
- **Because of the beauty of the cross, we can live faithful and bold lives.**
- **We are no longer defined by our mistakes; we are forgiven for everything—past, present, and future. We don't have to strive to be better; we are called to embrace His finished work, leading us to lives of true repentance.**