

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 23RD, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

CRUCIFIED (MARK 15:21–32) SIMON OF CYRENE

Roman soldiers had the authority to compel civilians to carry their gear for a Roman mile. Simon was the first person to follow Mark 8:34 and take up his cross and follow Jesus.

- Only Mark includes Alexander and Rufus. This may be because Rufus was known to the original audience (Romans 16:13).
- **It may also be for us to see the impact it had on Simon's family as they became followers of Christ.**

GOLGOTHA

It was both Jewish and Roman custom to execute victims outside the city limits. Jesus is brought to Golgotha—Aramaic for *Place of the Skull*. We may call it Calvary—Latin for *scalp*.

- In an effort to ease His suffering, He was offered wine mixed with myrrh, but He refused.
- **Christ endured the full suffering of the crucifixion He had surrendered to. What is our suffering compared to His? We CAN pray for relief because He endured the worst.**

"THEN THEY CRUCIFIED HIM"

All history, mankind, time, and eternity are bound to these four words. Christ's act of redemption is in this historical fact. How did they respond?

- In fulfillment of Psalm 22, they gambled over who would have His clothing. To them, the garments were more important than the One on the cross.
- **It might be the right time for us to set aside our focus on the earthly benefits of being a Christian and remember what Christ did that day.**

"THE KING OF THE JEWS"

Without a description of the cruelty of crucifixion, Mark moves to the inscription of the charge against Jesus.

- It was customary to write the name of the condemned and a description of their crime. Pilate chose to insult the religious leaders and at the same time mock any ideas of independence.
- **It is worth noting that the opposition thinks the truth will end Jesus and His followers. Christ established His Church on this truth.**

CRIMINALS AND TAUNTS

Fulfilling Isaiah 53:12, Pilate had Jesus crucified between two criminals.

- Mark has been sparing us the gory details but includes the mockery Jesus was subjected to. We see that even those who passed by yelled insults. They mocked Him with the truth because they didn't believe.
- **Jesus' righteousness is the cause of ridicule, and He takes it.**

"COME DOWN NOW"

The taunt for Jesus to come down from the cross is in essence the same temptation that He faced in Gethsemane: to avoid "the cup" of suffering.

- Jesus made the commitment to do the will of God rather than His own and fulfills that on the cross.
- **God's way and our way (or what we conceive of as God's way) can be amazingly different. Jesus offers no self-defense and makes no effort to preserve His earthly dignity. He surrenders to the violence of the world.**

FORSAKEN (MARK 15:33–41)

DARKNESS OVER THE WHOLE LAND

Darkness was a response of God to the crucifixion of His Son.

- God was not pleased with the darkness of the world—the darkness of humankind's sin.
- Jesus had endured three hours of mocking from the arrogant crowd; now the crowd would endure three hours of darkness in fear.
- **God has always, and will always, respond to sin.**

"JESUS CRIED OUT"

After three hours of darkness, Jesus responded to the sin He was bearing.

- As He quoted Psalm 22, He endured the wrath of God's judgment for sin.
- Jesus did not lose His divinity or His humanity. His humanity experienced condemnation for sin—something He never deserved.
- **God judged Jesus because His body bore our sin. He was abandoned so we wouldn't be.**

"CALLING FOR ELIJAH"

The confused people responded, possibly because of their belief that Elijah came in times of distress to deliver righteous sufferers.

- They offered a drink, hoping He would survive long enough for a rescue by Elijah.
- **The cross was not about quenching a thirst or the return of a prophet. It was about One forsaken by God as a substitute for others.**

"BREATHED HIS LAST"

Jesus let out a final cry of victory and breathed His last.

- At that moment, God tore the inner veil of the temple. The way to Him was no longer veiled. What stood between God and man was removed in the death of Christ.
- **For God, what took place at the cross answered the darkness the earth deserved. There is now a way to God, through Jesus.**

"THIS MAN WAS THE SON OF GOD!"

The centurion's response was one of someone who had likely seen hundreds of crucifixions. On that day, he saw Jesus—someone unique in all of his experiences.

- He could only draw one confident conclusion: He had witnessed the death of the Son of God.
- **How much will we see, hear, experience, and live before we accept that Jesus is the unique Savior that we need?**

FAITHFUL TO THE END

The presence of the women showed their belief in Jesus' identity as Israel's King. They followed Him to the cross, having served Him in the past, and believed that He had the words and character of the promised Messiah.

- Their loyalty was a witness to His identity, even after His death.
- **We know that He is alive. Can people see our Savior, and our faith, when they have none?**

BURIED (MARK 15:42–47)

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

As nighttime approached, there was a rush to prepare Jesus' body for burial.

- As a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph guaranteed that Jesus would receive a proper burial. He performed a duty of devotion that parallels the woman who anointed Jesus' body in 14:8.
- **Being a disciple of Jesus may require times of great courage.**

VERIFIED

There are some who say that Jesus didn't really die on the cross and only passed out.

- Mark makes that an impossibility. Joseph, Pilate, and the centurion testify that Jesus was dead.
- It's also worth stating that Romans crucified hundreds of thousands during their centuries of power, and not one person is recorded as surviving the cross.
- **It's important to know that what is coming is a resurrection, not a resuscitation.**

SEALED WITH A STONE

Joseph purchased some fine linen, wrapped the Savior in it, and put Him in his own tomb. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance.

- The burial was done just in time (day 1), but the ceremonial tasks would have to wait.
- The faithful women who followed Christ were watching and preparing to return after the Sabbath to finish honoring their Messiah.
- **In the darkest hours, the faithful will stay and watch for what God will do next.**

UNIQUE

- Many things are unusual.
- **True uniqueness is one of a kind.**
- **Jesus experienced life as a man but was unique. His conception, baptism, teaching, righteousness, and even His death were unique. In all of creation and time, only Jesus could do what was done that day at the cross.**

JUSTIFIED

- We like justice. We want justice.
- **Justified is more than justice or fairness.**
- **Justified means reconciled and made perfect. Because God will always judge sin, we have a sin debt. When Jesus took the sin of every Believer on that cross, He paid that debt. We are justified, reconciled, and made righteous.**

PERSPECTIVE

- We don't always see what's in front of us.
- **Sometimes, we need to make a move to see clearly and get the big picture.**
- **Crucifixion is gruesome, and we may want to turn our heads away. The problem is we won't see what Jesus did and we won't appreciate what's coming next. We are surrounded by victory. Are we willing to keep our eyes on Jesus so we can see it, live it, and share it?**