

THE INFINITE WORTH OF THE SIN-BEARER

Mark 14:53-16:8

Tim Mitchell – April 10, 2022 PM Service
Emmanuel Baptist Church - Windsor

INTRODUCTION

David Garland writes on this text saying:

“The Gospel story depicts many of the sins that put Jesus on this cross: pride, envy, jealousy, betrayal, cruelty, greed, indifference, cowardice, and murder. We only add our own many sins to complete the list.”¹

We may add our own sins to that list; and oh how dreadful that list would be if it were not for our Savior and our God.

This evening, I want to look with you at a sizeable text about the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. There is of course quite a lot to look at and we of course cannot possibly notice every line or phrase within the time we have. This will merely be an overview. But as we survey this text, I don’t want us to miss who it is that we are considering this evening.

Last summer I had the pleasure of preaching through large portions of Mark’s Gospel while interning in Sarnia. And at the conclusion of this summer, one might ask me, what is one of your takeaways from studying through Mark. Well very simply this: *the infinite worth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*. Some look at the Gospel and think on the infinite love of God – and as you should. But allow me to suggest this evening that you cannot even begin to survey the heights and the depths and the breadth of the infinite love of God without first beginning to understand something of the infinite worth of Jesus Christ.

I. JESUS WAS SILENT (14:53-15:5)

And as we look into the face of the infinite Lord of glory, might we *consider firstly this evening that Jesus was Silent. The infinite Lord of glory was silent*. Although, last we see of Jesus in Mark’s gospel, he was anything but silent. He was greatly distressed and troubled; he was sorrowful to the point of death and sweating drops of blood. And entering the Garden of Gethsemane, he did not enter in silence, but crying out to his Father, **“Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me!”**² Mark tells us that this was not an isolated

¹ David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 605.

² Mark 14:36

incident, but that he went back three times – he went back three times to cry out to his Father, **“Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me!”**³ However, resolved to obey the will of his Father, and saying **“Yet not what I will, but what you will,”**⁴ Jesus would not leave the Garden crying out in distress, but silent and calm, and resolved to drink the cup placed before him.

In Mark 14:43-52, Jesus is betrayed by Judas, and arrested by the religious leaders – those whom Jesus had called in verse 41: **“sinners.”** And upon his arrest, verse 50 says that **“they all left him and fled.”** That is his disciples; that is his friends. Mark tells us that one man even left his clothes behind. Of course, we note that Peter does follow at a distance for a short while; he even sits in the courtyard of the high priest during the trial of Jesus—that is until he is questioned about him. And after denying Jesus three times, he would abandon Jesus as well.

Upon being arrested, Jesus is brought to the home of the high priest. Mark does not name him, but we know this man to be Caiaphas. Jesus is brought to his home to face a sort of trial. The place of this trial would be unusual. The trial would be at the home of Caiaphas. Caiaphas did not live within a courtroom. This was not the usual place to hold a trial. The time of day of this trial would be unusual. Trials were supposed to be held during the daytime – but Jesus’ would be held at night. Oh, and the verdict, the verdict was already determined before the trial even began. You see that in Mark 14:1. **“And the chief priest and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him.”** The verdict was already set; but the charge was not yet decided. They knew the outcome they wanted; the trial was merely a formality.

And so Mark 14:55 says that they sought a **“testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none.”** How about that! Jesus was so completely sinless and so completely innocent that even his enemies had to acknowledge it in some small way; they had nothing on him. There was nothing they could pin on him saying, “Aha! I know what you did!” There was nothing. And so we read in verse 56, that **“many bore false witness.”** Again in verse 57, **“And some stood up and bore false witness.”**

And though he was innocent; though their witness was false, Jesus remained completely silent. It’s stunning really! He said absolutely nothing in his defense. Such horrible slanderous things were being said about him. And yet *Jesus is silent. Amazing!* At one point in verse 58, some tried to accuse him of some sort of terrorism. They say, **“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’”** But verse 57 makes clear that even this was slanderous. Of course Jesus had said something like this. In John 2:19, Jesus had said, **“Destroy *this* temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”** But Jesus wasn’t speaking of the temple in Jerusalem. John 2:21: **“he was speaking**

³ Mark 14:36

⁴ Ibid.

about the temple of his body.” They had misrepresented what Jesus had actually said. Not that it mattered – verse 59 says **“Yet even about this their testimony did not agree.”**

What a difference between Jesus in the Garden and Jesus here in this scene. It was to the extent that the high priest, frustrated, speaks to Jesus in verse 60, **“Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?”** But verse 61 reads that Jesus **“remained silent and made no answer.”** You must understand the extent to which Jesus is in control here. Earlier, in Mark 12, they had previously sent people to Jesus in order **“to trap him in his talk.”**⁵ But Jesus had answered all their questions so very wisely, that we’re told in Mark 12:34, **“that no one dared to ask him any more questions.”** *They wouldn’t dare!* For Jesus could not be trapped; Jesus could not be outsmarted; Jesus could not be tricked into saying anything he didn’t want to say already. Indeed, Mark 2 makes clear that Jesus can even clearly see right into the very hearts of man. Listen, Jesus is anything but helpless here. I tell you, we mustn’t feel sorry for Jesus at any point; Jesus was not helpless. He could have easily overcome their slanderous attacks. But verse 61 reads that Jesus **“remained silent and made no answer.”** We shouldn’t feel sorry for Jesus; we should worship him for his resolve to remain *completely silent was astounding!*

Well, this was going nowhere, and the high priest knows it. Twice we’re told – in verses 56 and 58, that even the false testimony did not agree. And without agreement, Jesus could not be charged. So Caiaphas steps forward and questions Jesus directly. Verse 61. He says, **“Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”** Matthew 26:53 phrases his question a little bit differently. He says, **“I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”** Essentially here, Caiaphas is placing Jesus under oath. And unlike our own legal system, remaining silent was not a right. For Jesus to remain silent here would be an admission of guilt. And so for a brief moment, Jesus breaks his silence.

“Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”⁶ Verse 62, **“And Jesus said, ‘I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’”** Robert Stein writes, **“with this the ‘messianic secret’ in Mark comes to an end.”**⁷ Some of you no doubt, reading through Mark’s Gospel, noticed the many times that Jesus instructs others to remain silent. You see, Jesus did not want the misunderstandings of his identity to interfere with his mission. But now, all of that is at an end. **“Are you the Christ; are you the Son of the Blessed; indeed, are you the Son of God?”**⁸ Jesus says, **“I am!”** Pay attention to verse 62; pay attention to Matthew 26:53. If anyone ever ask you, “Where did Jesus ever say that he was God?”, there’s your answer! And of course, you’ll notice that in making this claim, Jesus alludes

⁵ Mark 12:13

⁶ Mark 14:61

⁷ Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 1030.

⁸ Mark 14:61; Matt. 26:53 (paraphrase).

to Psalm 110 and Daniel 7. He's describing his exaltation to the right hand of God, and prophesying his later return at the culmination of history. His claim to divinity could not have been more clear.

And the stark reality of that clarity can be seen in the response of Caiaphas in verse 63. Of course, Caiaphas correctly understood Jesus' claim, but he neither believed it nor accepted it. Verses 63-64 reads, "And the high priest tore his garments and said, **“What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?”** And they all condemned him as deserving death." The verdict had been already set before the trial began. But now there is no more need for false witness. For Jesus had given them all that they needed. He had (in their eyes) blasphemed God. And so they bring him to Pilate to be executed.

But the charge they bring to Pilate in Mark chapter 15 was not blaspheme, but rather that Jesus claimed to be a King. And the only words that Jesus would speak to Pilate would be Jesus' confirmation in Mark 15:2. **“Pilate asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ And he answered him, ‘You have said so.’”** In verse 3, they would accuse him many other things. And Pilate would say to him in verse 4, **“Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you.”** Verse 5: **“But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.”** *Jesus is silent.* Indeed, Jesus here is fulfilling the role of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. Isaiah 53:7 – **“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”** *Jesus is silent!*

II. JESUS WAS TORTURED (15:6-24)

Consider with me secondly this evening, that Jesus was Tortured. And leading up to the description of Jesus' Torture is verses 6-15 – we'll merely mention here today. This of course could easily be a sermon in and of itself. You see, the cross that Jesus would hang upon, was not intended for him. It had been intended for a criminal named Barabbas. Verse 7 says that he was **“among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection.”** He was a serious criminal. One might propose that he was deserving of this horrible end. *But* this man would not get what he deserves. Instead, because of the custom between Pilate and the Jewish people, Barabbas is released and Jesus is given his cross instead. What a marvelous picture of the gospel that is. Because every one of us is deserving of this horrible end. Every one of us deserves to be cast out into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁹ But here we see Barabbas released and Jesus condemned.

And it is because Jesus is condemned by Pilate that *he would be physically tortured* in the most horrific way possible: crucifixion. Verse 15 describes the preparation of Jesus to receive crucifixion. We read that when Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified, he had him scourged first – that is to say, he was flogged and beaten. Jesus would have been beaten with leather whips lased

⁹ Cf. Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.

with bits of bone and metal. This was common. And I don't know if you've ever imagined crucifixion before (I'm sure many of you have), but if you tried to nail me to a cross, you better believe I would resist. I would resist with every ounce of strength I had. Even if it couldn't succeed, even if there was no hope of success, the very thought of the pain would compel me (and I'm sure you as well) to fight in any way to resist. Well, the Romans knew better. You see, they beat the condemned man half to death first. By the time they got to the crucifixion, there wouldn't have been any fight left in them at all. It was easy work for the soldiers to crucify the victim at that point.

You've likely heard flogging described before. The victim would be stripped of his clothing and tied to a post and beaten. The soldiers would have been experts at doing this. They would have known exactly how to inflict the maximum amount of pain. And when they were done, well, there's really not a *G rated* way to describe this. Suffice it to say that bits of Jesus' flesh would have been flying through the air and probably some of his internal organs were exposed. His back would have absolutely ripped to shreds. *It was brutal!* And to add insult to injury, when they were done, verses 16-20 tells us that they took the time to thoroughly mock him before they led him away to die. They couldn't just get it over with; they had to make fun of him first. It was sport for these soldiers. I mean, such a display would likely cause us to go into shock but it was a laughing sport for these soldiers.

Imagine being so numb to this sort of violence that you could take pleasure in it. Verse 17: we see the infamous crown of thorns is placed upon his skull and he is fake-worshipped as a king. If they only knew—oh, if they only knew. They know by now. And let me say, **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”**¹⁰ Well, verse 20 ends saying that when they were through, **“they led him out to be crucified.”** No doubt there was very little fight left in Jesus at this point – not that he ever was going to resist. Jesus was resolved to obey his Father; he had remained silent during his court proceedings. Nevertheless, if he were to resist, he would be quite incapable at this point.

This becomes very evident within verse 21. In verse 21, we read that **“they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene...to carry his cross.”** You see, normally, the man condemned to be crucified was forced to carry the cross beam he was to be crucified on to the sight of the crucifixion. But apparently Jesus was unable to complete this task. Verse 22 says that **“they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull).”** A fitting description of a place men go to die. This site would have been located outside the city limits and near a much-traveled road so that everyone could see what happens to the enemies of Rome. Jesus was to be a spectacle.

In verse 23, **“they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.”** Wine mixed with myrrh was traditionally offered to one about to be executed. The drink supposedly acted as a narcotic to numb the pain. But verse 23 notes that **“he did not take it.”** When Jesus was

¹⁰ Hebrews 10:31

tortured, he fully experienced every ounce of physical pain given him. For the only cup that he would choose to drink from this day was the one given him by his Father. John 18:11: **“shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”**

Well, Mark ends his description of Jesus’ Torture with absolute simplicity. Verse 24 very simply and very plainly states, **“And they crucified him.”** One cannot help but notice the brevity of this description. No description of the cross on which he hung; no description of the nails which fastened his to that cross; no description of Jesus writhing in pain – and make no mistake: *Jesus would have absolutely been writhing in pain!* But Mark simply says in verse 24, **“And they crucified him.”** No other details are given.

That’s quite a simple description for what William Lane says: **“was one of the cruelest and most degrading forms of punishment ever conceived by human perversity, even in the eyes of the pagan world.”**¹¹ And to speaking for the ancient pagan world is Cicero, who said that: **“crucifixion [is] the grossest, cruelest...most hideous manner of execution.”**¹² Stein remarks that: **“Death by crucifixion was slow. At times the victim would live for days. Birds and animals would often begin to feast on the victims even before they were dead.”**¹³ But Mark is quite brief and restrained in his description of Jesus’ torture. Perhaps because of his first-century readers would have already been quite familiar with crucifixion. But whatever the case, make no mistake, this was an absolute horrible way to die. *Jesus was tortured!*

III. JESUS WAS MOCKED (15:25-32)

Consider with me thirdly this evening, that Jesus was Mocked. Verse 25 begins by noting that Jesus was crucified in **“the third hour.”** This would be 9 am in the morning. And within this scene, the complete and total abandonment of all those around him will be on complete display. Donald Macleod notes that when Jesus **“was dying to save the world...he died not to a chorus of gratitude but to a chorus of mockery.”**¹⁴ It was enough that he would be tortured physically, but Mark shows us that it goes much, much further than that. Jesus was Mocked. Indeed the mockery had already begun when as the end of verse 24 notes they had **“divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.”** As one author remarks, as Jesus hangs writhing in pain, **“a poker game breaks out beneath him.”**¹⁵ This in fulfillment

¹¹ William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 561.

¹² See *In Verrem* V. 64, 66. Cited from: Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 561n46.

¹³ Stein, *Mark*, 1069-1070.

¹⁴ Donald Macleod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 39.

¹⁵ C. J. Mahaney, “The Cry from the Cross,” *Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville*, (July 12, 2015).

of Psalm 22:18 which reads, **“they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”**

And within verses 26-32, the mockery just begins to pile on more and more. The popularity and praise the Jesus once enjoyed from such large crowds that followed him even into desolated places—that was all gone now. The abandonment of Jesus is nearly complete as he is mocked and relentlessly taunted by literally everyone: from the soldiers, to those just passing by, to the chief priests and scribes (who weren't going to miss this for the world). And note the end of verse 32: even **“Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.”** There just seemed to be not limit to who would mock him that even those crucified with him also reviled him.

But within all of the mockery, there was great irony. Indeed this entire paragraph is just laced with irony. All of the enemies of Jesus here spoke far more than they knew of realized. Because as these people came up to Jesus and hurled their taunts, they actually spoke the truth without even realizing it! *They actually spoke the truth!* Therefore, one writer describes this section as: *the gospel according to Jesus' enemies.*¹⁶ Because without realizing it, his enemies actually proclaimed the uniqueness of the one being sacrificed and the glory of the sacrifice that he was making.

Notice in verse 26: they mock Jesus as a king. Verse 26 says, And the inscription of the charge against him read, **“The King of the Jews.”** There is not doubt the inscription was intended to be mockery by the soldiers. They had already been mocking him in this way within verse 16-20 and they continue to mock him here. The inscription would have been just laughable for anyone walking by and reading it. Except that the irony was that *Jesus Christ was the king* – not merely of the Jews but of the world. And it would be through the cross that Jesus would come into his kingdom and be granted the name that is above every name before which every knee will bow. *Their mockery was ironic!*

Notice verse 29: they mock him as the one who would destroy and rebuild the temple. Verse 29 reads, **“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.”** Those who has passed by would see Jesus on the cross; they see the physical temple in the skyline in the background and they assume that obviously this man was a fraud! And so they mock him. Except that the irony was that by Jesus' death, he eliminates the need for the physical temple by creating a new a living way for God and sinners to be reconciled. And so it is no surprise, no surprise at all to read in verses 37-38 that when **“Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last....the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.”** For from now on, it would exclusively be through Jesus Christ that sinners would come to dwell with God.

Notice finally, that they mock him as a Saviour. *Nothing could be more ironic than this!* Look at verses 30-32: **““save yourself, and come down from the cross!’ So also the chief priests**

¹⁶ Cf. Dann J. Ettner, *The Gospel According to Jesus' Enemies* (Lima, OH: CSS Publishing, 1995).

with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.’” And oh, such great irony here. For the very reason that Jesus does in fact save others is exactly because he does not save himself. The very reason Jesus silently endures without protest all of the torture and all of the mockery is precisely so that he might save others.

And I want you to mark carefully this carefully this evening. It is not weakness that kept Jesus on the cross, it was not weakness, but it was indeed the very power of God. For the Jew this is a stumbling block; for the Greek this is foolishness; **“but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”**¹⁷ Behold the power and the might of he who remained upon the cross for our sake and for his glory! Indeed the greatest miracle of Jesus’ life was not so much the amazing signs and wonders that he would perform, rather it was the wonder of him who in great humility did not use his power, but rather suffered in his humanity. Jesus was Silent; Jesus was Tortured; Jesus was Mocked – indeed still today many who mock a crucified Saviour. And yet, there’s more; *so much more!*

IV. JESUS WAS FORSAKEN (15:33-39)

Consider with me fourthly this evening, that Jesus was forsaken. Verse 33 states that it was the sixth hour now. That is to say, it is 12 noon. Jesus has been on the cross for three hours now in absolute pain; in absolute agony. And yet notice that Mark reports no incidence of Jesus complaining, or protesting. No doubt Jesus would have let out several great cries at this point (a natural response to being tortured), but not a word of protest is reported by Mark. In this respect, the sin-bearer remains completely *silent!* But then the scene suddenly shifts; all of the sudden, there is a shift. There is a shift which reveals the most painful and agonizing aspect of Jesus’ grief while on the cross. And when this shift occurs, Jesus will no longer be able to remain silent. *He will cry out!* He will cry out in abandonment—and not from the crowds; not from his disciples; but from his Father! For all of eternity, there had not been broken fellowship between the Father and the Son – *until now!*

For three hours Jesus has been on the cross; for three hours Jesus has been writhing in pain when verse 33 says, **“when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.”** Darkness comes and darkness covers the whole land for three whole hours. And make no mistake: this was not a natural phenomenon. No amount of dust could account for this darkness. And since this happened during the Passover; no a solar eclipse was taking place. You’ll notice that Mark does not explain the darkness itself. Go ahead and look at the paragraph—there’s no explanation for why darkness comes. There is only Jesus’s response *to* the darkness—*and it is troubling!*

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:24

Verse 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?’**” It is within this cry that we learn that Jesus is experiencing something far worse than physical pain; it is within this cry that we learn that Jesus is experiencing something far worse than mere darkness. This cry from the cross, from the very lips of Jesus is indeed Gethsemane realized.¹⁸ This is what Jesus was so greatly distressed and troubled over within the Garden; this was the cup that Jesus staggered over the prospect of drinking; this was the cup which Jesus in obedience to the Father had become resolved to drink for us. And as he drinks this cup, *he is in utter agony!*

I’ll be honest, I struggled to write words to describe this. Donald Macleod was right when he wrote that there is a degree of inaccessibility here.¹⁹ You see, somehow, without disrupting the Triune Godhead (because you see, God cannot cease to be the Triune God);²⁰ and yet, somehow without disrupting the Godhead, the Father forsook the Son. And this is not metaphorical here; nor did Jesus merely feel forsaken—*he was actually forsaken!* The Father had to forsake him, and he had to because his holiness demands it. It was here that he who knew no sin, became sin for us;²¹ it was here, that “**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us— for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’**” – Galatians 3:13. And it was here—listen—it was here that Jesus endured *the entirety* of the wrath of God and God forsakenness. *And he did this FOR YOU!* “**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!**”²²

Oh, the infinite love of God that he would die for us! And he could have come down from that cross. He could have saved himself as the crowds taunted him to do so. Listen, at every single point, at every point, at every turn, *he had options!* He had legions of perplexed angels poised to intervene waiting for a single word.²³ But they never receive that word. The hymn writer captures this well when he writes: “**Was it the nails, O Savior, that held thee to the tree. Nay, it was thy love—thy wonderous love—thy love for me!**”²⁴ *That’s what kept him there!*

And the effects of that God-forsakenness—the effects of that *love* were seen immediately; *immediately* the effects were seen. Verse 37 records that finish, saying, “**Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.**” And to show the absolute effectiveness of that cry and of that death, verse

¹⁸ Cf. Mahaney, “The Cry from the Cross.”

¹⁹ Cf. Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 48.

²⁰ Cf. Donald Macleod, “Why Have You Forsaken Me,” in *Desiring God* (April 3, 2015).

²¹ Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21

²² Stuart Townend Copyright, *How Deep the Father’s Love* (Thankyou Music, 1995).

²³ Cf. Matthew 26:53

²⁴ K. A. M. Kelly (1869-1942), *Give me Sight, O Savior* (slight paraphrase).

38 says, **“And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.”** The way to come into the presence of God is now open, and all because he stood in our place, forsaken on our behalf! My friends, in the words of Jesus Christ himself (John 19:30), **“It is finished.”** The way has been prepared for us to come into the presences of God. Though we are sinful, and though we are unclean, Jesus Christ having been forsaken by the Father, dies upon the cross, and now the way for sinners has been made wide open. *Listen: the way is wide open!* Consider the infinite worth of he who hangs upon that tree! *The way is WIDE OPEN!*

You know, Mark had made this very point so very plain already at the outset of his gospel. In Mark 1:1 he already indicated that he had written to speak to us specifically about **“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God.*”** And I want to tell you seated here this evening that it is impossible, *it is impossible* to even begin appreciate the heights and the depths and the breadth of the love of God on display here unless you begin understand something of the heights and the depths and the breadth of the infinite worth of **“Jesus Christ, *the Son of God.*”** And I don’t even know how to fully communicate it; I don’t know how to make you understand. But you need to understand it! Because so many people tout the phrase “God is love” and yet they haven’t got a clue what they’re talking about—it’s merely an excuse for them to sin more. See the infinite worth of Jesus Christ and you will begin to understand something of the infinite love of God.

The second-century church father Melito of Sardis helps us to understand when he writes:

“He that hung up the earth in space was Himself hanged up; He that fixed the heavens was fixed with nails; He that bore up the earth was born up on a tree; the Lord of all was subjected to ignominy in a naked body—God put to death!...in order that He might not be seen, the luminaries turned away, and the day became darkened—because they slew God, who hung naked on a tree...This is He who made the heaven and the earth, and in the beginning, together with the Father, fashioned man; [this is he] who was announced by means of the law and the prophets; who put on a bodily form in the Virgin; who was hanged upon the tree.”²⁵

And oh, what transformation; *what transformation occurs!* Listen, this is incredible. Verse 39: **“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!’”** *How extraordinary is this!* For all of Mark’s Gospel, Jesus had been performing utterly astounding signs and utterly astounding miracles and yet not even his disciples could figure it out. **“Who then is this?”²⁶** And this vicious man; this Centurion; this ruler of a hundred supervising the very execution of Jesus himself, this man looks upon the

²⁵ Melito, 5. Translation from Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012), VIII: 757. Cited from: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Mark 9-16* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2015), Loc: 14337.

²⁶ Mark 4:41

Suffering Servant and says, **“Truly this man was the Son of God!”** As one commentator writes, **“Where God’s absence was most loudly expressed, God’s presence was most profoundly revealed.”**²⁷ This Centurion, **“had doubtlessly seen other men die by crucifixion. But something in this crucifixion—in the very weakness and suffering of Jesus’ death—becomes revelatory moment for him.”**²⁸

And when this very moment becomes a revelatory moment for you and me—when we can gaze upon that cross and say, **“Truly this man is the Son of God,”** oh my! Oh my, the joy that awaits us; *the utter joy!* And all because *Jesus was silent, Jesus was tortured, Jesus was mocked, and Jesus was forsaken.* My friend, where are you this evening? Have you believed in Christ? Where are you? What do you see when you look at the cross of Jesus Christ? Do you see the execution of God’s judgement against sin; do you see the only provision of forgiveness from your sin; do you see the sacrifice of the Savior as the only hope of that forgiveness; do you see, do you see this death as the ultimate expression of the infinite love of our infinitely glorious God? My friend, where are you?

V. JESUS HAS RISEN (15:40-16:8)

Well, very quickly now, *consider with me finally this evening, that Jesus has Risen.* You see, we’ve spent some time now considering how Jesus was silent, tortured, mocked and forsaken. *But none of it matters in the slightest unless he has risen.* And my friends, as we say every year at Easter, *he has risen indeed!* It is the torn curtain that deals with the fact that we can know God. But it is the empty tomb that lets us know that the Father was pleased with the offering of his Son. For **“on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied.”**²⁹ And the proof that he was satisfied can be seen in that *the tomb was empty!*

For the sake of time, we won’t look at these verses today. But if you glance down at your Bibles, you’ll notice verses 40-41 mention the names of the women who had followed Jesus in Galilee, looking on from a distance. Verses 42-47 note the preparations for Jesus’ burial concluding with the women who **“saw where he was laid.”**³⁰ And then in Mark 16:1-8, the mention of these women bringing spices to the tomb on Sunday morning so that they might anoint his body. Only they don’t find a dead body – but rather an empty tomb. And an angel who says to

²⁷ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 91. Cited from: Garland, *Mark*, 606.

²⁸ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 479-480.

²⁹ Stuart Townend & Keith Getty, *In Christ Alone* (Thankyou Music, 2001).

³⁰ Mark 15:47

them in verse 6, **“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.”**³¹

CONCLUSION

Allow me just to say in closing specifically to my brothers and sisters in Christ (and all who will be soon I hope if not already), allow me to say to you that because Jesus Christ is alive today, you live your Christian life with assurance! This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And because there is life in him, *you have hope!* Friends, this is what we’ve placed our hope in here this evening; this is why we’re here and this is why we sing; *this is why we preach!* It is because our Savior has risen; *he has risen indeed!* And thus the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:33-35, **“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”**

Oh my friends, because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, because he is alive today, because he is seated at the right hand of the Father, you may know you are safe. Did you know that? Tell me, do you base your life on that reality? Can you say, **“Because he lives, I can face tomorrow; because he lives all fear is gone!”**³² Oh dear Christian, may you run this Christian life then with joy, and with singing—because *he’s alive!* He is alive and he in all of his infinite worth is the guarantor that you have been saved and your are safe. Oh, may we live our lives in light of that very reality and within that great hope, for Christ sake! Amen.

³¹ Mark 16:6

³² Gloria Gaither and William J. Gaither, *Because He Lives* lyrics (Capitol CMG Publishing, 1971).

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