

MESSAGE TITLE: The Great Exchange

SCRIPTURE: Mark 15

KEY TRUTH

As Jesus died on the cross, there was much more going on than the angry crowds could have guessed. God the Father was orchestrating the most incredible trade of all-time. Jesus was taking our sin so that we could get His perfect life. Three days later, the resurrection of Jesus was the display of God's pleasure and power in the work of His Son.

GETTING STARTED

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. This verse is one of the most important in all of Scripture for understanding the truth that God exchanged our sins for the righteousness of Christ. Here we read that the one who knew no sin (Jesus) became sin for us by the will of God. This clearly means that God the Father made Christ to become regarded and treated as our sin, as if our sin belonged to Jesus and not to us. In becoming sin for our sake, He bore the punishment we deserved. And in return, we inherited his righteousness. This means that just as God imputed our sins to Jesus, so God imputes the righteousness of Christ to all who believe on Jesus for salvation. And Jesus is perfectly righteous. Because Jesus bore the sins of those who believe on Him, God regards and treats believers as having a legal status of righteousness. We have right standing in his presence based on the blood of Jesus shed at the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. That's why we can come to His throne of grace and mercy (Hebrews 4:14-16). This righteousness comes by faith, not by works. More than just right standing, we have received the very life of Jesus by faith! He lives within the hearts of believers.

OBSERVATION

Read Mark 15:1-15.

What are some of the ways Pilate's questioning of Jesus was different than the earlier questioning?

Does the crowd's reaction surprise you? Why or why not?

What sticks out to you the most from the story of Barabbas?

How do you see the gospel on display in his story?

Do you resonate more with the story of Peter or Barabbas? Why?

*How does finding yourself in that story change the way you look at Jesus' crucifixion?
How does it change the way you view people who don't yet know Jesus?*

A man was clearly and rightfully condemned. Another innocent man took his place while he went free. The story of Barabbas is more than just another tragic detail in the story of Jesus' crucifixion; it's our story. Jesus courageously stood in our place, and because He was punished, we get to live lives of freedom. God exchanged our sins for the righteousness of Christ.

Read Mark 15:16-47.

Why did the crowd choose to mock Jesus? What's the irony of what they did to Jesus in these verses?

What are some ways we might, with our attitudes and actions, mock the Kingship of Jesus?

What was Jesus really talking about when He claimed to be able to destroy the temple and raise it again in three days? How does this fact point to the centrality of Jesus in all things?

APPLICATION

Why is it so important that we regularly remember details like these recorded in Mark 15 about the crucifixion of Jesus?

What do you learn about our Heavenly Father from this chapter?

What do you learn about Jesus from this chapter?

What do you learn about the sinful nature of man from this chapter?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. Explain in your own words the 'great exchange' that took place at the cross based on this verse. Refer to the Getting Started section for help. What difference does the great exchange make in your daily life? Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate this verse for your understanding. Ask Him for helping to apply this truth to your life.

PRAYER

Take some time in your group to praise Jesus Christ for being God made flesh who died and who rose by the power of God's own Spirit. Thank our Heavenly Father who exchanged our sins for Christ's perfect righteousness through Jesus' death on the cross. Thank God for sending the promised Holy Spirit to dwell in us. Thank God for the resurrection which is the power of salvation.

SHARE POINT

Read and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

COMMENTARY NOTES

15:1. This verse is often seen as a third Jewish trial in which the whole Sanhedrin legalized their verdict in the morning (cp. Lk 22:66-71). Decisions reached at night were not binding. Being handed... over (Gk *paradidomi*) is repeatedly emphasized in this chapter (vv. 1,10,15) and throughout Mark. Pilate was a Roman official among the Jews from a.d. 26-36.

15:2. Pilate focused on whether Jesus claimed to be King of the Jews. This is the first use of this title in Mark's Gospel, but Pilate used it several times (vv. 2,9,12,26; cp. v. 32).

15:3-5. Pilate's question involves a double negative. It is matched by Mark's double negative that Jesus did not answer anything. Pilate was amazed at Jesus' silence because he could free Him if His answers were satisfactory.

15:6. Mark is silent about Pilate's attempt to extricate himself from the situation by sending Jesus to Herod Antipas (cp. Lk 23:5-12), the same Herod as in Mk 6:14-29. Here, in 15:6-15, Pilate tried another maneuver involving a custom to release for the people a prisoner. This custom is not documented outside the NT and was apparently done only at the Passover festival (Jn 18:39).

15:7. The rebels who were in prison with Barabbas probably included the two criminals who were crucified with Jesus. Mark gave no other details about the rebellion, which may indicate that his readers were familiar with it and thus did not need him to spell it out.

15:8-9. The crowd, coached by Jesus' enemies, asked Pilate to follow his custom of releasing a prisoner. Pilate instinctively offered them the King of the Jews (vv. 2,9,12,26). Thus, Pilate unknowingly confessed Jesus' true status.

15:10. Pilate recognized that envy was why the chief priests wanted Jesus dead.

15:11-12. Again, the chief priests (vv. 1,3,10) manipulated the course of events. The phrase *Stirred up* suggests they incited the crowd to riot. Ironically, the crowd chose Barabbas ("son of the father") over Jesus, the true Son of the Father.

15:13. This is Mark's first reference to crucifixion. None of Jesus' death predictions specifically mentioned crucifixion, though He had hinted at it (8:34).

15:15. Willing to gratify the crowd at the cost of justice, Pilate handed Jesus over.

15:16-20. Company reflects the Greek equivalent of the Latin "cohort," which totaled 600 soldiers. Mark did not use "company" in its technical sense, but he meant to indicate that a large group of soldiers mocked Jesus. The soldiers used makeshift substitutes for the robe... crown, and scepter of a king. Purple was a royal color. Hail, King of the Jews was a mocking corruption of the greeting, "Hail, Caesar." The verbs in

this verse are in the imperfect tense, indicating repeated action. They beat the King of the Jews on the head with his own scepter (reed) to indicate, as they believed, the weakness of His reign. The phrase led Him out to crucify Him refers to the centurion and the execution squad, not to the company of soldiers. Roman soldiers had the right to press citizens of subject nations into compulsory service (Mt 5:41), so they forced Simon to carry Jesus' cross. Simon was a Jewish Cyrenian from the north coast of Africa. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus, indicating that readers in Rome probably knew these men (Rm 16:13). Simon apparently became a Christian due to this experience.

15:22-25. Golgotha is Aramaic for Skull Place. The traditional site of the crucifixion is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, located outside the city walls (Lv 24:14; Num 15:35-36; Heb 13:12). Wine mixed with myrrh was a primitive narcotic. The offer fulfilled Ps 69:21. They crucified Him is all Mark wrote about the main event of the gospel. The crucifixion took place on Friday, now known as Good Friday. That the four soldiers of the execution squad divided His clothes and cast lots for them fulfilled Ps 22:18 (cp. Jn 19:23-24). Nine in the morning is literally "the third hour." Jews reckoned time of the daylight from sunrise.

15:26. The charge on which a person was condemned was often written on a placard and hung around his neck. In Jesus' case, it was nailed to His cross (Jn 19:19). All four Gospels record the words differently (cp. Mt 27:37; Lk 23:38; Jn 19:19), possibly because the inscription was trilingual (Jn 19:20). THE KING OF THE JEWS ironically proclaimed the truth about Jesus.

15:27. Criminals is the word used to describe Barabbas in Jn 18:40 (cp. Mk 14:48). Jesus' crucifixion between "criminals" was meant as a parody of His kingship (as if He had attendants on either side) but by God's design the whole event really was His royal enthronement. The phrase *one on His right and one on His left* recalls the request of James and John (John 10:37,40).

15:29-30. Insults means "blasphemies." Those who passed by were thus guilty of the very thing for which the Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus (14:64). The bystanders' insults and shaking of their heads fulfilled Ps 22:7 and Lam 2:15.

15:31-33. Once again, the chief priests led the mockery of Jesus. Their derision along with that of the scribes went to the heart of Jesus' mission: To save others, Jesus refused to save Himself (10:45). The religious leaders' mockery recalls the second charge Jesus faced before the Sanhedrin (14:61). Mark reported that the two crucified with Jesus also taunted Him. One of them repented (Lk 23:39-43). Noon was literally "the sixth hour," and three in the afternoon was "the ninth hour." The darkness was supernatural and represented God's judgment (Ex 10:21-23; Am 8:9-10).

15:34. At 3:00 p.m. Jesus cried out with a loud voice the Aramaic phrase, Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni. As usual, Mark provided a translation. Even when Jesus felt most

forsaken by God, He affirmed His relationship with His Father— My God, My God, quoting the opening words of Ps 22:1. Jesus endured God’s wrath as the sin-bearer.

15:35-39. Perhaps bystanders mistook Eloi for Elijah (Aram Eli) since there was a tradition in Judaism that Elijah would return (9:11-13; Mal 4:5). Sour wine, made with vinegar and water, was a drink of the soldiers, not the wine of verse 23. This action fulfilled Ps 69:21. The content of Jesus’ loud cry (reported by all three Synoptic Gospels) is specified in Jn 19:30—” It is finished.” Luke recorded Jesus’ final words (Lk 23:46). The curtain of the sanctuary hung before the holy of holies in the temple. Its tearing symbolizes unhindered access to God, made possible because of Jesus’ atonement for sin on the cross (Heb 6:19-20; 9:3; 10:19-22). The Gentile centurion who presided over the execution was the first in Mark’s Gospel to confess Jesus as God’s Son (cp. 1:11,24; 3:11; 5:9; 9:7). His confession matched Mark’s opening statement (1:1).

15:40-41. This is the first reference to Mary Magdalene in Mark. Jesus expelled seven demons from her (16:9; Lk 8:2). She came from Magdala on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses is called “the other Mary” in Mt 27:61. Possibly she was the mother of James the son of Alphaeus (Mk 3:18). Salome is named only in Mark (v. 40; 16:1). She was the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Mt 20:20; 27:56). In Mark, only women (v. 41; 1:31) and angels (1:13) serve or help (Gk diakoneo) Jesus. The many other women who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem did so for Passover.

15:42-47. Jesus’ burial, an important element in early Christian proclamation (1Co 15:3-4), is recorded also in Mt 27:57-61; Lk 23:50-56; and Jn 19:38-42.

SOURCES CONSULTED

ESV Study Bible

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