

Mark 15:16-21

¹⁶ The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. ¹⁷ They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. ¹⁸ And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" ¹⁹ Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. ²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹ A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross

1. Last time, we looked at the accusation and substitution
 - a. Jesus was wrongly accuses and falsely convicted
 - b. He became a substitute for Barabbas

2. As we pick up the story, Jesus has already been scourged
 - a. Pilot was hoping that a bloody beating would satisfy the crowd
 - i. It only stirred their thirst for more

 - b. It's fascinating that this portion of scripture doesn't highlight or detail the horrific experience of that beating

 - c. Perhaps because the physical pain is not the center of this story

 - d. Redemption is the key, leaving out the painful description

3. However, Mark highlights the Savior and Simon of Cyrene

I. The Savior in the palace

II. The Cyrenian who carried His Cross

I. The Savior in the palace

1. Jesus is led by soldiers into the Pretorium (Governor's main residence)
 - a. He's in the palace courtyard
 - b. A garrison is waiting for Him (600 soldiers)
 - i. They put a purple robe on Him**
 1. Purple is the color of royalty
 - a. The soldiers hear that Jesus claims to be king of the Jews
 - b. They place purple robe to mock Him
 - ii. Twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head**
 1. Caesar wore a wreath on his head
 2. They place a crown of thorns on His head
 - iii. Saluted Him in mockery "hail, king of the Jews"**
 1. Just as the emperor was saluted, Jesus is being mocked
 - iv. Struck Him on the head with a staff and spit on Him; bowing the knee and worshipped Him**
 1. Being hit on the head and spit upon is the ultimate insult in that culture
2. All of the despicable acts wrongfully done to others, He experienced first hand
3. The question here must be asked
 - a. Why allow this ridicule?
 - b. It is a picture of what sin does to humanity**
 - i. It chains you
 - ii. It messes with your thoughts
 - iii. It mocks and taunts you
 - iv. Eventually, it kills you
 1. By slowly separating you from God
 - v. Just as it did with Adam in the garden

1. He was bound with fear and shame
 2. His thoughts were now blaming God
 3. His peace and security are gone
 4. He's driven out from the presence of the Lord
4. Jesus shows us something else from this experience
 5. Imagine being surrounded by 600 soldiers
 - a. Most people would collapse under this type of pressure
 - b. Jesus stands in the middle to say something to all who are in a physical prison or those imprisoned by sin
 - c. "Although I stood alone, The Father is with me"
 - d. "Although you may feel alone, I am with you"

6. The robe was a mockery of His position

- a. "If you are the Son of God..."
- b. The enemy will normally taunt your position when you either dedicate yourself to the service of God or agree to take up your cross and follow
 - i. Jesus walked that road before me; He is with me

7. The crown of thorns on His head

- a. Next is the attack on the mind
 - i. All of the thoughts of doubt and confusion rush in
 - ii. Questions like, if God really loves me, then why would He allow this to happen?
 - iii. If God calls me to do something, why is it such a struggle in many cases?
 - iv. An onslaught of thoughts attack us to get us to doubt God, His Love & His purpose
 - v. Jesus endured that pain for our peace of mind

- vi. God's Word tells us that we have the mind of Christ
- vii. **Is 26:3** You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you.

8. He was called names

- a. You'll often experience people calling you names when you take a stand for Christ
 - i. Bible thumper
 - ii. Holy roller
 - iii. Jesus freak
- b. Physical bruises heal, but people's words are not easy to forget
- c. He understands those who have been verbally mocked

9. Struck on the head and spit upon

- a. The ultimate form of disrespect and humiliation
 - i. He walked that road before us
- b. "Just as I went through this experience pleasing to the Father, so will you"
- c. "There is nothing you're going through that I don't understand"
- d. This serves as a comfort and strength to our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted and imprisoned around the world

II. The Cyrenian who carried his Cross

1. We view this from 2 perspectives

- 2. From Simon's perspective: Simon, a common name for a common man
 - a. He was a visitor from Cyrene simply passing by

- b. Probably toward the temple, he didn't intend to be any part of this experience
- c. Roman soldiers stop him and force him to help

3. Simon is a picture of the church

- a. He was compelled; he didn't volunteer
 - b. He was arrested like Saul of Tarsus was on the road to Damascus
 - c. With this arresting is a call to carry the cross
 - d. He was compelled, he tried to resist
 - i. This is our normal & typical reaction to the Cross
 - ii. However, we learn to embrace it.
 - iii. It doesn't come naturally, it's gradual
4. What initially seemed like a horrible thing ends up being the Grace of God capturing him
5. Something about being with Jesus carrying the Cross changed Simon
- a. His son & wife are mentioned by Paul in Romans 16

6. Cheerfully accept this burden Simon

- a. You visited the holy city to worship God
- b. The very God of the universe is on the Via Dela Rosa with a Cross
- c. Suffer the shame with Christ and you'll share in His Glory (Col 1:24)
- d. It's there that you learn what Jesus meant by:
 - i. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and you'll find rest for your souls

- ii. The Cross is that yoke for us to carry
- iii. How is the cross easy?

- 1. The key is finding life is in dying to self
- 2. When you live for yourself, you end up dying, unhappy, unfulfilled, cynical, bitter...
- 3. But in dying to self, you find rest and peace

7. From Jesus' perspective

- a. He showing us that taking up our cross doesn't mean gritting our teeth and being miserable
 - b. It means letting the Cross do to us exactly what it did to Him when it caused Him to fall on His knees and allow another to bear it
 - c. When the weights of walking in faith are hard to bear and I'm falling under, there is another who can help carry the Cross
 - d. Simon is believed to have carried the lighter side of the beam, not the whole thing
 - e. A picture of the 2 Oxen is scripture
 - f. **Spurgeon:** Even if Simon carried the entire beam, he only carried the wood, the mere tree. But the curse of the tree, which as our sin and its punishment, rested on Jesus' shoulders still. Jesus took the wrath; He carried the sin
8. Some believe the distance to the cross was not very far
- a. Our time on earth is not that long
 - b. **2 Cor 4:17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory