

The Cross

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[0 : 0 0] Well, this past week and a bit, I've been reading through the Gospel of Mark. And I was amazed again at just how quickly Mark takes us from the beginning, where it all started at Jesus' baptism, to the cross.

It's almost like you can sense the cross looming the whole way through. In one particular moment, Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, comes to that wonderful moment of declaring what he believes about Jesus.

Mark 8, verse 29, he says, You are the Messiah. How exciting! You are God's chosen king, promised and prophesied long ago.

And how does Jesus respond to Peter? Peter, Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed.

And after three days, rise again. Just when the excitement was likely flooding Peter's heart, you are the king that we've long been waiting for.

[1 : 2 7] Jesus almost seems to snuff it out with these foreboding words. Yes, but first, the cross. First, I must suffer, be rejected, and die.

He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. Get behind me, Satan, he said. You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.

It's as if Peter's saying, no, no, Jesus, you mustn't say such things.

You mustn't talk like this. Let's not talk of suffering or rejection or failure here. But Jesus responds very strongly, no, Peter, stop it.

[2 : 3 7] You're wrong. You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns. I got thinking about those words this week.

Peter's expressing the human concerns. No, you're not going to die. May it never be. Don't even talk like this, Jesus.

You're the Messiah. May you live and reign forever. However, these are the human concerns. But God has his concerns in all this.

God has his things that he wants to accomplish here. Things that he wants to do for his people, for you, for me.

And those things that he wants to do requires the suffering, the rejection, and the death of his dear son first.

[3 : 3 7] The cross looms over Jesus here and now. Jesus is the Messiah. He is the king.

Yes. He is the son of man who, a few verses down, will come in his father's glory with the holy angels. Yes. But first, the cross.

Not long after this moment, six days later to be exact, we catch a glimpse of the glory that Jesus will come with at the end.

Or rather, Peter, James, and John do, as they see Jesus transfigured on the mountain. A beautiful, even if brief, foretaste of who Jesus is and what he will be when he returns.

But then again, not too long after that, they are traveling the back roads with Jesus through Galilee and hearing him say this in Mark chapter 9, 31 and 32.

[4 : 46] The son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him. And after three days, he will rise again.

But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. The cross looms over Jesus here too, holding back for now the wonder and the joy of what they saw up on the mountain when his face shone gloriously before them.

Well, finally, Jesus and his company begin their journey up to Jerusalem for the last time. Mark chapter 10, verse 32.

They were on their way up to Jerusalem with Jesus leading the way. And the disciples were astonished while those who followed were afraid. Again, he took the 12 aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

We are going up to Jerusalem, he said, and the son of man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law.

[5 : 57] They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him and spit on him, flog him, and kill him.

Three days later, he will rise. The cross looms over Jesus here as well. Jesus knew it was coming.

He even knew the details beforehand. He would be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They would condemn him to death and would hand him over to the Romans, the Gentiles.

The Roman soldiers would mock him and spit on him, flog him, and kill him. And yet Jesus marches on to Jericho, then to Bethphagia, then to Bethany.

And finally, he rides right into the city of Jerusalem on a colt. And at first, all seems quite well. The crowd with him makes quite the noise.

[7 : 09] Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David, they shout. Hosanna! Hosanna! In the highest heaven!

It was quite the procession. But it wasn't long before the excitement of this procession gave way to these somber words of Jesus at the Passover meal later that week.

While they were reclining at the table, eating, he said, truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me. One who is eating with me.

They were saddened and one by one they said to him, surely you don't mean me. It is one of the twelve, he replied, one who dips bread into the bowl with me.

The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man. it would be better for him if he had not been born.

[8 : 19] While they were eating, Jesus took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, take it.

This is my body. then he took a cup and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and they all drank from it.

This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many, he said to them. Truly, I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Here again, here at the table with his disciples, the cross looms over Jesus. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him.

I will be betrayed. I will die, says Jesus. My body will be broken. My blood poured out. But there's a reason it must go this way.

[9 : 43] My death has a great purpose and it's to secure a covenant between God and many. To broker an arrangement, I will die.

To see to it that the promises of God are kept to many. To you. To me. My blood will be poured out.

Even here at the table, Jesus reminds them, as he did time and time again, I will rise again. But I wonder if they heard it that night.

there will come a day when I drink this cup with you again in the kingdom of God. But first, the cross.

And just as Jesus had told them these four times, so it went. He was betrayed. He was delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law by Judas, one of the twelve.

[10 : 56] He was condemned to death by the chief priests and the teachers of the law, handed over to the Gentiles, the Romans, and was mocked by the soldiers, spit on, flogged, and finally crucified, executed as though he were a criminal.

But you know, without Jesus' suffering and death, we'd all be lost. We'd have no hope.

There would be no new covenant. There would be no better arrangement with God to be had. No forgiveness. We would all get just what we deserve from God, each of us, for our sins.

We could have no Messiah and no king, without first having a cross. There came a moment before Jesus was handed over in the garden when he was praying and pouring out his heart to the father.

In the garden, Mark tells us that he fell to the ground and prayed that if it was possible the hour might pass from him. Abba, father, everything is possible for you.

[12 : 22] Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will. The suffering and the agony of Jesus on the cross was horrible and Jesus knew it would be.

But unlike Peter, he had in his mind and in his heart the concerns of God and not just the concerns of men.

He prayed, not my will, but what you will be done. He bent his will to the fathers. He submitted his wants and desires to the fathers and he chose to do what was needed, what was required for our salvation, for the salvation of his friends, the disciples, and for all who would repent and believe in him.

And then he went through with it. He suffered and died. Do you know that God has you in his concerns?

Do you know that Jesus has you in his heart? That both father and son love you like nobody in this world ever could.

[13 : 55] Week after week as I read my Bible, I see again just how far short I fall of God's holy and perfect standard.

I see my own sins glaring but the cross of our Savior Jesus does for me what I can't do for myself.

It gives me forgiveness, hope, the guarantee of all that God has promised for his people. Eternal life and citizenship in this glorious kingdom of God that will soon break forth upon our world.

This is what we remember when we come to the Lord's table and pass out the bread and the cup. We remember the love of our Lord. We remember the mercy of God.

We remember the cross that came before the crown and saved us forever. if you believe this with all your heart this table is for you.

[15 : 15] And in these next moments as we pass out the elements and partake I invite you to partake with us if this is your faith. If it's not if you're not sure I would ask that you would abstain.

we'll wait until everyone has been served and once we all have been served we'll partake together in unison. Take the next few minutes to pray quietly and to reflect on what the Lord Jesus has done for us.

O O O O O O O O Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[17 : 49] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you so much for going to the cross for us, for suffering what you did for us, for our sins to be forgiven. We are so grateful and we love you.

We do this in remembrance of you. Amen. Amen. I'll invite you to remain seated for this next song.

[20 : 18] Amen.

And now I am happy all the day. When I surveyed the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died.

My riches, I count, I count, but loss. My riches gain, I count, but loss. I count, but loss, and poor contempt on all my pride.

And poor contempt on all my pride. flow, and poor, and poor, and poor, and poor.

Did there's such love and sorrow mean. me poor thorns composed so rich a crown the cross but we all know that's not the end of the story is it Mark 8 31 and after three days rise again

[24 : 06] Mark 9 31 and after three days he will rise Mark 10 34 three days later the son of man will rise said Jesus and to Peter and his disciples Mark 14 28 but after I have risen I will go ahead of you into Galilee even before Jesus went to the cross he knew it wouldn't be over there his body which was broken for us was laid in the tomb but three days later he did rise the tomb was empty you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified said the angel to the women at the tomb early Sunday morning he is risen he is not here see the place where they laid him but go tell his disciples and Peter he is going ahead of you into Galilee there you will see him just as he told you this is not a fateful tragedy that we mark with bread and cup but a glorious victory so I invite you to stand and we'll continue singing praise to our risen Lord ha