

# Pierced For Our Transgressions

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're parachuting in, so to speak, to the middle of Mark's description of Jesus' crucifixion. As we saw last week in verses 16 to 32, Mark really aimed to express what Jesus endured in the process of crucifixion itself, namely mockery, brutality, blasphemy.

And we walked through that text last week. But there's a noticeable shift in the text that we just read. When we get to verse 33, Mark is still describing the crucifixion, but he has moved away from a focus on the cross to a focus on the death of Christ itself.

To say it another way, Mark is moving in the earlier section, telling us of the physical suffering that Jesus endured, to now he is focused on, in this present passage, communicating the atoning work that Jesus accomplished.

Do you see the difference? In one sense last week, we focused on this is the physical nature, for the most part, the physical nature of what Jesus endured. And now Mark moves on immediately to the most important facet of all of that, which is why that physical suffering even matters.

What was actually the purpose of it? It was a finished work of atonement that Jesus was providing for sinners. So our concern with Jesus' crucifixion then is not merely about the excruciating way that he died, but about the spiritual purpose that his death achieved, which we would say in one simple word, it achieved a substitution, a substitution for sinners.

[ 1 : 56 ] And this substitution is not something that has been looked back upon by Christians and contrived in an effort to try to piece things together as they've looked at it.

This is actually the pattern of the Bible. The Old Testament prophesied this substitution. Jesus himself declared this substitution as we have studied all the way through Mark's gospel.

It was symbolized most recently in our study in Barabbas, who was set free at Jesus' trial, and then as you work on through the New Testament, it is explained in explicit detail by the apostles.

And of course, we're reminded of Isaiah 53, which we have referenced so often in these last few weeks. This passage corresponds very hopefully to verses 4 through 6.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

[ 2 : 55 ] But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

That's the significance of this text. That's why we care about the cross. And that's what I'd like for us to explore this morning. Four things that I want to point out to you. The first two will take us a good bit of a time, and then we'll move somewhat quickly through the last two.

So if you get to the point after about the second point, and you're just ready to be done with this, don't worry. We're close, okay? Number one, if you want to keep notes, I want you to see the judgment of God.

The judgment of God. Look with me at verse 33. And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Now I want to go ahead and pause here, and I want to take just a moment to consider the nature and the purpose of this darkness that descended upon the region around Jerusalem.

[ 4 : 05 ] Mark tells us that this darkness enveloped the region at the sixth hour, which according to Jewish reckoning of time was midday.

It was noon. And the darkness continued until Jesus' final breath at three in the afternoon. Now the significance of this is its timing. Darkness descended upon the land, not clouds.

This isn't a storm that just kind of rolls into the area of Jerusalem. That's not what we're told in the text. We're told in the text this is actually a supernatural darkness that descends upon this particular region at this time.

And the significance is it appears and it descends upon this region at the brightest part of the day. There's no natural way to explain it. The timing of Passover actually renders a full solar eclipse an impossibility because Passover took place at the new moon, not the full moon.

So it couldn't be that there was, it's not astronomically possible that there would be a solar eclipse that we could point to and say, well, this was just kind of coincidental. That's not what's happening here.

[ 5 : 17 ] What was taking place at the moment of Jesus' crucifixion was an astronomical anomaly attributed only to the supernatural power of the creator God.

Now that shouldn't come as surprising to us if we're students of the Bible because the kids just quoted just a few moments ago in Genesis 1.26 that God created not only us, but he created everything that we see and that he rules over those things.

And that part of the blessing of knowing him is that we can see his hand at work in the creation around us. So if he created all that there is and he created the things that we see in the world, including the sun and the moon and the stars, as the Bible affirms that he did, then it should come as no surprise to us then that he would actually have power over those things.

That in his divine power, he could bring darkness at whatever moment he wanted to bring darkness. And it appears that that's exactly what is happening here in verse 33. But this darkness was not an expression of divine mourning.

That's not the reason for it. It's not that God was so distraught by what man was doing to his son that almost in a sense, maybe we would imagine it this way, that there was an expression of his emotional volatility in this moment that ushered in this darkness, just so that everybody would know that Jesus was upset at what they were doing or that God was upset with what they were doing to Jesus.

[ 6 : 47 ] That's not what this darkness is about. It's not divine mourning. This darkness is a divine judgment. The Old Testament speaks of prophecies, particularly in Amos chapter 8.

It speaks of prophecies of midday darkness sent by God in reference to his divine judgment against sin and sinners.

Many scholars see even in this darkness a parallel to the ninth plague in the book of Exodus, which was darkness that continued through the moment of Passover where there was a death that resulted in the freedom and the exodus of God's people out of bondage in Egypt.

In either case, no matter which one you would want to attribute it to, or maybe it's to be attributed to both things in some dimension, in either case, there's no doubt that this darkness is a sign of the Father's judgment against sin.

It's an expression of it. But the fact that we cannot overlook is that Jesus had no sin for which to be judged.

[ 7 : 59 ] So what is this darkness then about? It's not about God's judgment on us. It's about God's judgment on Christ, the sinless one, who on the cross absorbs the wrath of God in the place of sinners.

And God expresses this in a visible sign through midday darkness. And then it's affirmed by Jesus' own statement. Look at verse 34.

And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which means, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

So the darkness then is a visible expression of the divine judgment that Jesus was in that moment genuinely experiencing. And perhaps for us to understand this best, we need to be reminded that the ultimate punishment for sin is spiritual death, which the New Testament affirms as alienation from God, separation from the creator.

In becoming a man, Jesus experienced the fullness of humanity with one exception up to this point. The one exception is that his relationship with the father was not broken.

[ 9 : 31 ] But remember, it's sin that brings death and separation from God. But Jesus did not sin. At that moment, in the hours of his crucifixion, Jesus was truly experiencing what he had foreseen with profound horror in the garden of Gethsemane.

Remember in our earlier study, Jesus cries out to God three different times. He goes back and he cries to the father, if it be possible, let this cup of divine wrath pass from me.

And then of course he affirms in that moment, not my will, but your will. An amazing pattern for us to follow as we studied that. But what was his anguish over in the garden? It wasn't merely what he

foresaw in his physical suffering.

His anguish in the garden was about this moment. For the first time, experiencing true separation from the father in the sense of bearing our sin.

And after hours of silent suffering, Jesus cried out, quoting verse one of Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[10:49] And it's amazing how instinctively Jesus expressed himself in biblical language. Something we see him do over and over and over.

And then here again on the cross, the way that Jesus expresses himself is with his very words, the words of God, the words of the Old Testament. I think that might be just as a side note, a good lesson for us to make note of.

In these moments, Jesus doesn't express himself in just human feelings. He expresses himself through the lens of the word of God. Maybe we would be helped to do that ourselves.

But we don't need to be confused by his statement here. We shouldn't interpret Jesus's cry here as a question for which he had no answer. That's not really what Jesus is doing.

He's not asking the father a question that he had no answer for. Jesus knew all along what would happen to him. He knew all along exactly why this was happening.

[11:53] And he was willingly enduring it for our sakes. So he wasn't asking a question. He was using scripture to give voice to what he was going through at that moment.

And what he was going through at that moment in bearing our sin was the separation from the father as sin bearer. And praise God that he made this cry from the cross.

Because had he not made this cry from the cross, we would have terrible difficulty grasping the true nature of his suffering in this moment. But his suffering wasn't just about his body's pain.

His suffering ultimately was about being the bearer of our sin. You said God's holy nature demanded separation as the son became sin.

Not even the most evil man, he goes on to write, including Nero and Hitler, has ever known in this life the horror of being completely cut off from God.

[12:56] But Christ knew it in this moment. Now I want to take a moment to let this marinate. And I know that can produce all kinds of other questions that we don't have time to get into today.

And there's answers for those questions if you're thinking that we can get to later. But I want you to just let this marinate for a moment. On the cross, the sinless son of God endured what sinners are destined to suffer for all eternity.

And I wonder how often we consider the death of Christ without clearly recognizing that it is our personal sin that made it necessary.

I think we tend to view Jesus' sacrifice for sin in abstraction.

That is that we see sin theoretically and we understand the dynamic that Jesus died for sin and for sinners, but we don't always personalize that in a way that the gospel demands. We think that sin is this thing that's kind of out there, just kind of this whole big thing that the whole earth is just kind of inadvertently plagued by and that when Jesus died on the cross, he was dying for like this kind of thing that's just out there.

[14:19] And we never really truly bring it into concrete terms. We think of it theoretically, we fail to acknowledge the words of that song that we just sang. It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished.

The reality is that it is yours and my deceits, yours and my immoralities, yours and my slanders, yours and my rebellions, yours and my thefts, yours and my abuses, yours and my envies, yours and my sin.

It is our sin, my sin, Jared's sin that made the death of Jesus necessary for our salvation. And I'll never forget when Ashlyn first made a profession of faith and conversion.

She's always been so good at memorizing things and she could explain the gospel better than some adults could before she had ever actually professed faith in the gospel. Which tells us something that's helpful about the nature of conversion.

Just having an intellectual knowledge of the things of God is not sufficient for salvation. And she could tell you all of those things. And I remember one day we're working through all the stuff.

[15:46] She had been catechized thoroughly on the fact that Jesus died for sin. Jesus died for sinners. But I remember the first time that she finally realized that it wasn't just that Jesus died for sin, this kind of abstract notion of sinful existence, but that he died for her sin, for her lies.

Maybe you know that Jesus died for sin, but you've just never really seen yourself as much of a sinner. And I want to tell you that Jesus did not die for sin conceptually.

He died for it actually. And the only way possible for him to do that is if the sin for which he died was ours personally.

Your sin, your rebellion, your lies, your fill in the blank, that's what held him to the tree. That's what made his death necessary.

That's what he was absorbing in that moment. God's wrath against you, not people against you and me.

[17:08] And just to show you that I'm not just making this up. This is in the text itself. 1 Peter 2 in verse 24. Peter says he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds, we have been healed, Peter writes, quoting Isaiah 53. Paul says it to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 5, 21. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

He says it again to the Galatians. Galatians chapter 3 and verse 13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

For it is written, quote, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. What is the significance of this moment? In this moment, in this darkness, with this statement of being forsaken by the Father, Jesus becomes our sin bearer.

He takes our sin. He suffers in our place. Verse 35. Just as today, there were many people standing by who didn't get it.

[18:35] Some of the bystanders hearing it said, behold, he is calling Elijah. And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine to put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying, wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.

Now, I need to leave it to you to do some of the digging necessary to mind these verses or we'll never finish. As Alistair regularly says, you are sensible people and with a little effort you can determine these things, you can work these things out.

The basic point here is that the Jews standing by completely misunderstood and misinterpreted Jesus' cry from the cross.

And there's some explanation from this we could point to. If you look at the words that Mark gives us the Aramaic language that Jesus would have actually cried out, Eloi, Eloi, Lema Sabachthani, and then he translates it in Greek which we then have in English, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

In Aramaic, there's only a single letter difference between the phrase my God and the name Elijah. If you take what for us in the text in verse 34 is an O or in Greek would be an Omicron, you take that out and you just have the E-L-I, that would be the Aramaic word for Elijah.

[19:57] So it's possible that the people standing, the Jews at least, that were standing by the cross when they hear Jesus cry this out, they perhaps confuse his language and say he's calling out for Elijah.

But why would they ever think that he would call out for Elijah in that moment? Scholars say there was a Jewish superstition at work in the first century where they viewed Elijah as sort of a patron saint in the way that some religions would view sainthood today.

And that Elijah was the patron saint, so to speak, over righteous sufferers. And in unique cases of injustice, they could cry out to God and God would send Elijah.

Now this is not actual, this is just in some of the rabbinic thought of the day. That God would send Elijah and Elijah would rescue them in some way in that moment.

And it appears that this might be the best explanation for their confusion. So what did the people do? They gave him some wine vinegar. This is different from the drink, the narcotic that was offered to him earlier that we talked about last week.

[21:07] And they gave him this so that they could try to prolong his life long enough to see if Elijah would indeed come to rescue him. That's the language. Some bystanders hearing it said, behold, he's calling Elijah.

They run and fill a sponge. John tells us Jesus had actually mentioned his thirst to prolong his life, to hear his voice perhaps more clearly. They usher this wine vinegar to him to refresh him in some way.

And then they say, wait, let us see if Elijah will actually come. Let's see if he'll come to help him. Let's see if this might be some kind of proof that we have messed up here.

James Edwards affirms this thought. The bystanders then, as some today, fail to see that Jesus fulfills God's plan of redemption precisely in his suffering by giving his life a ransom for many by taking the curse of humanity on himself.

And here's the point I want to get across to you here. These people are staring directly at the cross but they can't see it.

[ 22 : 19 ] and I'm concerned that many Christian churches are filled with precisely this type of person. Their lives are surrounded by the clear truth of the gospel but they keep fiddling around with things that are entirely irrelevant to the true purpose of the cross.

They wear crosses around their necks and offer prayers and public worship but the idea that Jesus absorbed the wrath of God in place of sinners is the furthest thing from their minds.

And what a shame it would be to sit in service after service where the truth of the gospel is taught and preached and remain ignorant of its significance to your life.

It would be like standing beside the cross gazing upon the crucifixion itself witnessing Jesus become the Savior but your only thought in that moment is I wonder who's going to save him.

Fiddling around with things that don't matter. Fiddling around with things that are irrelevant. What a tragedy that would be. Well that's the judgment of God.

[ 23 : 35 ] Let's look at the finished work of atonement. The finished work of atonement. So if verses 33 to 36 reveal the divine judgment of God being poured out on Jesus verses 37 and 38 communicate the sufficiency of Christ's death as an atonement for sin.

Okay? So stick with me. First few verses God's judgment put on Christ. Now we see it worked.

Okay?

That's the point. The word we use for this in theological terms even in biblical terms is propitiation which just means that Christ's death totally satisfied appeased the wrath of God.

We sing this in Christ alone. We sing this till on that cross as Jesus died the wrath of God was satisfied for every sin on him was laid here in the death of Christ I live.

Okay? He took our place. He appeased God's wrath and that Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient to pay for our sins is proven in his resurrection.

[ 24 : 54 ] It's validated there. We'll get there in a couple of weeks but it's also clearly expressed here. Look at verse 37. Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

You say, well that doesn't really actually tell us anything, Jared. Well you're right. We have to go outside of Mark's gospel to actually piece this together. Mark doesn't identify exactly what Jesus cried only that he did cry out and I really think that the reason for that is in the brevity of his narrative he wants us to really see the response of the centurion to the way that Jesus cried.

We'll get there in a minute. Just hang tight, okay? We have to go to Luke and John to find out what exactly Jesus cried out. They record two statements that constitute this loud cry that's mentioned by Mark.

The first one we find in John 19 and it is the cry it is finished. It is finished. I'll read the verse to you. John 19 and verse 30 when Jesus had received the sour wine he said it is finished and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

So when Jesus musters up the strength to cry out it is finished he's not referring there to he is finished he's referring to the fact that his work is finished.

[ 26 : 27 ] John chapter 10 Jesus explicitly said his mission was from the father was to lay down his life and to take it up again for an atonement for sin.

It is finished is Jesus' declaration that the task he was sent to accomplish has been fully and perfectly brought to completion.

That's the significance of this statement. There's a Greek word I know you don't care about that I'm just going to tell you because it's helpful here. It's tetelestai tetelestai it's in the perfect tense which communicates a past action that has an ongoing effect if that makes sense.

So it's in the past tense in one way but it's in the past tense not simply bringing completion to a moment but completion to an action that has lasting effects moving forward in the present and into the future.

That's the language that Jesus uses here that Mark communicates Jesus or John communicates Jesus' language as. So Jesus was in essence saying it has been and it forever will be finished.

[ 27 : 40 ] And here's why that matters. The work that Jesus accomplished for us on the cross is an eternally finished work that will not be withdrawn and it cannot be undone.

The sin that God poured out on his son will never have to be paid for again meaning that all who believe can rest assured in the promise of eternal salvation.

What Jesus did on the cross was a once and for all work. It is finished. It is accomplished. And no matter how much on your worst day you feel like you just emotionally may not be saved you could never point to the sacrifice of Christ and say there was something lacking in what he did.

He covered it all. He took it all. He drank the cup every last drop of God's wrath and in this moment at his dying breath he cries out my work is finished atonement has been made.

And Paul tells us in Romans 6 we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him for the death he died he died to sin once for all but the life he lives he lives to God and then Paul puts it in practical terms for us.

[ 29 : 17 ] So you also those who are in Christ those who are believers so you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

It's a finished work accomplished by Jesus alone which means that it's sufficient to cover your sin for all of eternity.

No more payment must be made. There's no place for you to go and be sent after this life to suffer to pay for what Jesus didn't pay for. No it's been paid.

It's finished. Tetelestai. It's finished. Well he says another statement Luke tells us this one in Luke chapter 23. Father into your hands I commit my spirit.

Another quote from Psalm 22 Luke 23 and verse 46 then Jesus calling out with a loud voice said Father into your hands I commit my spirit.

[ 30 : 23 ] And having said this he breathed his last. This final statement affirms that Jesus gave his life.

It was not taken from him. He gave it. Over and over we have seen Jesus' power and opportunity to overcome his enemies and escape the agony of the cross.

His adversaries as he hung on the cross we saw last week even taunted him to this end. If you're really the Christ save yourself. Take yourself off the cross they cried.

But again they misunderstood the whole thing. Jesus didn't need a savior. this is what he had come to do. His life wasn't taken.

He gave it. He didn't need a savior. As we said last week he only needed a cross in order that he could become the savior. He wasn't overcome by death.

[ 31 : 28 ] He willingly surrendered to it to fulfill his purpose. And this is the mark of a true sufficient sacrifice and atonement for sin.

John chapter 10 verse 17. For this reason Jesus says the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down. I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my father.

So with his last cry it is finished and into your hands I commit my spirit. Jesus says my life isn't taken. I have laid it down. And by laying it down I have finished the work that God sent me to finish and to accomplish.

But there's a second part to this. Verse 38. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. So as with the issue of God's judgment, Jesus' words of complete atonement are accompanied then by a visible sign.

[ 32 : 35 ] God we saw in the first section, right? There's this visible sign of darkness, God's judgment, and then there's the words of Jesus that affirm it. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And we see the same thing happening here. With the sufficiency of his work, he cries out, into your hands I commit my spirit. It is finished. And at that moment, at his last breath, God sends another visible sign.

It is the curtain, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. There were two veils in the temple, and there's some debate regarding which curtain the gospel authors were referring to. We don't have to get into that now. I believe that the evidence suggests that it was the veil that divided the holy place from the holy of holies. The innermost chamber where only God dwelled, or the presence of God was believed to have dwelled.

Why does any of this matter? Well, God tears it from top to bottom. I think there's probably some symbolism in that, that this was not an act of man, this was a divine act from top to bottom.

[ 33 : 44 ] Maybe that's reading too much into it, that's okay. But why does it matter? Once a year, on the day of atonement, the high priest, he's the only one that could do it, would enter into the holy of holies, and he would make an atonement for the sins of the nation.

And like all the other sacrifices that God demanded, it was insufficient. It couldn't truly atone for sins because God said you have to do it over and over and over and over and over and over and over. There was no end to it. It was insufficient. And so every year, the high priest would do the thing the way that God had instructed for him to do it. By tearing the curtain, God declares that it is through Jesus' sacrificial death that we now have access to him.

James Edwards, again, the holy of holies, which was believed to contain the very presence of Yahweh, is made accessible not by the high priest's sacrifice on the day of atonement, but by the atonement of Jesus on the cross.

The writer of Hebrews affirms this, therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

[ 35 : 14 ] That's the significance. What does it mean? His work was sufficient. It did what it was supposed to do, and nothing was left out.

Now, remember, the ultimate tragedy of sin is that it separates us from God in eternity, not only in this life, but eternally. Jesus endured that separation on the cross so that we might be reconciled to God, the Father, and in the rending of the veil, we have a visible expression of that being accomplished.

We now, all, each of us, have access to the Father through the work, the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Judgment of God, finished work of atonement.

The last two will be quicker, okay? Number three. I want you to see the response of faith. The response of faith. 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.

This is a dramatic and powerful conclusion that its brevity makes it seem like it isn't such, but this is actually a pivotal moment in Mark's gospel. In the centurion's confession, we find what is the desired result of Christ's work.

[ 36 : 50 ] Salvation by grace through faith. And the fact of Jesus' sacrificial death does not automatically make every person forgiven and reconciled to God.

Please don't mistake that. Just because Jesus died doesn't mean he all of a sudden takes a blanket of atonement and just cast it over everybody throughout all of eternity and everybody is just saved no matter what you do regardless of your life or your heart or anything else.

He doesn't do that. That's not what his atonement does. The atoning work of Jesus requires a response of faith. And there's a lot that we don't know about the centurion.

There's a lot that we can suspect and maybe guess as to what he meant in his mind by this confession. But what we want to see is what Mark intends for us to take away from it.

And what Mark's purpose is in recording this is to communicate the only proper response to Jesus' death. And like I said it's a pivotal moment in his gospel.

[ 37 : 57 ] It complements both his stated purpose and Peter's earlier confession. And we've talked about this so much. Mark chapter 1 and verse 1. The stated purpose.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. In other words Mark says what I'm writing to you is the good news. I'm declaring the good news that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah and the Son of God.

And we get about halfway through his gospel. There's all of this build up for Jesus' identity. And we get about halfway through in chapter 8 and Jesus looks at his disciples and he says but who do you say that I am?

And Peter has this monumental confession. He doesn't even fully understand all of this but it's a confession nonetheless. And he says you are the Christ. Check mark number one with Mark's stated purpose.

And then we go a little further and we begin to see more of Jesus' identity unfolded. We see the explicit details of his purpose in becoming the Messiah and then we get to this pivotal moment at the sacrifice of Christ and what do we find once again?

[ 38 : 58 ] Another confession. This time it's not from a Jew and it's not from a disciple. It's from a Gentile Roman soldier who was just responsible for nailing him to the cross and he cries out truly this is the Son of God.

God. This is significant to Mark's gospel. And what is it that he's telling us? He's telling us that the pair of confessions from Peter and the centurion constitute the only saving response to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

No person merely hears the gospel and is all of a sudden okay with God. No, there is a required response of faith in who Jesus is and what he has done.

True conversion occurs when an individual by faith acknowledges Jesus' identity, trusts wholly in his atoning work, and devotes himself to the lordship of Christ.

Now, it's clear the centurion probably didn't understand all of those things but there's one thing he understood in that moment in this confession at least, that Jesus is the Son of God. And Mark intends for us to see that here.

[ 40 : 11 ] And there's also something to be said here about the contrast between the centurion and the Jews in verse 35. The Jews were the privileged ones.

They had the scriptures. They had the prophets. They had the promises. They were the ones who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' power, to his miracles.

They heard his teaching. They heard the authority with which he taught. If anyone should have recognized what was happening and wholeheartedly believed, it was the Jews.

But it wasn't the Jews that made the confession. It was the centurion who Mark displays as the one with the proper understanding and the necessary confession.

But how can this be? How can the centurion and the bystanders witness the same exact moment, but only the centurion respond in faith?

[ 41 : 12 ] Is it not the grace of God that intrudes upon the heart and heart of men and women and draws them to his son? Is he intruding upon your heart today?

Today? Is he calling you to make this response of faith today? Not to just see your sin in a theoretical sense, not to see Jesus as a historical figure that we can learn a lot about, but to see him as the only savior who has made a complete atonement for sin and by response you will cast your faith wholly on him, following him as a faithful disciple.

Is God doing that work on your heart? Do you sense his call? Do you feel his draw to believe? The only saving response is the one that confesses Christ and trusts wholly in him.

Response of faith, finally, we see the provision of witnesses. Verse 40, there were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger, and of Joseph and Salome.

When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem. So here Mark, in conclusion, introduces us to a group of women present at Jesus' crucifixion, and then he's going to mention them again, present at Jesus' burial, and then once again at Jesus' resurrection.

[ 42 : 53 ] Mary Magdalene, literally Mary from Magdala, was healed by Jesus according to Luke chapter eight, after being possessed by seven demons.

The second Mary was the mother of two individuals who apparently were known well among the early church, James the younger, and Joseph. Salome, we're told, in chapter 16, was the mother of the sons of Zebedee, the sons of thunder, James and John.

they're from Galilee, they were followers of Jesus, they ministered to him and to his disciples in their travels, and the question is, why does Mark care to mention them here?

Sinclair Ferguson gives this a succinct answer to this, because they were eyewitnesses of the central facts of the Christian gospel, which were to be enshrined in the great creeds and hymns of the Christian church, as well as in the rest of the New Testament.

Why does Mark mention them? Because by God's grace, he provided witnesses of all of these things. We know these crucial truths because these faithful women were willing to share them with someone else.

[ 44 : 08 ] They were willing to tell others. God used them in history at the very first evangelist regarding the crucifixion and resurrection. They probably hadn't pieced it all together, they hadn't connected all the dots, but they were at least willing to be there, something that the disciples were not willing to be.

And they witnessed these things, they heard these words, they saw where he was, they witnessed the empty tomb, and they go and they tell others, simple thing to do. There was nothing flashy about them, there was nothing charismatic as far as we can tell about their personalities. these. As far as the scriptures are concerned, there's no listing of a particular gift that they had that made them particularly suited for this task. They were ordinary women who loved Jesus and were at some point willing to share with others what they had seen and heard. And loved ones, this is the pattern we're called to follow. Those who know the truth and have been saved by the gospel of God's grace must lovingly and willingly share what we have seen and heard with others.

Tell someone you don't need a particular gifting, you don't need a particular charisma to be a faithful witness, you need only be a willing vessel.

[ 45 : 40 ] through which God might use to draw sinners to himself. Some of you are parents, your job is to be these women to your kids, to tell these truths of the gospel to your children.

Most of you are neighbors. Your mission, tell these truths to your neighbors. most of you have coworkers.

Your mission, not just to be a good employee. What a waste that would be to merely have an existence where you're just a good employee. How might God use you to just tell what you've seen and what you've heard?

God, Paul tells us in Romans chapter 10 that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved and then he immediately follows that up. But how then will they call on him whom they have not believed?

And how will they believe in whom they have never heard? And how shall they hear? Unless someone preaches to them the gospel.

[ 46 : 54 ] gospel. For faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the word of God and we are the ones who have the word of God. Which is why we gather on a Saturday morning every now and then to take 1200 Bibles and just put them on the doorstep of people's houses.

It's the easiest possible thing that we can do. And some people love it. I've already gotten two emails about it from yesterday. One was really positive and one was really negative. We always get the negative ones.

That's okay. But over the course of the last year and a half we've handed out 4,000 Bibles in these neighborhoods and less than 10 people have actually sent an email to comment on it whether good or bad. Some people might have thrown it into a drawer.

Some people might have put it on a shelf. Some people might have given it to Goodwill as we've seen. That's fine. Some people have stuck it in their community book sharing things. That's fine too. Some people have thrown them in the trash no doubt as well and they've been kind enough to send us the pictures when they do.

All of those things are true. But there's a lot of people who have a Bible sitting in their house right now because one of you took it and put it on their doorstep. You say, what does that even matter? I didn't even talk to them.

[ 48 : 03 ] But you did something and maybe at some point, maybe it's this week or maybe it's this year or maybe it's five years from now, maybe it's ten years from now and they're at a point in their life where they're desperate for answers and God is doing a work in their heart and they walk over and they pick up that Bible and they open it up where the bookmark is which is John chapter one and the first thing that they see is the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory.

The glory is of the only son of the begotten. And perhaps God uses his word in that person. It's like, you see, you don't have to have a particular charisma. You don't have to be gifted in a particular way.

You just have to be willing. You just have to be willing to have somebody over to your house and in the process of that talk about everything you want to talk about and talk about the sports and talk about the goals and talk about work and the weather and all the things if you want to talk about it. At some point, just tell them, I just can't let this time go by without at least telling you that I'm a Christian and I love Jesus and I care about your soul. I care about your soul.

And you can't do anything to save that person, but you can tell them what you've seen and what you've heard and you can pray in the process of that, that God will intrude upon their hearts in the way that it seems like he might have intruded on the heart of that centurion to which they would call

out in faith.

[ 49 : 22 ] You say, you get all that from these women? Yeah. That's all they had to do. They didn't even understand it all. They didn't even understand it all. People surely would have asked them questions. Well, now what did he mean by that?

I don't know. It's just what he said. Eventually, they would figure it out and I'm sure they told more people. And here we are today, 2,000 years later, we're reading their eyewitness account so that we can know the truth of the gospel and we can believe and we can teach our kids and we can share it with others.

That's by God's grace. He has provided those witnesses. He has provided us as witnesses. The death of Christ is no ordinary death.

The wrath of God's judgment was poured out on him as he bore our sins on the cross. His death was a sacrifice sufficient to save all who will believe for all of eternity.

But his death demands a response, a response of faith, trusting in his finished work, following him in faithful discipleship.

[ 50 : 32 ] And part of that faithful discipleship is sharing this glorious gospel with someone else. will you receive that gift today?

Is he intruding upon your heart? Will you give the response of faith that shows that work that he's done in you? And if you have, will you share it with someone else?

Will you tell someone else? Will you tell someone else?