

# Despised and Rejected

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 07 August 2022

Preacher: Jared Blankenship

[ 0 : 00 ] At the heart of Christianity is the conviction that the focal point of all human history is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Of course, we understand that. That's why we gather today. That's why we gather Sunday by Sunday. It is to reflect particularly and foremost on what Christ has done for us through the cross and the resurrection.

But the significance of this particular belief, this conviction, is not merely on the historical reality of crucifixion, but it's on the atoning work that was accomplished by Jesus through the crucifixion.

In other words, the cross is not important to us because it is the dramatic climax of Jesus' life. It's important because through it alone, we can actually receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Do you see that? I'm not sure that the world around us understands that part of it. People in our communities and people in our world and in our life are almost always going to be familiar on some level with Christianity.

[ 1 : 15 ] And when they think of Christianity, at some point, they're probably very early on in those thoughts, going to be brought to the cross. But for the most part, they see it only as a historical reality.

The fact that there's this man that we follow, this moral man, we have patterned our lives after him. And this is the dramatic conclusion to his life and that it is tragic.

And there is things that we learn through what he displayed, even in his moments of suffering. And they think that really that that's why we care so much about this. But that's not why we care so much about this.

It's not just about the reality of his suffering. It's about what is purposed in his suffering. It's the fact that in the cross, in his crucifixion, and in his crucifixion alone, we actually have eternal life.

We have forgiveness of sin. And we have been reconciled to God. So this crucifixion is what it's called.

[ 2 : 18 ] This conviction that the cross is really the focal point of all of history. It's not a theological concept developed by Christians over time. It's not like the first two or three hundred years after Christ's life, the people who were following him looked back and in examining his life and maybe through their forms of philosophy determined that this was important.

This was not a concept that was contrived by man. The concept of the cross as the focal point of human history is actually revealed as a reflection in the scriptures themselves.

beginning at Genesis all the way to Revelation, the Bible is a book about salvation, a salvation that is promised by God and is fulfilled in his son, Jesus Christ.

So even as we look all the way back to the very beginning of mankind, and then we look ahead to what will be the conclusion of mankind in the second coming of Christ, everything we read in the Bible finds its focus here in this part of the Gospels and the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. That's the nature of Mark's gospel even. Everything we've studied over the last two years in this gospel has been pushing us forward to the cross.

[ 3 : 44 ] As early as chapter 2 even, Jesus had detailed or revealed the fact of his murderous death that he would be taken from the disciples and from his followers.

But then on at least three occasions, he's explicitly described it to his disciples and those who followed him. Everything in Mark is pushing forward, not just to show us the incredible things that Jesus did, though those things are very important, but it's to eventually get us to this moment on the cross.

Of course, you'll remember in Mark chapter 10, Jesus plainly said all the things that we just read would take place. Mark 10 verse 33. See, we are going up to Jerusalem, he told his disciples.

The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priest and the scribes. We read about that with Judas. Judas delivers him to the chief priest and scribes. They will condemn him to death. We saw that in the kangaroo court in the midnight trial. And they will deliver him over to the Gentiles. We studied that last week. They parade him to Pontius Pilate, where he stands trial there. [ 4 : 58 ] And what does he say to his disciples will happen after he has stood before the Gentiles or Pontius Pilate, as we look back? And they will mock him and they will spit on him.

They will flog him and they will kill him. And after three days, he will rise. Jesus has already told his disciples, this is going to happen.

And we get here to the verses we just read and we see it indeed happened exactly as Jesus said it would. The crucifixion was no accident. Jesus had not lost control.

He is in this predicament. He is in this circumstance and in this position, particularly and specifically because he is in control in this moment. That's why he's there.

So Christians view the crucifixion as the focus of human history because Jesus taught it as such. And the scriptures affirm it as such.

[ 5 : 59 ] But there are some inherent dangers to this, aren't there? There are some inherent dangers to us having a complete focus on the cross in our faith.

On the one hand, we can become so distracted by the savagery of such an execution that we are guilty of a shallow sentimentalism.

You know what I mean? You scroll through Facebook and perhaps as I saw the other day, someone posts a portrait rendering, a painted rendering of what Jesus' deformed body must have looked like as he endured the process of crucifixion, particularly the scourging and the flogging that he went through.

And we see that. And we should see that. But we see it and we gaze on it, we gaze on it, we gaze on it. We never actually move beyond that to the purpose of it. We get so distracted by the fact of his suffering that we develop this shallow sentimentalism that is only attracted to Christ because of what he endured, not necessarily what he endured for us.

Are you with me on that? So there's one end of this, one extreme of it, we would say, where constantly looking at the cross actually might prevent us from actually going all the way to see the purpose of the cross because we never actually get past the grotesque picture that we see there.

[ 7 : 30 ] That's one side. On the other side of that, we can become so desensitized to the sufferings of Christ that we're no longer moved by the extent to which he was willing to go to save us.

That's a problem too. To where we can come in even our daily Bible studies or maybe perhaps in, even in our reading in our time of worship this morning, as we come to the Lord's tables month by month and we reflect on these things.

We can reflect on it so often that we become desensitized to it, to where we're no longer moved by the reality of what he has done for us. Both are problems. Not a problem with reflection, problem with our hearts, problem with the way that we approach the scriptures.

Kent Hughes pointed out these two extremes. He said, as Christians, we must still ourselves against such desensitization. Christ's passion was real.

Granted, we should not be overcome by a morbid preoccupation with the gore of the cross or by shallow sentimentalism. At the same time, Christ's agony must never become a matter of dispassionate interest.

[ 8 : 49 ] It is the fact of Jesus's suffering that makes salvation possible. It wouldn't have been enough for Jesus to have been strangled to death.

That wouldn't have done it. Hebrews says, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. An honorable death wouldn't have worked either.

For a substitution to occur, which was necessary in the death and in the suffering of Christ. For a substitution to occur, he had to have been treated as if he was truly guilty.

He himself says to his disciples in Luke 24, following his resurrection, was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And he went back to Moses and the prophets and he interpreted to them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself, the things concerning his suffering. The fact that this was not an honorable death, this was a criminal's death.

[ 10 : 00 ] Furthermore, it wouldn't have been sufficient for his death to take place in the privacy of a prison cell or an execution chamber. Jesus had to face the full gamut of public scorn and

humiliation to be our savior.

As we read in Isaiah 53 in verse 3, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. Keith and Kristen Getty wrote a Christmas song years ago called Fullness of Grace that touches on this dynamic.

Fullness of grace, the love of the Father, shown in the face of Jesus, stooping to bear the weight of humanity, walking the Calvary road.

Christ, the holy innocent, took our sin and punishment. Fullness of God, despised and rejected, crushed for the sins of the world.

[11:18] That's what we see in this text. Not only today, but the text that we'll see next Sunday as well. And I want us to take the next two Sundays to gaze fully at the cross of our Lord.

not to fall into a morbid preoccupation or a shallow sentimentalism, but to duly consider the suffering and humiliation that Jesus willingly endured to provide salvation for us.

salvation for sinners. So what did he endure? This text, I think, reveals three things he endured for us. Number one, he endured mockery.

Mockery. Look at verse 16. The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is the governor's headquarters. And they called together the whole battalion.

So traveling to Jerusalem with Pontius Pilate, as we saw last week, is a battalion of soldiers assigned underneath his control. This would have been equal to about 600 men, a tenth of a Roman legion.

[12:31] They were stationed in Caesarea, but had traveled to Jerusalem due to the Passover celebration. There were so many people in Israel descending upon Jerusalem at this time.

We've talked about that a number of times. There were so many people in Jerusalem that the battalion station in Caesarea would go to Jerusalem during these times in order to make sure no riots unfold, as from time to time they actually took place.

These anti-Roman crowds, anti-Roman riots that would inevitably unfold, they go there to make sure that they can control the people who are there.

So there's 600 men there. They've traveled from Caesarea along with Pontius Pilate. There's a fortress in Jerusalem that we read about in history, had barracks there that the soldiers would have stayed in.

Pilate wouldn't have stayed in the fortress. Pilate would have stayed in Herod's palace that was also located in Jerusalem. It was also from this palace where Pilate would have overseen the morning trials, pronounced his judgment against Jesus.

[13:43] That's why we see it reflected in verse 16, that the soldiers led him away inside the palace that is also at that moment functioning as the governor's headquarters.

So the Jews wouldn't have risked, especially with it being the Passover, they wouldn't have risked going inside the palace of King Herod to appear before Pontius Pilate.

That would have made them ceremonially unclean, which would have removed them from any participation in the feast of Passover and the unleavened bread that immediately followed.

So that morning as they come to Pilate, the Jews remain outside. Pilate would go out to the front.

Perhaps there was a stairwell there. Perhaps there was something there where many people could gather.

Pilate would address the Jews. They would do their business. And then Pilate would move inside the headquarters to carry out the specific trials. So when we see the Sanhedrin crying out to Pilate, we see that would have taken place outside.

[14:42] And then when we see that Pilate is interacting with Jesus, that would have actually occurred inside the palace. And at some point in the trial, we're told, Pilate handed Jesus over to the soldiers who were present there to scourge him.

We see that in verse 15 right at the very end. Mark's not writing chronologically here, but that's where we see the scourging in particular. So Pilate wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

Scourging or flogging was an intense form of discipline. It almost always preceded crucifixion, but it doesn't seem like it was in regards to crucifixion that Jesus was scourged here, especially when we look to John's gospel.

It was really being used, at least at this point, as a punishment in and of itself. A criminal would be tied to a post. They would be tortured with their bareback exposed.

A flagellum is what was used. It was a whip that had multiple thongs on it. On the end of each thong would be a broken piece of glass or bone or a ball bearing or some type of metal, and it was designed specifically to rip into the flesh of those who were suffering underneath the torture of it.

[16:10] Some of these beatings were so severe, we read historically, that some criminals died before it was ever over. Pilate has delivered Jesus over to this battalion of soldiers to endure this particular scourging, not to the point of death, but to the point of perhaps releasing him back to the crowd.

And it's after Jesus endured this vile torture device that the scene with the soldiers begins to unfold. Look with me at verse 17. They clothed him in a purple cloak, twisting together a crown of thorns. They put it on him, and they began to salute him. Hail, King of the Jews! They were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him.

Do you see what they're doing? You see the mockery that is beginning to unfold. Between the scourging and the earlier beating from the Sanhedrin, remember, Jesus has already been through quite a bit of suffering, physical suffering, up to this point, before the soldiers are ever beginning to mock him in this way.

He would have stood before these men, swollen, bruised, bloodied, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.

[17:41] In Isaiah 52, his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance, his form beyond that of the children of mankind, Isaiah wrote. The soldiers were aware of the charges against Jesus, which the charges brought to Jesus before Pilate were not charges of blasphemy.

Remember, the charges brought before Pilate were charges of insurrection. He says he's the king of the Jews, and he's amassing an army to take over Rome. That's what they view. And now standing before them is this frail man, beaten and swollen and bruised and bloodied.

And what does that result in in the minds of these soldiers? How could they possibly take him serious? The idea of a true king in Jesus's position, the way that they saw him, was preposterous. So they made a game out of his suffering. First, they found some purple material or scarlet material, perhaps something they found lying around Herod's palace, and they draped it over Jesus as if it was a royal robe.

Then someone comes in with a fake crown fashioned out of thorns, and they force it on his head. Someone else takes a reed or a stick, and they put it in his hand as if it's a royal scepter.

[19:09] Jesus, of course, at this point would have been too weary to stand on his two feet and endure the treatment that he's experiencing. Surely they would have also provided a stool or a chair, a makeshift throne from which they could cast their mockings.

And after the whole battalion had gathered to see the charade that's unfolding in the palace, some wise guy yells out, hell, king of the Jews! And you can imagine a wave of laughter following and billowing through the hall as they continue to mock the Lord, one by one, taking their turn, spitting in his face, beating him in the head with the reed that they had earlier put in his hand, kneeling before him to get a good laugh.

And when the laughter had grown old, they stopped and they delivered him outside. The God of all creation, who created these men, who gave them life, sat silently before them, enduring the fury of their scorn.

Verse 20, when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, put his own clothes on him, and they led him out to crucify him.

Now if we follow John's chronology, if you want to write maybe in the margins of your notes, John 19, you can piece all of this together. Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews one last time before they removed the robe and the crown.

[20:55] So they escort him out before the Sanhedrin and the crowd that had gathered there, not for Jesus, but for Barabbas, and he presents their king to the people, arrayed in the fake robe and in the fake crown, beaten now even more severely after a scourging.

And Pilate says in John 19, look at the man. Not so much, I think in a sense of mockery from his own mouth, I think in resistance to what the crowd was actually calling for, which was the crucifixion of Jesus.

He's essentially presenting Jesus before them and essentially saying, what more do you want us to do with him? Look at what we have done to him already. It's not that he felt bad for doing what he

did.

He's presenting to them, what more must we do to satisfy you? And it's from that point that they look on this fake form of royalty and they say, crucify him.

And they follow crucify him with, we have no king but Caesar. So that's what they did.

[ 22 : 09 ] The soldiers removed the robe, they replace it with Jesus' tunic and they let him out of the palace to be crucified. What did he endure for us?

He endured mockery. Number two, he endured brutality. Brutality. And when describing the crucifixion here, Mark broke from the narrative style and he really fires off a series of bullet points is what he does.

You can notice if the style of Bible that you have is a verse by verse edition, that is that the beginning of every verse is aligned on the left side of the page, you may have one like that.

You'll see this very clearly. If not, you can write it out on a piece of notebook paper with each verse beginning a new line. And what you'll see is every one of these verses begins with the word and.

Do you see it there? Look first with me. It really begins at verse 16, but let's look first at verse 21.

And they compelled a passerby, 22. And they brought him, 23.

[ 23 : 14 ] And they offered him wine, 24. And they crucified him, 25. And it was the third hour, 26.

And the inscription of the charge, 27. And with him, they crucified two robbers, 29.

And those who passed by derided him. Do you see what Mark's doing? He's pushing the story forward. And this is consistent with Mark's style. But what he's doing is breaking from this narrative element, and he's firing off these bullet points.

Now, why would he do that? Part of it, I really actually think, is just he's moving the story along because that's what Mark does. His book is one of action. He's constantly moving things forward.

The other thing is we're reminded here that Mark's immediate audience for this gospel were Romans. They didn't need a description of crucifixion.

They were well aware of that. And it was actually so disdainful of a death and such disdainful of a form of execution that not even the Romans in general wanted to talk about things related to crucifixion.

[ 24 : 13 ] So Mark kind of passes over the details of it. I think it's also true that Mark wasn't interested in us fixating on the gory details of crucifixion, a la Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ.

We need to acknowledge the reality of Jesus's suffering. We need to look into those things, and we will. But we need to be careful not to get stuck dwelling on his anguish without ever genuinely moving forward to consider its purpose, which was to satisfy God's wrath against our sins, to make an atonement for us.

We got to move forward to that. And the gospel authors, I think all four of them, none of them really get distracted by the gory details of it. And so let's work through the bullet points.

We'll note those things, but we'll do it as quickly as we can. Verse 21, And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

Just as a side note, Rufus, we know was, according to Romans, was one of the Christians and perhaps even leaders of the church in Rome. Perhaps the reason, Mark's the only one that mentions Alexander and Rufus.

[ 25 : 33 ] All the gospel authors mention Simon. Perhaps the reason he's mentioning Alexander and Rufus is because if they wanted to check the validity of what he's writing, they have eyewitness testimony right there in their own church that could confirm or deny the things that are being written here.

And they brought him to the place called Golgotha, which means place of skull. So the place of Jesus's execution was Golgotha. In Latin, that is Calvary, named for its shape like a human skull. The path between the palace and Golgotha would have been very long and very crowded. That was intentional. The Romans intentionally paraded their crucifixion victims through the streets in order that they could strike fear into the hearts of all who witnessed the procession.

This wasn't just about the shame for the criminal. This was about a warning to everyone else. If you do what he does or what she has done, this will be your result as well.

This will be your destiny. And so they would have paraded him through the streets, long and crowded. James Edwards said, every totalitarian regime needs a terror apparatus.

[ 26 : 50 ] And crucifixion was Rome's terror apparatus ad horrendum, infamous alike for its infliction of pain and disgrace on the victim.

Quote, whenever we crucify the guilty, the most crowded roads are chosen where the most people can see and be moved by this fear, which was a statement of approval by a noted Roman orator from the first century.

Well, Golgotha was located just outside the city gates. It was itself on a busy thoroughfare. It was equipped with vertical posts fixed into the ground.

So when we picture Jesus carrying a cross, it is not the full cross that he's carrying. The vertical posts are already fixed into the ground outside of the city. They were used multiple times for multiple crucifixions.

The portion of the cross that criminals were to carry was the cross beam, known as the patibulum in Latin. Jesus was too weak to carry even this piece.

[ 27 : 56 ] So the execution squad forced a passing spectator named Simon to carry it for him. It's quite a fitting picture of discipleship, isn't it?

We don't know the nature of Simon's faith at that particular moment. Perhaps he became a believer later. We don't really know anything else about him. What we do know is that as he picks up that cross and begins to follow Jesus on the path of suffering, Jesus's earlier words from Mark chapter eight really come alive in a unique way.

That if anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, pick up his cross and follow me. Soldiers nailed Jesus's hands to the cross beam carried by Simon.

Then they would have together lifted the beam, Jesus's body suspended in the air, and fastened it to one of the vertical posts. Final step was to nail his feet, probably one on top of the other.

Then the soldiers took a seat nearby to wait and to watch. Crucifixion was notoriously painful.

[ 29 : 11 ] It's undoubtedly one of the most torturous forms of execution the world has ever known. Most victims ultimately died of either exhaustion or asphyxiation.

As they were hanging on a cross, their bodies slumped over, it was difficult for them to breathe. And the only way for them to grab a breath would be to force themselves up in order to gasp for a breath.

So you can imagine for the hours that Jesus is on the cross, time after time, to breathe or to make one of the statements that he said to have made would have required some type of physical effort just to get a breath in order to say the things that he said.

And eventually, the people being crucified just became so exhausted that they could no longer push themselves up and they would have suffocated to death. We even have an English word that reflects the brutality of crucifixion.

Excruciating is the word. Literally means out of crucifixion. So even when we describe an excruciating experience that maybe we have gone through, we're speaking of the realities of the devastating, torturous moments that Christ went through in physical suffering to provide salvation.

[ 30 : 30 ] It was a disgusting form of death. So disgusting that it was illegal to crucify a Roman. Crucifixion was reserved for the people that the world considered to be the most despicable and deserving of shame.

And again, that's the death Jesus suffers for us. And it's necessary that that's the death Jesus suffers for us.

verse 23. They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. Historians say it was customary for the Jewish women to prepare wine mixed with myrrh.

It functioned really as a narcotic, as a reflection on a proverb of Solomon that talks about giving wine to those who are suffering. They would have had this prepared for victims of crucifixion.

It was a show of compassion. And Jesus was offered this mixture to numb the pain in his final moments of death, but he refused it. He refused to accept anything that would mitigate his suffering.

[ 31 : 44 ] But why? He didn't rely on a narcotic in his final act of obedience. He willingly embraced the Father's plan in a fully conscious state necessary for Jesus not only to go through what he went through, but to feel every part of the pain, to feel every part of the separation from God as we'll get into in the next passage next Sunday.

Necessary for him to endure it in that way. Again, Keith Getty and Stuart Town and help us here. What took him to this wretched place?

What kept him on this road? His love for Adam's cursed race, for every broken soul. No sin too light to overlook.

No crime too great to carry. All mingled in this poison cup, and yet he drank it all. The Savior drank it all.

Every part of the pain, every part of the torment, every part of God's wrath poured out on him in this cup, and no drop of the cup was left.

[ 33 : 05 ] He drank it all. That means that in every sin that you've ever committed, there's never been a sin so badly that Jesus refused to suffer for it.

And there's no sin too small that didn't require the same effect as Jesus displayed on the cross. Verse 24, and they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them to decide what each should take.

each crucifixion is carried out by an execution squad, has four soldiers and one centurion. The squad is so callous to what they're doing at this point that they pass the hours as they wait for these men to die by casting lots to distribute the prisoners' belongings.

William Lane helps us here. Roman legal texts confirm that it was the accepted right of the executioner squad to claim the minor possessions of an executed man.

In the case of Jesus, this was limited to his clothing which probably consisted of an under and outer garment, a belt, sandals, and possibly a head covering.

[ 34 : 26 ] And the significance of this note is that it's a fulfillment of a portion of Psalm 22 that we read earlier in the service. John 19 24 specifically refers to it as a fulfillment of Psalm 22.

We read it a moment ago. Verse 17, I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots.

Reminder that no portion of scripture left unfulfilled by Jesus. Verse 25, it was the third hour when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, the king of the Jews, and with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.

So Mark provides three final bullet points about the process of crucifixion. We're not going to dig into the details of these. We'll just take a moment to mention them. The first one is that they began the process at the third hour, which is about nine in the morning.

We'll find out next week that Jesus dies at about the ninth hour, which is three in the afternoon. So perhaps about six hours from beginning to end is how we see this unfolding.

[ 35 : 37 ] The second bullet point Mark gives is that those being crucified had a sign on the cross describing their charges. Jesus' sign simply said, King of the Jews.

Fitting. Third note, we're told that Jesus wasn't the only one crucified that day. Two others, probably insurrectionists along with Barabbas, were also executed, one on Jesus' right hand, one on Jesus' left.

Now as we read through the gospel accounts, we know that there was only one disciple that was present at the cross. It was John. Do you remember earlier in Mark's gospel, as they're on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, John and James had a question for Jesus?

Do you remember the question? Lord, would you let us sit in your kingdom, one on your right hand and one on your left? They wanted seats of power. They wanted authority.

They wanted honor. They wanted position and they thought they deserved it for what they had done in following Christ in those moments. And do you remember Jesus' response? Can you drink the cup that I'm prepared to drink?

[ 36 : 48 ] And they didn't understand what they were saying, but they said, yeah, we'll do whatever you want us to do. And in that moment, you can imagine for probably the reality of what Jesus was saying, truly settling in on John's mind.

As to be on Jesus' right hand and Jesus' left hand in his ultimate moment of glory is to suffer with him. It is to walk the true path of discipleship, the true path of denial and self-abandonment in order to follow Christ and to follow Christ alone.

So we see Jesus endures for us, mockery, he endures brutality and finally he endures blasphemy. Blasphemy. Look at verse 29.

Those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, aha, you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, come down from the cross.

So also the chief priest 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.

[ 38 : 07 ] Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. It's another fulfillment of Psalm 22, isn't it? We just read it in verse 7.

All who seek me, see me, mock me. They make mouths at me, they wag their heads and they say, he trusts in the Lord, let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him.

Mocking tones. Mark's focus is on the shame and rejection of Jesus here. And every group in this text despised him.

The people passing by, the chief priest and the scribes, even the two criminals, even the two criminals who are dying, show no humility at all.

Right here. They show no humility at all. All of them revile him. All of them blaspheme him.

[ 39 : 11 ] And again, we're reminded of Isaiah 53. He was despised and rejected by men. So they taunted Jesus as he suffered on the cross.

If you're really the Messiah and Son of God, save yourself. But they had it all wrong. Jesus didn't need a Savior.

Do you see that? A thought of saving himself, a thought of coming off the cross was never, ever a part of Jesus' mind.

He didn't need a Savior. He was there for that very purpose. As he said on another occasion, he could have called 10,000 angels to come and deliver him if he wanted to, but he didn't do that.

Why? Mark's purpose is not just to reveal him as the one who suffers, but as the one who saves.

He's there on purpose. He's not the one needing a Savior.

[ 40 : 13 ] He just needed a cross so that he could be the Savior. The soldiers in Herod's palace mocked Jesus out of ignorance. The Jews outright rejected him in unbelief.

The Sanhedrin's charge against him was blasphemy, but in reality, they were the blasphemous ones. The Roman soldiers, they hadn't been around to witness the miracles of Jesus.

They hadn't sat underneath the authoritative teaching of Jesus, but the Jews were given every possible proof of Jesus' identity, and yet they rejected him still.

Says Edwards, the thought that God's Messiah could suffer a cross of shame was so scandalous that some 25 years later, Paul confessed that the preaching of a crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles.

He's quoting there 1 Corinthians 1.22, for Jews demand signs, Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, which is a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, it is Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[ 41 : 36 ] in unbelief, they refused to receive Jesus for who he truly was, and they committed the greatest act of blasphemy in history.

And here's the point of that. Every single one of us sitting in this room today have been so privileged. We have not sat on a hillside to see Jesus healed, but we have read it in the scriptures. scriptures. We know the truth of it. We've seen it in the pages of God's word. We haven't sat in a room and listened to Jesus himself out of his own mouth speak the words that he taught to those people, but we have read what he taught.

We have read what he saw. We have read all the things related to his life that are necessary for us to know. We are just as guilty as the Jews if we walk away from the word of God in unbelief.

It won't be out of ignorance. it will be in unbelief. So what did Jesus endure for us? Well, he endured mockery, brutality, blasphemy, but the impact of Jesus' crucifixion is not found in the suffering itself, but in the reality that God's son submitted himself to such suffering to bring us salvation.

[ 43 : 07 ] Can I remind you of Philippians chapter 2? I know we quote this often. Paul says, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

You see, the scandal of this is not the crucifixion itself, it's not the suffering itself. Lots of people were crucified in history. Lots of people have suffered physically in the same way that Jesus suffered.

It's not just about the physical torment that he went through, it's the fact of who he was. God's son, co-equal with the father and the spirit who willingly steps away from the glory that is in heaven, and he comes and he takes on flesh, and he is crucified and mocked and brutally beaten and

blasphemed against, for the very people that he came to save.

That's the scandal of it. And if it's true that Jesus is the son of God who willingly subjected himself to such suffering, then we must consider the why of all of it.

Why would he do that? What does it have to do with us? And the simple answer to that question is love. Love.

[ 44 : 40 ] He did it willingly out of his measureless love for us. And so I want to conclude with John 3.

Would you flip there in your Bible? I don't know if I put this on the screen, so just look at it in the pages of your Bible. That way you know I'm not saying something that's not true.

John chapter 3. Look at verse 14.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Now do you remember the story that Jesus was referring to there? You'll find in the Old Testament, you can read it on your own, but you'll find in the Old Testament there was a time where God sent a judgment on the people of Israel because of their unbelief, their hard-heartedness.

[ 45 : 52 ] It was God's judgment. He devised it, he sent it. But along with the judgment, God sent an element of mercy. The judgment were fiery serpents.

They would bite the people and the people would die. So God had Moses make a serpent out of bronze and wrap it around a post and would display it among the camp of Israel. So if anyone were bitten by the fiery serpents, they could look up and looking up as an act of faith in God's promise that he would heal them if they would look up to what he had provided.

As they looked up, they would become healed. And Jesus looks back on that and he says to Nicodemus in John 3, just as Moses lifted up that serpent, so must I be lifted up because every one of us have been bitten by the fiery serpent of sin.

God sends the judgment. The judgment is devised by him and it is sent by him. It is the judgment of death, eternal death. But then he also sends an act of mercy and grace in the person of his son and lifted up on the cross quite literally, lifted up on the cross.

Jesus says, all who look to my cross and believe will be saved. And then he continues on in verse 16. This is the explanation of it.

[ 47 : 10 ] Why would the son of man have to go through this? Why would God do this? For God so loved the world. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. And whoever believes in him is not condemned.

But whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God. Do you see?

The crucifixion of Jesus was not a historical coincidence that Christians through history have twisted to look back on and fashioned it into some type of religious scam to help us cope in life.

If the cross is supposed to help us cope, it's not much of a coping mechanism. The cross was always God's plan. That's the point.

[ 48 : 16 ] It was always God's plan. It was always his purpose to forgive sins and reconcile sinners. The cross was his initiative. And in his indescribable love, he invites us to receive eternal salvation through the sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ.

Just as he told the Israelites, if you get bit, look to what I've provided in faith. So he tells sinners now. If you are bit with sin, and you are all bit with sin, it's in your very nature, you need only look to the cross.

You need only look to what I have provided in my son, and believe in him, believe on his work, believe on his sacrifice, and you will receive life.

What love my God could hold you to the tree, to bear that overwhelming debt for me, the son of heaven leaves the father's side, the healer bleeds, the life was made to die.

Why? For love. We sang it at Christmas, thou who art God beyond all praising, all for love's sake became his man, stooping so low, but sinners raising heavenward by thine eternal plan, thou who art God beyond all praising, all for love's sake became his man.

[ 49 : 56 ] He provides his son, and he says, believe my son, and all who will believe his son will receive eternal life. That's the significance of the cross.

God will have son to him. He will his!