

The Steps to the Cross

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[0 : 00] So as we see here, as he's there, and the Lamb without spot, without blemish was to be chosen. But on Palm Sunday, we see that the very Lamb of God entered the city of Jerusalem.

The one that is the Passover Lamb. John the Baptist made this statement, the Lamb of God, the one that takes away the sin of the world.

I mean, he made that declaration at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. And a few days before where we're looking here, we know that Jesus entered into the city of Jerusalem with a triumphal entry and all that was there.

And it was for what lay ahead, it was Jesus' purpose for that he came into the world. You know, when he entered Jerusalem, he was there because he had his face set to go.

Because he knew what was going to take place. You know, the one thing we always have to keep in mind is the crucifixion did not catch Jesus off guard. And Jesus knew.

[1 : 08] But if you found Mark chapter 15, let's look here this morning. We'll read a couple of verses here. Then we'll get into our text for the sake of time here this morning. But you want to stand together for the honor of reading of the Word of God.

And we'll look down at verses, let's read two verses this morning, verses 15 and 16. And then we'll cover some others as we go through the text here this morning. And it says, Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we come before you this morning, Lord, as we look at this text, the reality of what you've done for us and how you were brought to that point.

Lord, the events leading up to it. Lord, nothing that surprised you along the way. But Lord, you had a purpose. You had a direction and an intention when you went to the cross that day.

You knew even the day you entered Jerusalem for that time, you knew what was going to take place from that point forward. Lord, we pray just to have your hand upon each heart, each life here today, that we might not take that for granted.

[2 : 30] We might not take it lightly. The reality of what you've done for us, that we might be redeemed. Lord, that we might become a child of God.

And Lord, we ask it all in your precious name. Amen. May we be seated. You know, as we see here, as Jesus had entered in, and we know that he entered in Sunday, went back, and he came back on Monday, and we find that he cleansed the temple and all the things that were there.

You know, he was purifying, getting the leaven out. You know, you see all the pictures of the Passover in this week. You see all those elements laying out as Jesus is then questioned.

He's examined. You know, is he who he says he is? We know that he met many times every day in the temple, and he was conversing with them.

But I want you to understand that Jesus knew exactly what was going to take place. You know, Mark chapter 10, on their way to Jerusalem this time, they went every time in Jesus' ministry.

[3 : 36] Jesus didn't miss going to Jerusalem for the festivals. As a matter of fact, the Bible says it was his custom. It's something he always did. It was something that he never missed. And we find here, just again, he heads that same direction, but this time is different.

And with his disciples, he says, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be what? Delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes. And they shall do what? Condemn him to death.

And shall deliver him to the Gentiles. And they shall mock him. And they shall scourge him. And they shall spit on him. And they shall kill him. And the third day he shall rise again.

I want you to see here, Jesus told his disciples exactly what was going to take place. There was nothing that Jesus didn't already know was going to take place, as we're going to look here this morning.

As the horrible things that men did to him was nothing that caught him off guard. He knew exactly when he entered that day, what was going to take place.

[4 : 35] He knew what was needed. He knew what was required. But you know, the good part is, he knew what the outcome was going to be. He knew why he was there. He knew what he was going to do for others.

Because it was nothing was a surprise. He knew those things. He knew. But you know, the most important thing is he chose to go. Have you ever noticed sometimes in life, if we know something, especially if something's bad, we kind of want to delay.

We want to hold off and say, well, maybe somebody will change their mind. I want you to understand, Jesus didn't hesitate to go.

The Bible tells us he set his face towards Jerusalem. That's a phrase that means he went with intention. In other words, even knowing what was going to happen, he went and said, I don't care. There's a purpose. There's a cause. There's a reason. Because there's people that I love that need a Savior. The Bible tells us that Jesus commended his love towards us, and while we're yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[5 : 44] When we see what takes place, and he knew what was going to happen there, and I want you to understand, it wasn't a death wish. Some people try to play it out like Jesus had a death wish, trying to do things.

Sometimes people try to become famous different ways. I want you to understand, that's not what happened. This is something that was set in place from the foundation of the world. It tells us in Ephesians chapter 1.

And we understand what's happening, and even throughout the Scripture, you'll find that God foretold what was going to happen. One of the passages of Scripture in the Old Testament this morning, that this time of year is a good time to read through, is Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53, that whole chapter talks about Jesus. It's a chapter in the Bible you'll find Jews stumble over. Because they understand it's talking about their Messiah, but it's not the Messiah they were looking for.

It's not the one that they wanted, but it's the one God foretold, and understood, wanted them to know. You know, in verse 5 of Isaiah 53, it says, I want you to understand, that's a powerful passage that describes exactly what Christ was doing.

[7 : 19] He understood the cost, and there was a great cost to go to the cross. As we're going to look here this morning, the brutality that Christ faced, it's hard to describe to understand what took place.

And when we see this, you know, Peter describes it this way in 1 Peter 3, it says, Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might do what? Bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

You know, Jesus went there because He wanted to bring you and I to God. He wants to bring your neighbor to God. He wants to bring people on the other side of the world to Him.

Everything He did was for the sake of people. That was His purpose. That was His intention. And here Jesus is, He's coming, He's about to finish what He had come to accomplish.

You know, I want you to understand that. Of all the brutality, all the things you could describe when it comes to the cross and the death of Jesus, that Jesus did it because He went, because He knew what was required to accomplish what was needed.

[8 : 28] He gave His life that it might be a sacrifice for our sin. So as we look here this morning, I want you to see here that as Jesus was there, He came to accomplish those things, and that was to take sin upon Himself, my sin and your sin.

And He knew that was going to take place on the way to the cross. But we're going to see this morning, Jesus has now taken those steps to the cross. Not just figuratively, but literally.

As we're going to see here this morning as they put that beam upon His shoulders to carry, to walk to the place that He was going to be crucified. You know, we see here that Pilate had attempted, we learned last week, that Pilate didn't want Jesus.

He didn't understand Jesus was innocent. You know, He declared that He found no fault in Him, which is the exact picture that we see as the Passover Lamb, the one without spot or blemish.

The one whose blood was good to cover the death and to cover the price of sin. Pilate attempted to release Jesus to no avail.

[9 : 36] All they did was cry more. If you remember, crucify Him, crucify Him. So Pilate here this morning we're going to see condemns an innocent man to die. That's an atrocity to itself when you consider here's one that knows somebody's innocent and says, I'm going to condemn you to death anyway.

We're going to see here He takes and condemns an innocent man. No valid charge against Him, but now Jesus is going to step towards the cross.

Notice here in verse 15, and so Pilate willing to content the people released Barabbas Son to them and delivered Jesus when He had scourged Him to be crucified. Here we see the Savior is condemned.

You know, I want you to see as Jesus was released into the custody of the soldiers who led Him away to the courtyard as the soldiers, the others, were called together because they were going to do something, they were going to play what we might think is a very cruel game.

This is something the soldiers often would do. The historians tell us that they would take a condemned prisoner and they would do atrocities and brutality.

[10 : 50] But we're going to see here they mock, they're going to mock Him, they're going to beat Him, we're going to see all that takes place. They went into the courtyard and the scourging would have commenced. That alone would have been a brutal beating, ripping flesh and bone from your body.

They complete the scourging and they take and they sit Him down and they put a robe upon Him. Here's some men that had no compassion for the one that stood before them.

Here's Jesus' back is bloody and bleeding and His face is barely recognizable from the beating that He had taken as His blood runs under the floor from the scourging that had taken place.

They confront the whole band that had gathered together so what do they do? They take off His clothes, put a purple robe upon Him which would have been a faded Roman garment.

They take a crown of thorns and place it upon His head. Now I want you to understand that the thorns they're talking about are not the thorns that you find on your common rose bush in America.

[11 : 55] Those are bad enough. The thorns they would have had would have been well over an inch long. It would have been woven into a crown that would have been placed on His head and it says they took a reed and started to smack Him on the head driving Him in.

Mocking Him. The soldiers could do what they desired. Their only limitation on the soldiers was Jesus had to be alive when they walked Him up the hill. They'd heard about the charge of Him being King so they wanted to mock Him about it.

Hail, King of the Jews! You'll notice what it tells them here in verse 18. It says, And He began to salute Him. Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him on the head with a reed and did spit on Him and bow their knees and worshipped Him.

And when they had mocked Him they took off the purple from Him and put on His own clothes on Him and led Him out to be crucified. I want you to see this picture this morning as Jesus is on His way to the cross.

You have a group of people who mock worshipping Jesus. You might say they understood the actions that were supposed to be. They were saying the things that you might say were the right things.

[13 : 07] Hail, Jesus, King! But you know, you can say the right thing and have the wrong heart and it becomes mocking. The mocking of who Jesus is, you know, is something that still continues today because we have a world that speaks about Jesus.

We have a world that says we openly want to worship Jesus but they do nothing towards really understanding who Jesus is. He is nothing but just a commodity that they use or they move.

Something they can play a game because there's no love, there's no desire to live for Him. They don't care about His word, His will. They don't care about His ways.

You know, the Bible talks about that very clearly. It says that they, it talks about their lips. Isaiah 29, verse 13, it says, Wherefore the Lord said, For as much as this people draw near to me with their mouth and with their lips do honor me but have removed their heart far from me and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.

In other words, it's artificial. Today we have a lot of artificial religion that put Jesus up and say, Jesus, yeah, we'll recognize Him but we want to do our own thing. We can come together and say all the right things but we don't care about Jesus when it comes to our life.

[14:33] You know what? People are no different than the soldiers. You know, there's people who come to church to claim that they know Him by their words but will not truly come to Him in faith. You know, people might feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit and say, I can't make that decision.

They refuse to listen to what God is working in their heart. They know that they're far from God. They know their life, their heart testifies to them that there's a problem but yet they won't turn to Him. They come and they feel good because they've set their time in church.

I've got my duty checked off for the week. It looks good to everybody. You know, we see that they fail to turn and submit to His will instead of their own. You know, the reality of that is so clear.

When it comes to the soldiers and the treatment of Jesus, we can see something else very important though because even though they treated Him like this, we see a great picture through this that we could talk, spend much time but I want you to point out of God's grace and mercy.

[15:42] Here's the creator of the universe being beaten and bruised and mocked and spit on and hit and all He had to do was say, take them out. He had the authority to call 10,000 angels to just destroy everything.

If you have any question what that might look like, you can read in the Old Testament, one angel's pretty good thing to contest with. 10,000 would be devastating. And here's Jesus and He's taking the onslaught of abuse not to make Himself look good but for my benefit and yours.

Turn over to 2 Corinthians for a moment. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 because I want you to understand what's happening here. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 it says, For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. I want you to understand this morning the wages of sin is death. Jesus took my sin and your sin that day.

He did everything that was needed. He took our punishment upon Himself. He became sin for us.

[16:51] That literally means He took upon Himself the penalty associated with it. That day on the cross I want you to understand Jesus was there in your place.

What we find here is all this is taking place the time has come as Jesus begins to walk towards Calvary. Look at the end of verse 20 and it says and they led Him out to crucify Him.

Now the gospel accounts really give us a very light glimpse into a lot of things according of what happened. I want you to understand there's a lot of details it leaves out but it's details that aren't the important part.

It gives us the important parts. What's the important part of what Jesus was there to do? What did Jesus accomplish? Because we could spend a lot of time talking about the brutality talking about all the things that take place but that's not the main point.

The main point is you have a Savior who loves you and God wants you to know what He's done for you. He says I want you to understand what took place. It wasn't the brutality that took place.

[18:00] It was that I became sin for you. I took your sin and put it upon Him. Jesus took it.

He paid for it. He took the wages of death your wages and paid for you. That's the point of the cross. But the time has come for Him to go because it still needs to be accomplished.

You know the weight of the cross was heavy as Jesus would have been exhausted. I mean a lot of this time we've got to go back and think about He hadn't slept.

He's been up over 24 hours at this point. It's almost 9 o'clock the next morning. He was up all the day before did all those things. He walked.

He moved. They had the last supper. He had prayed in the garden. They had been arrested. He had been beaten and abused all night. And now it's 9 a.m. the next morning. That doesn't sound too enticing does it?

[19:02] Just the fact you've been up all night. It used to not bother me as much but I tell you what I appreciate it more now as I get older. You know up all night is not as near what it was when you're 20 years old. You know 20 you can kind of shrug it off but you know when you get to my point in life and above it's like this is hard.

It's hard if we haven't had any of the things that took place. Jesus with the dynamics that had happened he came unto his own and his own received him not.

Rejection. The very one that came to give life is now being put to death. It's interesting that you find in verse 21 this little note in between that they make mention of.

You have one Simon of Cyrene you know. What a person to get I mean we think it's random I don't think there's anything random about it. But I tell you what you know you find these individuals in

scripture that suddenly just pop out that God makes note of.

I encourage you to study some things with him and his children because notice what it says and they compel one Simon of Cyrenean who passed by coming out of the country the father of Alexander and Rufus to bear his cross.

[20 : 20] One Simon of Cyrene here's Jesus is too weak to carry the cross and the Roman soldiers compel him to carry the burden. Now I want you to understand you get a lot of things in our mind today and we think you know we look at a cross and we think of this picture.

When Jesus went to the cross that day the part he bore was the beam that was upon his shoulders. That was the part that they would take and make the condemned carry out.

It was a beam he was going to be hung from and here's this Simon from a Greek city in North Africa. He's at the city with his family you know what that tells us? Here's a man that had come why was he in Jerusalem?

It was Passover. You know we can make some assessments the Bible doesn't tell us but you know everything points to the fact that Simon was a man who did love God. He wanted to honor God. He was there with his family. It wasn't just a trip across town. They'd left earlier to get there for the Passover and here he is he's coming out of the country you've got to remember this is early in the morning he's trying to figure out what's happening and a Roman soldier takes him and compels him.

[21 : 35] Now that's an important word in other words Simon didn't say hey Jesus let me help you I want you to understand he was pulled out of the crowd. Roman soldiers could compel anybody to carry something for at least a mile.

Remember Jesus said if they ask you to go a mile to go two this is the same principle that Jesus is talking about. Simon didn't it wasn't like well I don't feel like it Simon had no choice if he wanted to live but the Bible tells us that he took that burden and helped Jesus up to the place he was to be crucified.

That day he was there with two children it's interesting that Mark's gospel mentions them you know when the Bible mentions people by name it tells you that the people it was written to knew who they were.

It wasn't just a stranger that they were familiar with when the Bible mentions a name it means the people that it was originally written to understood who it is because why would you just make them generic when people know him.

We see his two sons Rufus and Alexander if you want to do a little interesting things you can take some time and notice it and look up this name Rufus it's mentioned a few other times in scripture and we find he's a man that grew up to serve God.

[22 : 55] You can make a lot of speculation out of what may have took in place but I want you to see that God used this event to change Simon and his family's trajectory forever.

They came to the Passover and came face to face with the Passover Lamb. 1 Corinthians 5 7 says for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

You know today have you ever come face to face with the Lamb that is your Passover Lamb? The one who took and spilt his blood for you. Have you ever been saved by grace and that you can come and call upon him as your Savior?

To trust him for the salvation that your soul requires that it needs. He can change your life and forever alter eternity.

I want you to understand the importance of that. This passage goes on and look here at verse 22 here and it says they bring him unto the place of Golgotha which is being interpreted the place of the skull and they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh but he received it not and when they had crucified him they parted his garments casting lots upon them and every man should take and it was the third hour and they crucified him and the superscription of the accusation was written over the king of the Jews and with him they crucified two thieves the one on his right hand and the other on his left and the scripture was fulfilled which saith that he was numbered with the transgressors I want you to see here the site of the one crucified with a label over it that says king of the Jews all that's taking place and we find here is the place of the skull located outside the city it was about the third hour of the day about 9 a.m.

[24 : 52] He's raised up that all may see him fulfilled the Bible says he fulfilled scripture in Isaiah 53 where it tells us he was crucified between the malefactors we see here this picture it's all referring to it but I want you to see something more important that Jesus said about this moment

turn over to John chapter 3 quick this morning John 3 when Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus early in his ministry it says as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the son of man be lifted up you can go back and read your Old Testament account I encourage you to do so because you don't have time to go over that this morning but the picture was that they had the serpent on the pole and they had to look and live that's the picture you see because notice what he says the son of man would be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should what not perish but have what eternal life Jesus was lifted up that you might see and recognize him for who he is we could go into a lot of other prophecies that were fulfilled that day you know when you realize that that day on that hill the death of Jesus of Nazareth and between the two seas were just business as usual for the crowd there was nothing unique to them it was a blip on the Roman radar they didn't see the significance in what was happening that day but you know what the news of Jesus' death made news in heaven the father witnessed the death of the son and he was satisfied sin's penalty had been paid sinners could be redeemed

Jesus Christ opened the way to God that will never be closed now anyone who comes to him by faith trusting his death on the cross his death signifies our sin our own responsibility to our sin that Jesus said I will take for you if you recognize that you're a sinner that needs a savior I want you to understand what Jesus did that day is sufficient for everyone but I want you to understand it's only efficient if it's used sufficient is an outstanding thought but unless it's applied unless it's used personally it does no good you know it's like people you could have food in the refrigerator and starve to death if you choose not to eat it you know the reality is Jesus said I've satisfied I've completed everything that's required it's sufficient for all but unless you call upon him unless you take his salvation to say I know

I'm a sinner that deserve what Jesus got and ask by faith to say I trust him that what he did that day is applied to me that happens in a moment in an instant John 3 36 and well I want you to see this look at John 3 36 it says he that believeth on the son hath everlasting life and he that believeth not the son shall not see life I want you to understand this points to something very important it's who do you see Jesus as because there's a lot of people who see Jesus as just a good person they see Jesus as a good teacher he may meet those qualifications but the qualification that's most important is far greater those are just subnotes unless you realize who Jesus is and that he died for you in your place that that day he took your sin upon it he that believeth not the son if you don't believe that Jesus is the one who died for your sin you miss everything it's not just believing that he is but believing in what he's done for you because notice it says you shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him very simply it's either you have

God's judgment coming or your judgment covered under the blood of Jesus Christ this morning his heads are bowed and eyes are closed for a moment I want you to consider a few things here this morning even your own self has there been a moment in time when you called upon the Savior not just saying Jesus I believe in you I believe about you but saying Lord I know that I'm a sinner and that what you did was for me to call upon him just ask Christ to save you if you've never done that I encourage you this morning let's make today the day of salvation if God's working on your heart don't wait there's no greater joy than having it settled but maybe you're here this morning also and you know that you're saved but you still struggle with the reality of what's happened maybe there's some time you need to spend with the Lord maybe there's some things you need to get right with God saying Lord you covered so much for me can I not take a moment to be right with you what about you today heavenly fathers we just come before you this morning Lord we thank you and praise you for the day for the opportunity

Lord as we understand the reality of who you are and what you've done Lord I pray just work in a mighty way Lord I pray that your spirit would convict where convictions needed encourage where encouragements needed Lord I pray that no one would depart here today that doesn't have it settled for sure with you of where they stand whether they're your child or that your wrath abides on them Lord help them not to abide to leave today with that wrath abiding upon them that they would look to you and live and Lord we ask it all in your precious name Amen as heads are bowed