

A God Who Makes No Human Sense

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[0 : 00] Mark chapter. What chapter of Mark are we in again? I forget. There we go. Okay.

Glad someone was listening. I've got a question for you all. Is anyone stressed?

Anybody feeling any stress or anxiety talking to friends or anything like that? Listen, I get it.

I really do. Is anybody struggling to make sense of the world? Okay, let's throw out the world. Is anybody struggling to make sense of the BC?

Right? Right? We have got a few things. We've got COVID. We don't have COVID. We've got lockdowns.

[0 : 58] We've got masks. We don't have masks. We have a Delta variant. Maybe now there's in the news the MU variant. There's the vaccines, the no vaccines, the forced vaccines, the are we living in a free country or not?

What about my rights? Yes. Then, of course, we have those other issues in life that are attacking us here. The issues with the residential school systems.

The whole idea of questioning our country's founders. The idea of tackling systematic racism. Any of those stress anybody else out? Did you guys talk about those things?

Right? Then, of course, we're just going to throw an election just to get people really going, eh? It just seems no matter where it's coming from, there's just a lot going on right now.

Then for you who don't come from North America, you guys have your own news in your own countries, which a lot of our news doesn't report on it because we would really come to understand what first world problems are.

[2 : 09] Just this week, I've been reminded through a couple of emails from families that are involved in missions overseas.

What's going on in Afghanistan has obviously become a big issue. We're also looking at one of my friends. Her father is involved with Campus Crusade.

They have a ministry of helping women escape from Boko Haram in Africa. If you know, they're the Muslim tribes that have been kidnapping women. Big issues, right?

Like, these are heavy issues. And does it ever cause you to wonder, what is God doing?

And I mean that very sincerely. Have you ever found yourself maybe in tears, frustrated, whether in anger or in sadness, asking the question, God, are you there?

[3 : 13] Are you not Lord? Why aren't you coming back? Why is justice not being served? Are you God?

Then have you ever thought, if I were God, I'd do things a lot differently. Anybody ever have that thought? You don't have to put up your hand, but you can give me a little bit of a nod, right?

If I was God, I would do it this way, right? I do. I understand. But to be honest, I really don't believe we are in any different place from any other time that this world has existed.

I believe these are the questions that we have been struggling with and humanity has been struggling with pretty much our whole existence. There has always been injustice. There has always been war.

There has always been rampant poverty. There has always been racism. And it couples on, I think, our frustration is when we believe we can humanly fix everything.

[4 : 22] So today, I entitled this sermon, A God Who Makes No Human Sense.

A God who doesn't make sense to us, maybe you want to call it. But I want you to focus on the idea that how God does things is a lot different than how we would do things.

And at the end of this sermon, my hope is that you would say, praise God. Praise God.

Praise God. So this passage that I'm bringing you to is an incredible passage that happens in the life of Jesus. We call it the days that Jesus taught in the temple.

So you remember there was a time when Jesus went in and cleaned out the temple. Are you all familiar with that story? So after Jesus had left Bethany, he's going on. So the next week, he's going to be died and he's crucified.

[5 : 31] He goes into the temple and he wipes out all the people who are making a disgrace of his temple. And then he begins teaching in the temple. The Son of God finally comes to the temple of God to teach.

So if you look back in your Bibles to Mark 11, 15, you will see he talks about when he drove out those who were buying and selling and dishonoring God in the temple.

Essentially, Jesus drove out all of those who dishonored God and who had graciously set up a place where his people could come and meet him.

That was supposed to be a place where people came to worship, but they had turned it into something that was horrible and not what God intended in any way, means, or fashion.

It was a place where people were to experience the Lord's presence. And now had come to a place where men could not have been more further from God.

[6 : 39] But during this respite, this beautiful thing happens. The people listen to Jesus and he teaches in this temple.

So if you notice, verse 27 of Mark chapter 11, it says, Jesus enters the temple area and is immediately set upon the religious rulers of the day.

Now we all know, if you've been studying anyway, the religious rulers were essentially three case of men. It included the chief priests, the scribes, which were the keepers of the law, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees would have figured in into the scribal category.

So these were the religious people. These were the religious authority that existed on that day. And notice in verse 27, And they came again to Jerusalem.

This would have been the next day after he cleaned house. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him. And they said to him, By what authority are you doing these things?

[7 : 46] And who gave you this authority to do them? Jesus said to them, I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? Answer me. And they discussed it with one another saying, If we say from heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe me?

But shall we say from man, They were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, We do not know.

And Jesus said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. So upon making this statement, we move through this passage that we come to in chapter 12.

So Jesus actually gives them three parables. Matthew has all three of them. Mark only includes this parable. And I want you to see how much God does not make human sense in this parable.

[9 : 04] And as I stated, I hope we can praise God for it. Two things that I want you to see from this passage is one, God's incomprehensible love for us.

And two, God's perfect justice and holiness. My hope and desire that as you see these things, may you be more humbled in the face of God, and may your love, joy, and worship increase because of it.

So let's start at verse one. I'm just going to take you through these passages, these verses, slowly explaining what's going on. So verse one, and he began to speak to them in parables.

Like I said, as we know from the gospel of Matthew, there was three parables, but Mark is taking this one. And remember what a parable is. Mark explains it in chapter four, that a parable is for those people who are in the kingdom.

It's very simple for us to understand. But if you're outside the kingdom, it's meant to confound you. But the characteristics of a parable is that they use everyday events.

[10 : 22] And as we're going to see in this parable, they're not just some stories, but these are stories told from the greatest storyteller that ever existed. He's saying strategic words to draw us in so that we actually have an emotional response to the story.

And that will lead us one way or the other. So a man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the wine press and built a tower and leased it to tenants and went into another country.

Now, what we are reading here is very common practice. Even today, there's a lot of people who are landowners who make sure their land is suitable for farming and they lease their land. My wife and I have a friend. His whole farming is he farms 10,000 acres of land, which is a lot of land, but he doesn't own it all. He just leases it off different landowners in the area. And he's been doing this in his family since the 1800s, if you can believe it. That's been their whole family business. So this is a very common practice.

[11 : 36] They would own the land. They would set it up and then make it viable to be leased out. Now, I want you to pay attention to who builds it. It's the owner. Now, if you knew Israel and the type of land there, it's a tough land.

It's a rocky land. But what they would often do is build into the side of these mountains and they would take those rocks and they would put the rocks in the ground to flatten out the vineyard or the land or whatever you were going to use to farm.

So a lot of work would go into preparing that land, that it would be a desirable land for a tenant. So the person would do all the work. Now, you know as I do when I say mountains, we call them hills here in BC, right?

But they're pretty rocky. They're pretty high. It can get pretty cold up there. So anyhow, he would remove it, use those same rocks, even out the land and plant his vineyard. And then he would fence off his property.

He would, of course, install a wine press where they would crush the grapes and the wine and they would have a tower. And that tower they would use to watch out for thieves and animals that could come and harm their livelihood.

[12 : 44] So this man goes to the trouble of building this vineyard and preparing it for life. You could build life here. It would be a sustainable land.

And then he turns over the stewardship to these tenants as he travels, notice, to a faraway land. As we all know, the tenant would come in and he would or she would be responsible for the upkeep. They'd be responsible for the vineyard and the tending because they would be paying the landowner for either from parts of the fruit that they grew or from the profits of selling the group in the market.

So it's not like the tenant just lived there who was some wealthy guy who could just pay his rent. He would have to work that land in order to pay off for the right to continue living in that land.

So when we come to verse 2, verse 2 generally takes 4 or 5 years for you to grow a crop that is healthy enough to have grown and sold.

[13 : 48] So it's 4 or 5 years. They've been living on the land. They've been tending to it. So here we have in verse 2. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get them, for them, some of the fruit of the vineyard.

This is obviously a normal practice for some of you guys who rent. You don't give the money to the person who owns the property.

It's generally to an apartment manager or something like that. Same kind of idea. He sends someone else to do the business. Verse 3, And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

Now, it's important for us to know this is a conversation that is happening, remember, in the temple. The temple has hundreds upon hundreds of people.

And even though the Pharisees might be the one asking him this question, there's the disciples. And we're not talking about the 12, right? There was dozens upon dozens of people that were following Jesus that were kind of in his entourage.

[14 : 53] And there'd be the other people in the temple, the court. And they'd be leaning in, listening to him as he's telling this story. So Jesus speaking, these people are listening.

And they're getting involved intensely into this parable. And as I said, these parables weren't just stories. These are skillfully told stories of everyday events that are meant to play a part on arousing one's minds and emotions.

So the first slave shows up to collect and he's literally whipped. When we get it from the Greek, the beat is to be flayed. All right? So they're not easygoing with this guy.

They're sending a message back to the owner. Verse 4, And again, he being the owner, sent to them another servant. And they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully.

So here we find the second slave going to pick up what is due his owner. A man who really has no choice but to follow the will of the master.

[16:05] But I want you to pay attention to the words that Jesus used here. It's not a beating he's getting. All right? Notice that Jesus calls the attention to struck on the head.

Most people know when they're in fights, you just don't go for the head. That's the... That can cause... Like even though when I was in university, a lot of guys would go out, you never hit a guy in the back of the head.

You just don't do anything. That's like superseding the intensity of the situation. But what's more important to pull here, it says, they treated him shamefully, which is to dishonor him.

Now what that means is, when this beating has taken place, it's not like they took him... It's not like some guy is the godfather and he says, you know, I want you to take him in the back and rough him up a little.

They're doing this beating in plain sight of public. They're not hiding their disdain for this man. So they've kind of upped it. People are noticing it and they're shaming the one who's come before him to collect for the master.

[17:11] It's a public spectacle. So we know that because the owner lives far off, we can assume that it would have taken time for the slave to heal, to get better, to travel back, to deliver the news and it would be months later until someone else shows up.

Verse 5. And they sent another and him they killed. Now the crowd is starting to pay attention.

We are meant to start asking ourselves, what is the landowner going to do now? What justice will this landowner bring upon these horrible people?

Which justice, they all know justice has to be served. No one in the crowd is saying, man, that slave deserved that beaten. He should have been killed.

Imagine that demanding money from the firmly owner's land. Of course not. Your whole heart is engaged in hating these tenants. They're dishonest, cruel, wicked, and now murderers.

[18:34] And it says, and so with many others, some they beat and some they killed. Now if you're listening to this at this time in the temple and you're familiar with the Old Testament, you're starting to put this story together.

You're starting to understand that the owner of the vineyard is God. The vineyard is the people of God. And the tenants are the religious rulers.

And the servants are the prophets that God continued to send to his people that they beat and killed. Matthew 23, 33, 35 says, Jesus dealt with it a little bit differently in this gospel.

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore, I send you prophets and wise men and scribes.

Some of you will kill and crucify and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth.

[19:55] From the blood of righteous, Abel, to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, on whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

See, the reality is God has always been sending prophets to his people. And the people always killed them. So thus far, we have seen this land loaner show great restraint, great patience, giving these tenants every opportunity to make good on their promise to pay.

So here he is, the more servants he sends, the more the tenants beat and kill them. Certainly at some point, you're starting, as you're listening to this, you're getting angry.

But you're starting to question the landowner. Why isn't there a sheriff? Right? If you're in the Old West, call the marshal.

Call the army. Call someone who can bring in and get rid of these murderous thieves. And with each action, the hearts of the tenants gets darker and darker.

[21:26] How true it is with each action birthing new wickedness and new condemnation. Then we find ourselves in verse 6.

And still he had one other, a beloved son. Notice that one other. He gave all that he could.

And he only had one more person left. We know what that term beloved means, right?

We've already heard it if you're familiar with the Gospel of Mark. In Mark 1.11, when Jesus Christ is baptized, a voice comes down from heaven and says, you are my beloved son.

With you I am well pleased. Later on in Mark 9, there's the transfiguration on the mount where Jesus Christ, or God, reveals his glory to Jesus and three of his apostles, Peter, James, and John.

[22 : 43] And it says, a cloud overshadowed them and a voice came out of the heavens, out of the clouds. This is my beloved son.

The word beloved means one who is an object of peculiar love. It is a focused love.

It is an endearing love. It is a special love. Now, I want to ask you a very serious question.

Does this sound rational to you? I mean, does this sound sane? If you were friends, maybe you're his brother of the landlord or your sister or his parents.

Is this when your landlord friend said he was going to send his beloved son to these murderous, wicked people, would you be encouraging him or discouraging him?

[24 : 02] What was that? Discouraging, right? I'm certain the whole crowd is chiming in. Are you nuts?

Jesus, this guy's crazy. You'd want to step in there, wouldn't you? Perhaps you would try to declare your friend mentally incapable or incapacitated.

Maybe you'd start to search that maybe something's happened to them and you might want to get a court-appointed attorney to go over his affairs.

Maybe you want to tell him, you just need to take a long vacation and cool it, man. You start to think that the owner needs protection from himself.

Am I right? Now, here's another question. What kind of son would follow his father's instructions when everybody else around is saying, what are you doing?

[25 : 29] Really? Dad ran out all the slaves because the tenants killed them all. It must make sense that I go too.

Would anyone here consider this a rational, human way of thinking? The fact of the matter is the slave, the servants, they had no choice.

They had to go. But the son, remember, this is the beloved son. This is not the ne'er-do-well troubled son who's already breaking my car and not replacing the gas when he takes it out kind of son, you know, you want to get rid of.

Didn't he at least have some free will? Will? The question that is in your mind is how would you respond? Hey, Dad, you know, I know we put a lot of work into that vineyard.

How about we just take a loss on that? Right? Maybe we can go to those Samaritan guys and build property there and maybe they won't do these bad things to us.

[26 : 40] The thought would be, haven't the tenants had enough chances to pay up? Isn't it time to call in some justice?

You see, this story makes no human sense at all. In fact, unless the son's name was Hercules, right?

It makes no sense to us. Verse 6, Finally, he, being the landlord, sent him, his son, to them, saying, they will respect my son.

See, what we have here, my friends, is the incomprehensible love of God. It is truly incomprehensible. The Bible tells us that while we were yet sinners, that we were yet enemies, that we hated God, Christ died for us.

Christ didn't die for us if we promised to clean ourselves up. Christ didn't die for us if we promised on our mother's life that we would pay back the debt.

[28 : 07] Christ didn't die for us if we promised to pull ourselves together. Christ didn't die for us because we gave enough, served enough, or committed enough works of righteousness.

No. Christ died for us when we were rebellious, foolish, broken, blind, selfish, cruel, unjust, and wicked.

This is who the Son came to die for. Sinners just like you and me. You see, this love and patience exceeds absolutely everything that is unimaginable.

This story is the story of a man they have not heard of. 2 Peter 3, 9 says, the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

In the face of such patience and mercy, how do you think the tenants would respond? verse 7, but those tenants said to one another, this is the heir.

[29 : 41] Come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours. You see, this is not some spontaneous decision. The text here implies that they consulted, they plotted, they displayed cunning.

This is wicked deliberation, this is corrupt, selfish scheming. This is first degree murder.

Verse 8, and they took him and killed him and threw him out in the vineyard where we know scavengers and filthy animals would consume his body.

Then Jesus asks a very simple question in verse 9. What will the owner of the vineyard do?

Matthew 21, 41 reads, they said to him, he will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits of this season.

[30 : 56] That's what the crowd is saying. verse 9, he will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyards to others.

You see, here the leaders are drawn into the story to take God's side. But that is what they do. That is what we humans would do, wouldn't it?

We do not change, we do not repent. once again, Jesus reveals to them their hearts over and over again. The more they speak, the more they act.

Like the tenants, they pile up guilt upon themselves by not repenting and by not changing. Verse 10, have you not read the scripture, Jesus says?

The stone that the builders rejected has become his cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. You see, these two verses are from Psalm 118, where a rejected cornerstone became a piece of the temple.

[32 : 10] And we know the response in verse 12, and they were seeking to arrest him, but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left and went away.

If you read commentaries, you'll read different scholars suggesting that Jesus was actually sedating, this is clearing the way for the Gentile over the Jew, that the Jew had their time and now Jesus Christ was handing over the Gentiles were now going to be seen as the quote-unquote apple of God's eye.

But I do not believe that is what the purpose of this passage is. It is a judgment on the leadership who rejected the prophets, rejected God's word, and ultimately will reject Jesus and in less than 48 hours kill them.

You see, this is the problem when people try to search for Jesus. Because everywhere where you go to learn about Jesus, he confronts you.

you see, where man is confronted with the truth of Jesus Christ, there are only one of two options. You must either be justified by Jesus or you are condemned by, or you must condemn Jesus.

[33 : 46] Perhaps that you might say you are indifferent and you will get to Jesus at a later time. The sad reality is there is no indifference towards God.

To love him not is to hate him. To not love him is to make him your mortal enemy. You might be thinking right now, but BK, I didn't kill him.

And you know what? You're right. Maybe you did not physically kill him. But I'm going to share you with you this morning, eight ways that we virtually kill Jesus.

And demonstrates to us that we are no different than the man who sat there that day listening to him who would eventually crucify him.

One, we kill Jesus when we deny the deity of Jesus. As soon as you start believing that Jesus was just a man, just a prophet, just a good teacher, just a rabbi, and he was not in fact the Son of God, you are killing Jesus.

[35 : 00] We kill Jesus when we deny the atonement. That is the idea that we deny the fact that Jesus had to die on the cross to save us from our sins.

That we might have an idea that there's another way. My sin wasn't so bad that someone needed to die for it. Really? Come on. Fact of matter is, no cross, there is no Jesus.

The third way we kill is when we deny God our most cherished and careful thoughts. When we do not care how we think or live, we kill Jesus.

God we kill Jesus when we deny the inspiration and sufficiency of the Bible. If we believe man's wisdom or our wisdom is greater than God's wisdom, we are in effect killing Jesus.

To pick and choose what we agree with and what we disagree with. The fifth way we kill Jesus is when we set aside God for our own agenda. We do this when we busy ourselves with our businesses, our pleasures, our values of life, rather not considering what Jesus Christ died for.

[36 : 20] The sixth way we kill Jesus is when we occupy ourselves with trivial amusements and unimportant discussion. The fact of the matter is he who deserves everything but gets nothing is no Christ at all.

The seventh way we kill Jesus is when we push Jesus aside from being the number one thing in our life. There's any other thing in your life that you pursue besides Jesus Christ you are in effect killing him.

The eighth way we kill Jesus is when we choose to have nothing to do with God's people, God's causes, and God's direction. To say we serve Jesus once a month or we just think about him once a week is a terrible injustice to the one who died for us.

Let me ask you one final question. Does this bring horror to your hearts? To know that you might be guilty of killing Jesus?

Because that's the way you're supposed to feel. in case you do not realize I'm actually pleading for your soul this morning.

[37 : 50] I am pleading for your soul for you to give everything to Jesus Christ. Christ. You see, this parable of the owner and the tenants is a wonderful story of God's incomprehensible love.

But it's also a story of God's justice and holiness. When did that justice happen? What happened to these leaders who held up this false apostate religion?

Well, within one generation, God called on the marshal. The Roman soldiers showed up in 70 A.D. They absolutely destroyed the temple. Every single priest was massacred. What was also massacred were the records so that Israel can no longer determine who is a part of the priestly line and who isn't?

Where did the leadership go? And this is the most interesting thing of all. It went to 12 rather ordinary, most of them uneducated men who walked with Jesus and gave everything they had for him.

[39 : 24] him. If you've been thinking about Jesus, I ask that you not put off today what you can have today.

Today can be the day of salvation. Today is the day when you can make Jesus your all. You see, the call of Christ is not one of misery that ends in destruction.

The call of Christ is one that brings life, liberty, salvation, wisdom, and joy. And obedience to Jesus is all joy for ourselves.

Pray with me. The fact of the matter is, Lord, we just don't get what's going on around us. I don't think we even get you. Father, we do give you praise for being patient with us, even those of us who have made you Lord.

When we struggle with our thoughts, our frustrations, our egos, our stations in life, we have this whole world that wars against our souls.

[40 : 46] Forgive me for killing you, Jesus. Forgive me for not making you all that you are at all times. Father, forgive us for thinking casually about our sin, dependent upon your grace, and not considering your holiness.

forgiveness. Father, I pray if there's anyone here who has the heart of a Pharisee, who believes they have done everything justifiable by the law, but there resides no love for you, I pray that you would redeem them this day.

For those that are here that are seeking you, may you continue to reveal yourself more and more in their lives so that they would have no other choice but to claim you as Lord and Savior.

At the very least, have them understand to turn their back on you is to invite eventual destruction. God, we thank you for this parable.

so simple, yet it draws us out so perfectly. Even here we understand that so much injustice was happening.

[42 : 19] We don't understand why you sent your son. But we give thanks that you have opened our spiritually blind eyes and gave us an understanding of the wonderful grace that we can freely accept in you.

may our lives change because of our love and your great love for us.

We ask you these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen. Amen.