

# Behold Your King!

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. They began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they were striking his head with a reed, and spitting on him, and kneeling down in homage to him.

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put on his clothes, on clothes, on him.

And they led him out to crucify him. Verse 21, And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

[ 1 : 22 ] And they brought him to a place called Golgotha, which means place of a skull. And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

And they crucified him, and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him.

And 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.

And 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 that cross. So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, He saved others. He cannot save himself.

[ 2 : 26 ] Now, let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe. And those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

May God bless the hearing and the preaching of his word. You know, each of the four gospels tell this wonderful story about Jesus Christ.

But unlike traditional biographies, the gospels do not tell this story by focusing on where Jesus is from. We know he's from Nazareth, but they don't really focus on where Jesus is from or who his parents were.

They don't really focus on what schools he went to, what trade school he went to. They don't really focus on defining experiences of his life. Each of the gospels tell the story about Jesus by telling the stories of people who encounter him.

W.H. Vanstone, a Scottish theologian, says, As Jesus moves about, he leaves behind, listen, a trail of transformed scenes and changed situations.

[ 3 : 41 ] Fishermen no longer at their nets. Sick people restored to health. Crisis confounded. A storm stilled. A storm stilled. Hunger assuaged. A dead girl raised to life.

Jesus' presence is an active and instantly transforming presence. He is never the mere observer of the scene or the one who waits upon events, but always the transformer of the scene and the initiator of events.

And as we've gone through the gospel of Mark, this is exactly what we've seen. Mark has told us the good news about Jesus Christ through a wonderful trail of transformed scenes. I just love that phrase because that's the story of our lives, right?

A trail of transformed scenes, of scene after scene, encounter after encounter, transformation after transformation. All of it with Jesus at the center. You remember the word that stilled the storm.

The prayer that breaks bread and feeds 5,000 people. The hands that touch the withered, the man with a withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

[ 4 : 46 ] The leper, the disease ravaged woman who for 12 years had searched for a solution and one touch from Jesus Christ heals her instantly. Each of these encounters leaves people forever transformed.

But now it seems that the action of Jesus Christ has stopped. Jesus is no longer free. He's no longer on the loose.

He's no longer able to go wherever the Spirit leads. Jesus is bound in chains. Jesus has been delivered over and is now in the hands of Roman soldiers.

In our passage this morning, Mark does not so much describe the action of Jesus as he describes the inaction of Jesus. And is this the way the gospel of Mark is going to end?

With the one who possessed all power shown to be truly powerless? With the one who commanded demons and diseases unable to command a group of Roman soldiers?

[ 5 : 54 ] But for those with eyes to see, beneath all the pushing and punching, spitting and slapping, nailing and screaming, Jesus is actively working.

Jesus is still doing the will of the Father. Jesus is scaring away for all who are far off to be transformed by the grace of God through the cross.

And so, by the power of the Spirit, my prayer this morning is that we can lean in, step forward, and survey the wondrous cross as if for the first time where the Prince of Glory died.

The cross is utter foolishness. But if we can see it, it's the power of God and the crucible of transformation for every sinner who's far off.

So, in a word where we're going is, Oh, survey the wondrous cross where the King of Glory turns a foolish cross into a foolish cross into a throne of grace for sinners.

[ 7 : 05 ] Now, I know that's a bit of a mouthful. But, oh, survey the wondrous cross where the King of Glory turns a foolish cross into a throne of grace for sinners. So, we're going to break this out in three points, just walking through this, what happens to our Lord in these verses.

The first is the King's humiliation. The King's humiliation. Verses 16 through 20 describe what the Roman soldiers do to Jesus immediately after he is scourged.

They lead Jesus away and inside Pilate's headquarters, inside his palace. They call together a whole battalion. Officially, that would be as many as 600 men.

Now, why do they need 600 men to keep Jesus detained? This is a guy who's just been beat to a bloody pulp. And yet, there's 600 men. We don't know why, but they serve to only increase the humiliation of what comes next.

Look in verse 17. And they clothed him in a purple cloak. And twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on him. Began to salute him. Hail, King of the Jews. The charge against him, as we remember from last week, what the chief priests and the scribes and the elders told Pilate, is that he claims to be king.

[ 8 : 17 ] He's a vigilante. He's an insurrectionist. He's going to, he's a revolutionary. And so, he claims to be king. And so, that is the charge. And so, the soldiers surround him and mock him for that ridiculous claim.

What kind of king are you? You pathetic pound of flesh. They deck him in a purple robe. The color of royalty.

Mock him for such a ridiculous claim. They place a crown on his head. Not a crown of gold that he deserves, but a crown of an acthus plant common to the area with spiny stems.

So, they weave it together. Place it on his head. They salute him. Hail, King of the Jews. Very clearly, mirroring what they would do if they saw Caesar.

Hail, Caesar. They kneel and homage to him. Like the wise men, like the leper, like the rich man, they kneel before him. But their kneeling is just to tease him and taunt him.

[ 9 : 24 ] But mocking can only continue for so long. Positions of power often lead to misuse. And so, the authority of the soldiers give way from mocking to violence.

They strike him with a reed. Now, we're not supposed to think a blade of grass in some overgrown area. But likely a stick or a pole.

The size and sturdiness of bamboo. They begin spitting on him. And when they've had their fill, they strip off the robe, put back on his cloak, and lead him away to be crucified.

Now, what are we going to do with this scene? We could explore the utter wrongfulness of the Creator being treated by the creature like this.

It's an offense. It's treason. It's despicable. We could explore the sinless one being spit on by a gang of ungodly, unclean soldiers.

[10:43] But I think the purpose, and what Mark's trying to tell us in these verses, is a little bit more clear. The Roman soldiers mock him for his ridiculous claim and have a fake coronation service to rub salt in his wounds.

The reality is, and we have this point for you, the reality is, Jesus is the true king who delivers us from all our guilt and shame.

So there's irony here. They have this coronation service to rub the salt in his wound. But the reality is, Jesus is the true king who delivers us from all our guilt and shame.

And as we've said, Mark is underlining kingship throughout this passage. Six times in this chapter, Jesus is called the king. Six times, king of the Jews.

In addition, the robe, the crown, the salute, the kneeling in our passage are ways of expressing respect and reverence for a king, even though they're used here to express disrespect and disdain.

[11:41] Why all this focus on the king? Mark is telling us, because he is the king. He's the one through whom everything that was made was made.

He's the one for whom everything that was made was made. He is the one to whom we all must give an account. He is the king of all.

And this shameful spectacle, this despicable spectacle, spectacle on everything after is the beginning of his coronation, where he is the true king will deliver us from all guilt and shame.

And that's what Mark is telling us in his famous, or should be famous to us, his irony. So we see, now I think we see, I hope we see why Mark is referencing kingship so repeatedly in this passage, and also the shame of this spectacle.

Now we live in an anti-shame culture. Lady Gaga sings, there's, and I've never listened to this song, but Lady Gaga sings, there's nothing wrong with loving who you are.

[12:46] Don't hide yourself in regret, just love yourself, and you're set. Schools and universities now push for safe places where students can have frank discussion about uncomfortable things without any confrontation.

The show South Park summarizes our church's attitude when Cartman sings in a particular episode, there's no shame in my safe place. That was a long time ago.

How true is it now? In addition, after years of studying churches in America, one author says the main message young people are taught in the church is the central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about yourself.

So we're taught, we live in a culture where we're taught that we should be free to express who we are without fear of embarrassment or shame or challenge. In fact, there's nothing we should ever be ashamed about.

That's what the culture says. Nothing we should ever feel bad about. But as followers of Christ, we must be very careful. Don't get me wrong, we should never use shame wrongfully.

[13:58] We must not mock people for confessing struggles. We must not isolate and avoid people who sin in ways we can never imagine ourselves sinning. But we must avoid, we must not avoid the discussion of shame at all cost.

This is why. There are things we should be ashamed of. We should be ashamed when we lie and exaggerate. We should be ashamed when we ignore the needs of our neighbors.

We should be ashamed when we harbor bitterness. We should be ashamed when we mow down with our words. We should be ashamed when we live without regard to the Word of God. But in those moments, it is not our friend who says, don't hide in regret.

See, if guilt alerts us to something we've done wrong, shame alerts us to something wrong with us. Do you understand?

So when we realize our guilt, we rightly are often covered with feelings of shame. We rightly think, I don't just deserve to be punished.

[15:02] I deserve to be mocked. I deserve to be laughed at. I deserve to be ridiculed. I deserve to be scorned. I deserve to be the butt of every joke.

Mark, wonderfully, Mark spends so much time focused on the shame of the spectacle, but to tell us that Jesus is the true King who doesn't just deliver us from our guilt, but from our feelings of shame, of unworthiness, brokenness, uncleanness, feelings of damaged goods, feelings of I could never amount to anything.

God could never love me. One of the most powerful verses in the New Testament is Hebrews 2, 11 to 12, where Jesus is quoting, well, I guess it's in the mouth of Jesus from the author of Hebrews, but Psalm 22, he says, He is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers.

Jesus is not ashamed of you. Now, have you ever been introduced to someone, by someone, who's clearly ashamed of you? And sometimes it's just this reluctant introduction.

You feel like if they really said what they wanted to say, they'd say, yeah, this is my little pest brother, you know, this little annoyer that keeps me up all night, you know, something like that, or this is my, this is my deadbeat son.

[16:30] Yeah, he still lives in the basement. He still hasn't made anything of his life, or this is my needy co-worker who follows me around asking for a stapler, or something like that, who just drives me nuts.

You know, if they're honest, that's what they'd really want. Here's my failure father, who can't hold down a nine to five, where when you enter heaven, Jesus will not be ashamed to call you brother. This is what this means. Jesus, you will not be mocked. He's not going to pull off the clothes and say, yeah, you're the one who received so much grace from me, and yet continued to sin in these ways.

Jesus is not ashamed to call you brother. And you, sister. Jesus is not ashamed to call you brother. And you, brother.

Jesus is not ashamed to call those whom he rescues by grace, my brother and my sister. That's why all this is in the Bible.

[17:43] I mean, isn't that amazing? Sorry. All right, second point. The king's crucifixion. The king's crucifixion. I'm going to outrun the affections today.

Verses 21 through 27 describe the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Crucifixion was, as Cicero said, the most cruel and horrifying punishment ever conceived. It was designed to be painful, prolonged, and utterly humiliating.

When used by the Romans, it was not just a punishment. It was a public shaming, public cancel culture. Back in that day, to warn and deter everyone else from getting out of line.

You want to get out of line? See what happened to him. He's hanging over there down the street. And so the criminals were forced to carry their crossbeam through town as everyone looked on after being beat to a bloody pulp.

They were stripped naked. They were crucified publicly outside the city, but alongside the road. And as they were hanging on the cross, their crime was often nailed right over their heads or at the base of the cross.

[18:52] Therefore, before Jesus is crucified, his humiliation must continue. Verse 20b tells us they led him out to crucify him.

Jesus began the walk to Golgotha, carrying the hundred-pound crossbeam across his shoulders. As he was led through what is called the road of sorrows, Jesus carries his own wood to the sacrifice like Isaac. Eventually, though, Jesus is too weak to carry the crossbeam because of the amount of blood he's already lost in the scourging.

The soldiers call the passerby to help him out. The soldiers continue to lead Jesus to Golgotha, which means place of the skull. It's just a natural outcropping outside the walls of Jerusalem. And the very name Golgotha, place of a skull, is a painful reminder of how this day will end. Once they arrive at Golgotha, the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus Christ.

[19:59] Look in verse 24. He says, And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them to decide what each should take.

And it was the third hour that when they crucified him. The description of the charge against him read the king of the Jews. The third hour of the day, 9 a.m., they crucify him.

They drive nails through his hands and feet, sending searing pain throughout his whole body. Then the cross is raised into place, and Jesus begins to die slowly and painfully.

Every time his body sags, he begins to suffocate with the collapsing of his lungs. But each time he pushes up to breathe, pain in his arms and feet explode, and every brush with a wooden beam on his lacerated back sends him shooting and reeling in pain.

Mark adds, verse 27, and with him they crucified two robbers, one on his left and one on his right.

[ 21 : 09 ] The only other time one on his left and one on his right occurs in Mark's gospel is Mark chapter 10. James and John, sons of Zebedee, asks Jesus, grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand in your glory.

Is this your glory? Is this it? Is this the end?

Let the reader understand, it is his glory, but not the end. The reality beneath this scene is Jesus is the only mediator who perfectly obeys God on behalf of sinners.

Jesus is the only mediator who perfectly obeys God on behalf of sinners. I said this in passing last week, but contrary to popular movies, art, and books about the crucifixion, Mark spends very little time talking about the physical pain.

They crucified him. Mark doesn't tell us. one spike between both, through both feet, spike in the hands. Mark doesn't tell us all those things.

[ 22 : 22 ] We believe Psalm 22 tells us rightly that there was, but it just says, and they crucified him. But Mark devotes a lot of time to telling us Jesus fulfilled scripture. You know, in the same verse where he says they crucified him, he spends more time talking about the fact that they divided garments and cast lots for those garments.

Well, because Psalm 22, 18 says they will divide his garments. Psalm 22, 18 says they will cast lots for them. Psalm 22, 7 those who pass by will deride him, wagging their heads just the way it occurs in this passage.

Psalm 22, 8 those who pass by will mock his trust in God. Psalm, Isaiah 53, 12 says they crucified in between two thieves numbering him among the transgressors.

So Mark is wanting to make very clear with the details of this crucifixion, not about the physical pain, but about the fact that this man on the cross is fulfilling scripture. That he is not just another man that the Romans tortured.

Crassus killed 6,000 slaves in one day. Jesus is the one man, the promised man, the true king, the Messiah, but there's more here.

[ 23 : 34 ] There are 19 verbs. Now just hang with me for a minute. There's 19 verbs in which Jesus is the object, each of them underlining what theologians call his passive obedience.

They led him. They clothed him. They put a crown of thorns on his head, on him. They saluted him. They struck him. They spit on him. They knelt before him. They mocked him. They stripped him. They put on his own clothes back on him.

They led him. They brought him to Golgotha, offered him wine, crucified him, divided his garments, crucified him, derided him, mocked him, revived him. What's Mark trying to say? What are you trying to say?

All of these verbs in which Jesus is passive and he is the object, the one on whom the action is occurring. Jesus is saying, or Mark is saying, Jesus perfectly obeyed God, obeyed God actively, always doing the will of the Father, always loving God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving his neighbor and self.

But now Jesus passively obeys God. See, in order to make us right with God, Jesus cannot just actively obey. He cannot just live the life we should have lived.

[ 24 : 36 ] He cannot just give us his perfect record and say, cool. He must passively obey God. He cannot just live the life we should have lived.

He must endure the suffering and shame for the life we have lived. Interestingly, the only verb, actually, I think every verb in here, Jesus is the object, but we'll just say, the only verb in which Jesus is the object which he refuses is the one of wine mixed with myrrh.

Look in verse 23, and they offered him wine mixed with myrrh. Now, the Romans did not suddenly get soft on him for a number of textual reasons. Mark argues what we believe.

The verb's different than the other verbs. That's all. Take time to tell you that this was some of the ladies at the cross, actually, who offered him wine mixed with myrrh because Proverbs says give strong drink to a man who's dying to take the edge off.

This wine mixed with myrrh is a mild narcotic meant to dull the sensibilities. This is the one thing Jesus refused. Why? Because he must take it all in.

[ 25 : 57 ] In his obedience, he must take it all in. He must feel it, all of it, for guilty sinners like you and me.

As I shared last week in her book, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom just has rocked my world. She shares the story of how she and her sister Betsy and their families were so-called righteous

Gentiles because they were arrested for hiding Jews from Nazi soldiers in Holland. Nevertheless, Corrie and her sister suffered the same horrible treatment that the Jews did. She writes, I had read a thousand times the story of Jesus' arrest, how the soldiers slapped him, laughed at him, flogged him.

Now such happenings had faces and voices. Fridays, the recurrent humiliation of medical inspection.

The hospital corridor in which we waited was unheeded and a fall chill had settled into the walls. Still, we were forbidden to wrap ourselves in our arms but had to maintain erect, hands-at-side position as we filed slowly past a group of grinning guards.

[ 27 : 28 ] How could there be any pleasure in the sight of these thick-thin legs and hunger-bloated stomachs I could not imagine. Surely there's no more wretched sight than the human body unloved and uncared for.

Nor could I see the necessity for a complete undressing when we finally reached the examining room a doctor looked down each of our throat, looked at each of our teeth, a third in between each finger.

And that was all. That was all. Then we trooped down, I'm still quoting, trooped again down the long cold corridor and picked up our X-marked dresses at the door.

But it was one of these mornings while we were waiting, shivering in the corridor that another page in the Bible leapt into life for me. I read that happen. He hung naked on the cross.

The paintings and the carved crucifixes show at least a scrap of clothing, but this, I suddenly knew, was the respect and reverence of the artist. But oh, at the time itself, on that other Friday morning, there had been no reverence.

[ 28 : 45 ] no respect, no more than I saw in the faces around us now. Betsy, I said, they took his clothes too.

Ahead of me, I heard a little gasp. Oh, Corey, and I never thanked him. there's nothing meaningless going on in this passage.

What Mark is trying to underline for us is that the cross is not about physical pain, grinding Jesus to death. The cross is about Jesus showing himself to be the only mediator between God and man, about him becoming like us in every respect, yet without sin, perfectly obeying God on behalf of guilty sinners sinners like you and me.

Hebrews 4, 15 and 16 tells us this very well. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then draw near to the throne of grace that we might receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need. Jesus is a great high priest. It's so helpful.

[ 30 : 05 ] The physical pain can distract you from the reality of what Jesus is coming to do. He is the only mediator between God and man. He fulfills scripture and perfectly obeys God on behalf of sinners.

Point three, the king's defeat. The king's defeat. Verses 29 through 32 capture what happens as Jesus hangs on the cross for three hours.

Though very little detail again is given to the crucifixion itself, three verses are given to this mocking.

Those who passed by derided him. Look in verse 29. Those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads. Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself.

So also, the chief priests reemerged and the scribes mocked him to one another. He saved others. He can't even save himself. Verse 32.

[ 31 : 22 ] There's almost like some ironic humor. Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. I think, you know, we often read those things like they're this play-by-play.

Okay, cue. Cue the passersby. Cue the religious leaders. Cue thieves. But given the time markers in verse 25 and again in verse 33, the sixth hour and the ninth hour, or third hour and sixth hour, Mark is not describing something that happens in a few moments, but something that happens for three hours.

For three hours, Jesus is nailed to the cross. All those who pass by derided him, mocked him, and reviled him. It's hard for us to be around someone we dislike, let alone someone who dislikes us for three minutes.

Jesus hangs naked for three hours. Not only does he endure the excruciating pain of the cross, he also endures the constant chatter of fools.

Not once does he yell at them, tell them to stop. Not once. Now, he takes up a lot of laments into his mouth. That's what Psalm 22 is.

[ 32 : 50 ] It's behind this passage. But not once does he pray like the psalmist strike them, break out their teeth. Not once does he pray an imprecatory prayer of judgment.

But look what they mock him for. They mock him for being the king. Look at verse 32. Let the king, the king of Israel, come down from the cross.

Now, notice they don't mock him for being king of the Jews. The religious leaders don't mock him for that political title of king of the Jews. They mock him for what he is, for claiming to be, the Christ, the Messiah, the king of Israel.

The promised king. They know exactly what they're doing. They mock him for what he said about the temple. Remember how he flipped tables in the temple. Remember how he called it a den of thieves.

And what they're saying is, the temple's right over there. It's doing just fine. And you're hanging there on the cross. They mock him for being a savior, claiming to be a savior.

[ 33 : 53 ] How could he save others? He cannot even save himself. Well, the reality is, Jesus is the spotless sacrifice who secures our forgiveness through his death. The reality that's behind these verses, Jesus is the spotless sacrifice who secures our forgiveness through his death.

Last week, we saw how Jesus was the ransom. Like he was given in exchange for Barabbas and you and me so that we might go free. You pay the ransom so that you might go free.

Well, now we're seeing that Jesus is not just a ransom. Jesus is the sacrifice. Jesus is the, it's not just an exchange. It's an offering.

Jesus is the offering. Jesus is the sacrifice. Twice they say, show yourself, show that you're the savior by coming down. Saviors come down, but he can only be the savior by staying up.

He can only be the sacrifice by staying up on the cross. And so they say he saved others, but he cannot save himself. And in fact, they're right. John Stott says, their words spoken as an insult were the literal truth.

[ 34 : 58 ] He could not save himself and others simultaneously. He chose to sacrifice himself in order to save the world.

And it is in precise in this way that he does actually save. If the essence of sin is putting myself in the place of God, the essence of salvation is God putting himself in the place of me, in the place of my sin.

And strikingly, in the end, their words of ridicule become the songs of our celebration. Their words of ridicule become our songs of celebration.

Praise God! He didn't save himself. No, he said, no one takes my life from me. I lay it down. Who, though he is in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptying himself, taking on the form of servant, being born in the likeness of men.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death. Praise God! He did not save himself. Praise God! He did not come down from the cross, Colossians 2 says this, and you who are dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven all our trespasses.

[ 36 : 09 ] Why? Because he canceled them. He canceled the record of debt that stood against us with his legal demand. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Praise God!

He didn't come down from the cross. Praise God! He's a new temple. He's a new and living way. Ephesians 2, for through him, we both, we all have access in one spirit to the Father.

The curtain is ripped in two so that sinners like you and me might enter. Praise God! He's the new temple. Praise God! He does destroy that way to God and opens a way for Jews and Gentiles.

Praise God! He opened the way for everyone in belief. Look in verse 32. 32. They say, come down from the cross so that we might see and believe.

Show us a sign. If you remember from chapter 8, Mark says, this generation always seeks a sign. But you know what we say?

[ 37 : 10 ] When I survey, the wonders cross. I don't need a sign. I don't need a sign.

So 1 Peter 1 says, for though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, we don't have to see and believe. We believe him, though we don't see.

Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Praise God! In 1728, a young 14-year-old boy named Howell Harris sat by his dying Aunt Lizzie. The family had gathered like we often do in those moments and gathered around Miss dear Aunt Lizzie.

[ 38 : 20 ] She lay there taking her final breaths. If you've ever been in one of these scenes, you know exactly what it's like. She grew still. Thinking she had died, they began weeping.

Like, what? Weeping? Poor Aunt Lizzie. Poor Aunt Lizzie. Poor Aunt Lizzie. She's gone. She's died. Suddenly, Aunt Lizzie blurted out, Who calls me poor?

I've got to meet this lady in glory. She said, I'm not poor. I'm rich. And I will stand before him as bold as a lion. Years later, that young boy, Howell Harris, would write to him, Well, may the accuser roar of sins that I have done.

I know them all and a thousand more. Jehovah knoweth none. Oh, church, what we are seeing is not the king's defeat.

What we're seeing is his finest hour, his crowning achievement, the beginning of his wonderful, gracious, everlasting reign for hell-deserving sinners like you and me.

[ 39 : 27 ] So, oh, let us survey the wondrous cross where the prince of glory died, where the king turned a foolish cross into a throne of grace for sinners.

So what do we do now? We must survey.

But we must not only survey. We must take up the cross as well.

Look at verse 21 again. They compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Now, why does he give his name, his children's names? Many say, because he later became a Christian, became known to the people of Rome. But this little detail is included by Mark to remind us that there are still people needed to carry the cross of Jesus Christ.

[ 40 : 45 ] There are still people needed to carry the cross of Jesus Christ. Anyone who would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross.

John Stott, again, for the third time today, every Christian is both a Simon of Cyrene and a Barabbas. Like Barabbas, we escape the cross for Christ died in our place.

Like Simon of Cyrene, we carry the cross for he calls us to take it up and follow him. The way the world will know that we've been transformed by the gospel of grace is not our bumper stickers or our t-shirts.

Heaven forbid, our political positions or even our church attendance. The way the world will know we've been transformed by Jesus is the horizontal cross beam across our shoulders.

Take it out. Take it out. Take it out. There's room.

[ 42 : 14 ] Why? Because he needs it? No. Because it's the only appropriate response. I love the way the hymn When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, which we're going to sing in a moment, says, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God, all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. did ever such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown.

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were present far too small. That's what he's saying. He said, were the whole realm. If I could give everything in the world, that's a present far too small.

He says, love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, and my all. May God help us.

[ 43 : 30 ] Father in heaven, we, oh Lord, we are amazed at surveying the wondrous cross again where the Prince of Glory turned a foolish cross into a throne of grace for sinners.

We praise you that you did not come down, but you remain there to the end. We bow before you, God.

We offer ourselves to you. What do we have that we haven't received?

All that we have is yours. But we don't want to gain our lives, we're going to lose it. We don't want to save our life, we're going to lose it.

Because this one that we follow is the one who did not spare his life, but gave it up for us all. So that we who follow him might be those who give our lives away to others.

[ 44 : 57 ] God, help us. We praise you. We worship you, give you all the glory. In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [TrinityGraceAthens.com](https://TrinityGraceAthens.com). Thank you.