



Bible Study  
2014-2015

## *Heart of a Servant*

### The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 15

If you bring all four gospel accounts together, we are given a very detailed record of the last evening Jesus spent with His disciples and the trials which led up to His execution. All of the events took place in and around the walled city of Jerusalem. During Jesus' day, there was a lower portion of the city with tenement-style homes built all along the steep hillside. Then the "upper city" contained all of the larger homes of the wealthy, like the high priest Caiaphas and Herod's palace.

However, it was the glorious temple which the Jews took great pride in which dominated the focus of the city. Immediately next to the temple was Antonia's Fortress, where Roman armies were stationed and where Pontius Pilate held court. Directly across the steps of the temple and outside the city walls, separated by the Kidron Valley, was the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus would often visit and pray. Then finally, on the other side of the city, outside the city walls, was Golgotha; named appropriately "the place of the skull" and the landscape for the crucifixion. Many believe that a tomb nearby, which matches the description in the Gospels, was the one Joseph of Arimathea gave to lay Jesus' body in.

To a person with no background information, looking upon Jerusalem and its surroundings would be a feast for the eyes. A magnificent city sitting high atop a hill with a place of worship at its center. But for the Christian, this was the setting where the Deliverer gets delivered, the Shepherd is led as a lamb, the Freedom bringer is bound, the Justifier is accused, the Healer is wounded, and the Life-giver died. In just a few hours of time, all that is wrong, wicked and evil proceeded unobstructed and unhindered by God. The disciples scatter and struggle with disillusionment, fear, and deep sorrow. But as Alexander MacLaren once said, "The cross is the center of the world's history...the crucifixion of our Lord is the pivot round which all the events of the ages revolve." It is also the place where each of us must look and consider. Simple decisions about this night have repercussions that affect our daily life as well as our eternity.

*"Upon a life I did not live,  
Upon a death I did not die;  
Another's life, another's death,  
I stake my whole eternity."  
~ Horatius Bonar*



3. Our thoughts are a prime target of the enemy and he will capitalize on any opportunity to put Jesus' actions in your life on trial. Below are a few areas where you may be vulnerable for the enemy to attack and lie about His character. Write down a sure and precious promise from God's Word concerning these things. Memorizing scripture is a valuable weapon to defeat the lies of the enemy.

a. Lie: "God is not concerned about the things I am concerned about. They are too small."

b. Lie: "If God is good, then why did He allow this \_\_\_\_\_ (whatever painful circumstance applies)? He must not love me."

c. Lie: "No matter how hard I try, I feel I will always fail at being a \_\_\_\_\_ and will always struggle with guilt because of my mistakes."

d. What is your greatest area of battle in your thoughts? Then ask the Lord for a promise to counter that lie and write both below.

***"God never made a promise that was too good to be true."  
~ D.L. Moody***

4. David also experienced this area of suffering from false accusations from his enemies.  
Read Psalm 109:2-5.

a. Describe in your own words what two different types of people (verse 2) did to David and what he did to warrant such a response from them.

b. What did David say he was going to do in response to these attacks from verses 4, 24, 30?

c. Write out verse 31 as a precious reminder of God's promise to those who are heart broken in these types of circumstances.

### **Read Mark 15:6-15**

5. Legalism will always want to crucify grace. Despite Jesus' words in Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill," the chief priests were bent on destroying the One "Who went about doing good" Acts 10:38b.

a. What was it in the hearts of the priests that fueled them to murder? (Verse 10).

b. Jealousy may be defined as a resentment or hostility against another person for what they have. Envy may be defined as the same feeling, yet wanting what they have at their expense. Jealousy and envy in the heart of Saul made him pursue David in hopes to destroy him. Joseph's brothers were driven by the same poison. What does James 3:14-16 say to the Christian?

- c. Allowing this sin to continue in our hearts may or may not hurt the person we are jealous of, but it will certainly injure us, grieve the Spirit and negatively affect our relationship with the Lord. Remind yourself of one thing jealousy or envy will cost you from Psalm 66:18. Write it word for word here.
- d. Read Mark 15:11. As the chief priests did not want to lose their power, position, favor or authority among the people, they sought to turn the people against their threat. Look up Acts 13:45 and see what happened to Paul in Antioch. Notice that jealousy in a heart can provoke malicious gossip or slander against the person perceived as a threat. Have you ever been tempted to speak badly against another person or show someone else in a bad light in order to maintain a job, a friendship, relationship, or so on? Explain briefly but be careful not to share names or identities of other people in a group setting. This is between you and the Lord.
6. In contrast, wisdom and understanding from the Lord will show itself differently in our heart and actions (James 3:17-18). William Law once said, "If someone is leaving you behind, and you are becoming jealous and embittered, keep praying that he may have success in the very matter where he is awakening your envy; and whether he is helped or not, one thing is sure, that your own soul will be cleansed and ennobled." Let this truth sink into your heart. Write down any other ways the Holy Spirit may be prompting you to practically, tangibly deal with this area of struggle.



8. In Matthew 27:29, we see King Jesus with a reed scepter placed in His hand. Thorns, symbolic of the curse, are twisted into a crown and pressed into His skull. The mockery escalates and they spit on Him, strike Him, and we get a glimpse of the depth of depravity man's heart can descend to.
  - a. Though man's heart was moved to use a reed as a cruel instrument of pain, what was prophesied of Jesus in Isaiah 42:3?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. As man's heart would strip Jesus' garments to humiliate and shame Him, then robe Him in a manner to promote mocking, what does Jesus do to us as seen in Isaiah 61:10?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. When we become discouraged from other people's cruelty, what does Hebrews 12:3 say to us? (This is not implying that it is ever right to submit to physical abuse or some similar threat.)

**Read Mark 15:21-32, Luke 23:27-43**

9. Many a person did not survive the torturous flogging that the Roman soldiers would inflict across the backs of their prisoners before their execution. Long leather straps were covered with iron balls and shards of sheep bone to bruise and ruthlessly tear open the person's back as they were rhythmically whipped by soldiers on either side. Jesus survived the scourging and is now led to Golgotha for His execution.
  - a. No longer strong enough to carry His cross, yet loving enough to bear the burden for others' souls to the very end, read His words from Luke 23:(28), 34, and 43. Which one blesses you the most and why?

10. The chief priests and scribes admitted something very important in Mark 15:31, “He saved others.” They knew that there were eyes once blind but now see, legs once lame but now leap, as well as others who had been healed, delivered, and “saved” because of Him. Yet, now they deny His ability to save Himself.
- a. What did Jesus say was possible in Matthew 26:53 when Peter tried to defend Him?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. What does He say in the next verse that caused Him to restrain from calling for divine help?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. Read Isaiah’s prophetic account of what Jesus was accomplishing by NOT saving Himself from Isaiah 53:4-12. The chief priests, mocking scribes, wicked soldiers, and hate-filled crowd could be saved because Jesus chose not to save Himself. What does Galatians 3:13-14 mean to you today?

*“I learn from the Scriptures that repentance is just as necessary to salvation as faith is, and the faith that has not repentance going with it will have to be repented of.”*  
~ Charles Spurgeon

**Read Mark 15:33-41**

11. Right at the sun’s peak of a Middle Eastern day, creation seems to respond to what is happening to the Creator on the cross. The Holy Spirit gives details where we need them, but conceals with divine silence certain things pertaining with the infinite. Three hours of unpredictable darkness cover the land and all its occupants: and we are only left to speculate what was happening in the kingdom during this time.
- a. As the light returns, what is heard being shouted with strength from Jesus Who is weak and minutes from death?

- b. During the years of the Old Testament, what was God's covenant promise to His people regarding His presence and "being forsaken" as seen in 1 Chronicles 28:9 and 2 Chronicles 15:2?
- c. In the New Testament, after Jesus came and the gift of His Holy Spirit was given, what is God's promise to the righteous from 1 Samuel 12:22, Psalm 37:28, John 10:28-29?
- d. Jesus is the only One, in all of history and for all eternity, Whose life was sinless, Whose love is endless, and yet was still forsaken by God. Though forsaken and His love rejected, He still continued in obedience until His final breath. Because of Jesus paying our price and experiencing the consequences for our sin, we never have to experience the Father's judgment, rejection, abandonment, or being forsaken. As you think and pray about this profound reality, how does it affect you? What is your response?

*"Jesus went without comfort so that you might have it.  
He postponed joy so that you might share in it.  
He willingly chose isolation so that you might never be alone in your hurt and sorrow.  
He had no real fellowship so that fellowship might be yours, this moment.  
This alone is enough cause for great gratitude!"  
~ Joni E. Tada*

*"We must not forget that it wasn't the Jews that put him on the cross,  
and it wasn't the Romans.  
It was my sins, it was your sins, the sins of this world."  
~ Franklin Graham*

12. Notice the purposeful, though easily overlooked, placement of verse 38 in Mark 15. This entire section has been focused outside of the city walls where Jesus has been crucified, yet one sentence stands alone and commands our gaze inside the temple at the curtained wall of separation between a holy God and sinful man. Read Hebrews 6:19-20, 9:7-11 and 10:19-22.

a. In your own words, what does the writer of Hebrews explain happened when Mark 15:38 occurred?

b. There are times we may sense the Lord's Presence with us more easily than others. When is it both easiest and most difficult for you to realize His Presence?

c. As we have inherited the promises of God by becoming His own through adoption, what is the tender promise He wants you to be secure in from 1 Samuel 12:22?

d. Read Matthew 27:51-53. Not only was the wall of separation torn in the temple, but what else was broken, torn, opened or raised?

- e. Seeing the power of God and hearing His words (Luke 23:34), a Roman soldier proclaims His deity in Mark 15:39. Salvation brings life from death, light to darkness, and makes stony hearts break and become soft. Take a moment to think of your own life or someone you know, where this triumphant power of God is needed. Make a few notes here and take some time to lift them privately to God in prayer.

***“For with God nothing will be impossible.”***  
***~ Luke 1:37***

**Read Mark 15:42-47**

13. Turn also to Matthew 27 and read verses 62-66. Man’s best attempts at keeping Jesus entombed are merely means by which He gains greater glory. Whether a body has been dead for days (Lazarus), filled with infection (leper), or imprisoned by demons (Gadarene), nothing can withstand the power and possibilities of God. End your lesson by recalling an experience where you have been an eyewitness to His goodness and glory.

***“Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done,  
And Your thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with You.  
If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to count.”***  
***~ Psalm 40:5***