They all shouted, "Crucify Him"

Mark 15:1-15
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[1] And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders
and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and
delivered him over to Pilate. [2] And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the
Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." [3] And the chief priests accused
him of many things. [4] And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make?
See how many charges they bring against you." [5] But Jesus made no further answer,
so that Pilate was amazed. [6] Now at the feast he used to release for them one
prisoner for whom they asked. [7] And among the rebels in prison, who had
committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. [8] And the
crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. [9] And he
answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"
[10] For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him
up. [11] But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them
Barabbas instead. [12] And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the
man you call the King of the Jews?" [13] And they cried out again, "Crucify him."
[14] And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the
more, "Crucify him." [15] So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them
Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

Whose side are you on?
If you have been with us for the past couple of weeks in the Gospel of Mark, it looks like nobody wants to be on Jesus' side. We have seen that Jesus has had enemies from the time of his first sermon in his hometown. One of Jesus's own disciple betrays him. All his disciples abandon him at the time of Jesus' unlawful arrest. While Peter, the first among the disciples held out some hope, he too denies our Lord.

And if that was not enough for Jesus to grieve about our human condition, we now turn to this passage where religion, power and politics collide to make a scapegoat out of Jesus.

- The Pharisees, the chief priests, the scribes and the elders of the Temple can't hide their hatred for Jesus. They want to see him killed.
- The crowd or the mob demands that a murderer be released and Jesus be crucified.
- Even those who were sympathetic to Jesus, including his disciples, have disappeared into the shadows.
- Pilate the governor and a clever politician is the one with the decisive power to either release or deliver Jesus. He eventually capitulates to the demands of the crowd.

Everybody appears to win, except Jesus.
So, whose side would you be on? If you were a first century Jew or Gentile, you would be better off not to be seen with Jesus or his followers, because you would be seized, arrested, or even killed.

- The Romans would be too powerful for you.
- The Temple authorities would despise you and cast you out for following Jesus.
- The mob would scream at you.

A young man who followed Jesus was seized but he escaped from their hands (Mark 14:51-52).

And yet, everything leading up to the crucifixion and the death of Jesus is the wisdom of God. Listen to Paul from 1 Corinthians 1 – "*For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified…*" 1 Corinthians 1:21-23

You have probably heard people say Christianity is for the weak.

- Sigmund Freud viewed Christianity as a "*slave morality*" that suppressed natural human instincts and promoted weakness.
- One former governor of Minnesota once said that "*Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people*".
- Ted Turner, the founder of CNN once said that "*Christianity is a religion for losers*!"

These people prove Paul right. The "wisdom" of philosophers, politicians and powerful men is folly in the eyes of God. This is the paradox of the Gospel. The gospel message appears foolish in the eyes of the world. The word for folly is *moria*

– where we get the word *moron*. And yet this "*moronic*" Gospel is the only message that is able to save you from the wrath of God. Why? Because it *pleases* God to preach a suffering Christ.

Three implications as we expound this passage.
Implication#1: *Listen* to your suffering Savior!
Implication#2: *Learn* of your silent Savior King!
Implication#3: *Look at* your sinless Savior!
Implication#4: *Love* your sin-bearing Savior!

Implication#1: *Listen* to your suffering Savior!
Verses 1 through 2.
[1] And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate.
[2] And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so."

Jesus is bruised and bound (perhaps with shackles or ropes). Jesus was betrayed, arrested, abandoned, condemned. By now the Lord Jesus Christ is physically weak, hasn't slept all night, wounded and humiliated. And he stands before Pilate. Pilate has the power of both clemency and condemnation.

So, Pilate asks Jesus a question – if Jesus is the King of the Jews. Why the question? No explanation is given in Mark but we can fill in details from the Gospel of John and Luke.
When they bring Jesus to him, Pilate asks "*What accusation do you bring against this man?"* John 18:28.
Their answer: And they began to accuse him, saying, "*We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king*. Luke 23:2.
Jesus answers in the affirmative.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world. And then he makes quite a *startling* statement to Pilate. Jesus says that he has come into this world to bear witness to the truth. And everyone of the truth *listens* to his voice. (John 18:37).

How do you know you are on the side of truth? *Listen* to Jesus.

There are so many voices that vie for your attention, day in and day out, isn't it? Voices from your family. Voices from your workplace. Voices from the media. Voices from world. Whether you believe or deny it, these voices form an impression on you and shape who you are. Some voices are just noises. They won't profit you. But the voice of Jesus always profits.

Application: Do you take time to listen to what your bruised Savior actually says? Begin with reading his Word and hear His Word speak in your life. Don't put too much stock in the things of this world because Jesus' kingdom is not of this world. Jesus' kingdom is much bigger. Jesus is not just the King of the Jews. Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of Lords.

Implication#2: *Learn* from your silent Savior King!
Verses 3 through 5
[3] And the chief priests accused him of many things. [4] And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." [5] But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Notice, Jesus is unassuming and perhaps even unassertive in his silence when he is accused of many things. And Pilate is rather amazed. Jesus does not need to defend himself or respond to lies. Jesus simply answers one question in this whole passage. Jesus is the King who has become a Lamb for sinners.

Application: There are times when you may be tempted to voice your strong opinions, air disagreements, show resentment when things don't go your way or when you are wronged. Or maybe you did the right thing and you suffered loss. Remember what Jesus taught. "*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. bless those curse you. Pray for those who abuse you*." Luke 6:27.
Could not Jesus who healed all the mute and blind have made all his enemies mute and blind with one word? Yes he could but he doesn't.
Yet Jesus said in Matthew 11:29 "*Learn of me for I am gentle and lowly*".

Implication#3: *Look* at your sinless Savior!
Verses 6 through 14.

[6] Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked.
[7] And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection,
there was a man called Barabbas. [8] And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate
to do as he usually did for them. [9] And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me
to release for you the King of the Jews?" [10] For he perceived that it was out of envy
that the chief priests had delivered him up. [11] But the chief priests stirred up the
crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. [12] And Pilate again said to
them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" [13] And
they cried out again, "Crucify him." [14] And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil
has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him."

Pilate's tradition was to release one prisoner upon their request. Barabbas, was a murderer and an insurrectionist. Very few liked Roman dominance over them. Riots and insurrection were not too uncommon. However, Roman power was so great that any rebellion was quickly put down. It's very likely Barabbas had followers and fans among the crowd. Roman law, however, dictated that a man be examined of charges before indictment and condemnation. Pilate knew that. But Pilate knows more. He knew the motive of these religious leaders. They were envious of Jesus. Pilate is a pagan as far as the Temple leaders as concerned.

And yet do you see the irony here: Pilate reads the heart condition of the most religious people. The most religious people on earth claiming to have the Law of God on their side desire to murder the most Innocent man who has ever walked this earth. What a mockery of God's law! What is the use of any religion if it makes you a hater?

- Jesus taught that *envy* (among other sins) springs out of the unconverted heart – "*For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness*" Mark 7:21-22.
- As Christians, these must not be named among you at all – "*put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander"* 1 Peter 2:1

These religious leaders are living out their sin. Their consciences are seared and dead. They have riled up the crowd to have Barabbas released. The religious leaders have become politicians.

They know that some in the crowd would rather have their hero Barabbas released. Their hearts were already sold to murder. They want a murderer released.
But Pilate is somewhat reasonable. What Pilate asks the crowd is a very important question, "What evil has Jesus done?" but the crowd doesn't care. They ask for Barabbas' release but they demand Jesus' crucifixion.

This is a question everyone must consider. What evil has Jesus done? If Jesus has done even the slightest of evil, the whole of humanity would be damned forever. But if Jesus hasn't done a single evil then his sinlessness is great news for you.
Application: When you sin and are ashamed of it (Like Peter you should have sorrow for sin). For *one* look at the ugliness and wretchedness of your sin, take *seven* looks at the sinless Savior.

- Look at Jesus' flawless character.
- Look at the love of Jesus.
- Look at the patience of Jesus.
- Look at the kindness of Jesus.
- Look at the goodness of Jesus.
- Look at the gentleness of Jesus.
- Look at the spotless Jesus.

Pilate asks the third time. And they yell at him – "Crucify Him". So, what does Pilate do? Verse 15.

15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

Pilate has caved in. He releases a murderer. And Jesus, he scourged – he had Jesus punished with a whip made out of bone and metal fragments. And he delivers the verdict. Let Jesus be hung on the cross and die!

To be a Christian is to know the great exchange. You cannot be a Christian unless you know that you were like Barabbas. You may not have committed murder or insurrection like Barabbas, but you fell short of the glory of God and you stole God's glory. You and I deserved the indictment for our sins. And yet because of Jesus' indictment, your indictment and judgment was reversed and passed over. You are freed because Jesus Christ traded places with you.

Implication#4: Love your sin-bearing Savior!

I began with the question, "whose side are you on?"
Moses was succeeded by Joshua. Joshua once met a man with a sword. Joshua did not know who this man was. So Joshua asked the man, "*Are you for us, or for our adversaries?"* The man said, "*No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD*." Joshua 5:13-14. And immediately Joshua fell on his face and began to worship God. You see the man who met Joshua was not on anyone's side. He was on God's side. Who side is Jesus on? Jesus is on God's side. Jesus fulfilled his mission from His Father by allowing himself to betrayed, arrested, condemned, humiliated and now handed over to be crucified.

How do you know whose side you are on?
You know whose side you are on by whom you deny and whom you love.

- If you deny yourself, follow and love Christ, then you're on God's side.
- If you deny Christ, follow the world, the politics, the power, the religion, and self, then you are not on God's side. Therefore, God is not going to be on your side.

Let us love God first. Let us put much effort into loving God. Put your sweat into loving Christ. Let us not neglect loving others. Change something. Make a commitment today that you will pursue loving Jesus without reservation.

The paradox of the gospel is that even those who maliciously murdered Jesus Christ are offered forgiveness.
No matter how much you have sinned when you turn and repent and trust in the death of Jesus Christ for your sin, all your sin will be forgiven.

---------- Discipleship Questions----------

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Peter's Denial. Mark 15:1-15
HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What do you observe about Pilate's question to the crowd and their response? How would you respond to the question, "What evil has Jesus done?" If Jesus did come not commit any evil or sin, why was he condemned? 1 John 3:5, Hebrews 7:26

2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

   - Do you believe your sin was a big deal to God? Why or not?

   - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.
HANDS For personal reflection: What would you stop doing in light of the suffering of Christ?