

Marked for Crucifixion
Message 4 of 5 in the series: "Marked"

A. Early Good Friday morning, the Sanhedrin brought Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor.

1. The Sanhedrin falsely accused Jesus of organizing a rebellion against the Roman government so the Romans would crucify Him. This would allow them to get rid of Jesus and hopefully mark Jesus as a cursed man. "Very early in the morning the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law—the entire high council—met to discuss their next step. They bound Jesus, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor." Mark 15:1 (NLT) "This man has been leading our people astray by telling them **not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king.**" Luke 23:2b (NLT) "If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is executed and hung on a tree, the body must not remain hanging from the tree overnight. You must bury the body that same day, **for anyone who is hung is cursed in the sight of God.**" Deuteronomy 21:22-23a (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus *did* become a cursed man on the cross. "When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing." Galatians 3:13b (NLT)

2. While questioning Jesus, Pontius Pilate quickly recognized that Jesus was no political threat to Rome but a great threat to the jealous Sanhedrin, whom he despised. Pilate tried to set Jesus free using a customary Passover prisoner release as a way out, but the leading priests of Israel stirred up the crowd to demand that Barabbas, a known terrorist, be released and that Jesus be crucified. "**Pilate asked Jesus, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'You have said it.'** Then the leading priests kept accusing him of many crimes, and Pilate asked him, 'Aren't you going to answer them? What about all these charges they are bringing against you?' But Jesus said nothing, much to Pilate's surprise. Now **it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner—anyone the people requested.** One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary who had committed murder in an uprising. The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual. 'Would you like me to release to you this "King of the Jews"?' Pilate asked. (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.) But at this point **the leading priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. Pilate asked them, 'Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' 'Why?' Pilate demanded. 'What crime has he committed?' But the mob roared even louder, 'Crucify him!' So, to pacify the crowd,** Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified."

Mark 15:2-15 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus' kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. "Jesus answered, '**My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom.** If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But **my Kingdom is not of this world.**' Pilate said, 'So you are a king?' Jesus responded, 'You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.' 'What is truth?' Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, '**He is not guilty of any crime.**'" John 18:36-38 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus taking Barabbas' place on the cross is a clear picture of what Jesus has done for (insert name). "For Christ also suffered once for sins, **the righteous for the unrighteous**, to bring you to God." 1 Peter 3:18a (NIV)

IMPORTANT! "You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you are called to testify in a dispute, **do not be swayed by the crowd** to twist justice." Exodus 23:2 (NLT)

3. The Roman soldiers beat and mocked Jesus because they could. "The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor's headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire regiment. They dressed him in a purple robe, and they **wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head.** Then they saluted him and taunted, 'Hail! King of the Jews!' And they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship. When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified." Mark 15:16-20 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus came to die in payment for the sins of sinful, wicked people. While hanging on the cross He said, "**Father, forgive them**, for they don't know what they are doing." Luke 23:34a (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus insists that we forgive others as freely as He's forgiven us. "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. **But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.**" Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)

B. Jesus died on a cross, one of the cruelest forms of capital punishment ever devised.

1. Jesus was so weak from scourging, sorrow, no sleep, and multiple beatings that a bystander from Libya was forced to carry His cross. "A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and **Rufus**.)" Mark 15:21 (NLT) (*Romans 16:13*)
2. Jesus hung on the cross from 9:00am-3:00pm. "And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means 'Place of the Skull'). They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it. **Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They divided his clothes and threw dice to decide who would get each piece.** It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. A sign announced the charge against him. It read, 'The King of the Jews.' Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. **The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery.** 'Ha! Look at you now!' they yelled at him. 'You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!' **The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. 'He saved others,' they scoffed, 'but he can't save himself! Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!'** Even the men who were crucified with Jesus ridiculed him. **At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock.** Then at three o'clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, '*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*' which means '**My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**' Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. 'Wait!' he said. 'Let's see whether Elijah comes to take him down!' **Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.** When the Roman officer who stood facing him saw how he had died, he exclaimed, 'This man truly was the Son of God!' Some women were there, watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of Joseph), and Salome. They had been followers of Jesus and had cared for him while he was in Galilee. Many other women who had come with him to Jerusalem were also there." Mark 15:22-41(NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus was NOT a victim. His crucifixion was a necessary part of God's plan to rescue sinners like us from death and judgement. God inspired David to write about many things that would happen to Jesus on the cross a thousand years earlier. "**My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?** Why are you so far away when I groan for help? ...**Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads,** saying, 'Is this the one who relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save him! If the Lord loves him so much, let the Lord rescue him!' ...My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. **They have pierced my hands and feet...** My enemies stare at me and gloat. **They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing.**"

Psalm 22:1, 7-8, & 16-18 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Darkness was a cosmic sign of God's judgment on sin which was placed on Jesus. A plague of darkness was sent on the Egyptians preceding the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Lift your hand toward heaven, and the land of Egypt will be **covered with a darkness so thick you can feel it.**' So Moses lifted his hand to the sky, and a deep darkness covered the entire land of Egypt for three days." Exodus 10:21-22 (NLT) In 750 BC, God gave the OT prophet Amos a vision of darkness at noon as a sign of judgment on the sins of rebellious Israel. "'In that day,' says the Sovereign Lord, '**I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth while it is still day.** I will turn your celebrations into times of mourning and your singing into weeping. You will wear funeral clothes and shave your heads to show your sorrow—as if your only son had died. How very bitter that day will be!'" Amos 8:9-10 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! The loud cry Jesus uttered just before He died was, "It is finished!" John 19:30b (NLT) In ancient Greek, this phrase is expressed as one word, "tetelestai," which also means, "Paid in full!" Through His death on the cross, Jesus paid in full the sin debt we owe God. "**For the wages of sin is death,** but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! The sanctuary curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross established a New Covenant between Holy God and sinful people. Jesus has made it

possible for anyone who trusts in Him as Lord and Savior to enter into God's presence anytime, anywhere. "And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. **By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.** And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, **let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him.**" Hebrews 10:19-22a (NLT)

C. Jesus' body was hurriedly laid in a rolling stone tomb before sundown.

"This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. As evening approached, **Joseph of Arimathea took a risk** and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. (Joseph was an honored member of the high council, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.) Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he had died yet. The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid." Mark 15:42-47 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Another prophecy was fulfilled when Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man, laid Jesus' body in a new tomb he had prepared for himself. "He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But **he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.**" Isaiah 53:9 (NLT) (*Matthew 27:57*)

John Schmidt • 03-29-26 • john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions:

1. Read Mark 15:1, Luke 23:1-2, Deuteronomy 21:22-23, and Galatians 3:13. Why do you think the Sanhedrin wanted Jesus crucified by order of the Roman Governor so badly that they made up charges against him?
2. Read Mark 15:2-15 & John 18:36-38. Why didn't Pilate view Jesus as threatening as the religious leaders made Him out to be? Why did Pilate give in to the crowd even though he knew Jesus was innocent? Share a time in your life when you gave in to pressure from others and later regretted it. (Exodus 23:2)
3. Is it legitimate to say that Jesus took our place on the cross just like He took the place of Barabbas? Why? Why not? (Romans 3:23, 1 Peter 3:18)
4. Read Mark 15:21. How would you have reacted if you had been forced to carry Jesus' cross? How do you think the experience impacted Simon of Cyrene? (Romans 16:13)
5. Read Mark 15:22-41. Then discuss the following observations:
 - Jesus was NOT a victim. His crucifixion was a necessary part of God's plan to rescue sinners like us from death and judgement. God inspired David to write about many things that would happen to Jesus on the cross a thousand years earlier. (Psalm 22:1, 7-8, & 16-18)
 - Darkness was a cosmic sign of God's judgment on sin which was placed on Jesus. A plague of darkness was sent on the Egyptians preceding the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. (Exodus 10:21-22) And in 750 BC, God gave the OT prophet Amos a vision of darkness at noon as a sign of judgment on the sins of rebellious Israel. (Amos 8:9-10)
 - The loud cry Jesus uttered just before He died was, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) In ancient Greek, this phrase is expressed as one word, "tetelestai," which also means, "Paid in full!" Through His death on the cross, Jesus paid in full the sin debt we owe God. (Romans 6:23)
 - The sanctuary curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross established a New Covenant between Holy God and sinful people. Jesus has made it possible for anyone who trusts in Him as Lord and Savior to enter into God's presence anytime, anywhere. (Hebrews 10:19-22)
6. Spend some time as a group praying for our church this Easter. Please ask God to empower us to proclaim the Good News boldly and joyfully through all that we do. Also ask the Lord to give all of us the desire and the power to invite people who need to know the Lord or need a church home to join us.