

# He Was Pierced for Our Transgressions

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[ 0 : 00 ] Be seated. But I didn't ask you to stand, did I? I forgot that. Well, if you were standing, you can sit down now. If you were sitting, you could stand up now if you want.

I usually have you sit so I can take a drink of water. Now I missed that opportunity. Well, what is it, about 15 days now that we've been self-isolating ourselves in a sense?

And this is upsetting. It's upsetting for me to watch my wife look through the window, tears drawing down her face, staring into nothing.

Breaks my heart. How can I cheer her up? I even considered letting her in. But, you know, rules are rules. That was, I'm teasing.

I'll pay for that one. I'll be outside looking in. As we're called more and more into seclusion, into isolation, I've heard a lot of messages both in the news and in writing about staying positive.

[ 1 : 28 ] That we encourage one another not to think on the negative, to stay positive, to keep looking out for each other and encouraging each other. And I think that's great. That's well and good.

We do not want to foster unnecessary fears or anxiety. There is much we don't know. And the information we have is very limited.

And we don't know which information we're getting that is accurate. And so, we don't want to be afraid for unwarranted reasons. So, that's well and good to stay positive and not dwell on the negative.

But many Christians want to apply that to their Christian faith, to their life. They don't ever want to dwell on dark things. They want only to sing songs that are positive and upbeat.

They want to avoid words like sin and guilt because it might make someone feel bad. It might convict them. And that is seen as negative.

[ 2 : 35 ] Well, the problem with that viewpoint is that's a worldly wisdom kind of thing, to dwell only on what's positive and not think on dark things at all.

And the reason I say that is because we come to a text that is dark. We come to a text that is negative. We come to a text that is about suffering. And so, some would say, we don't want to focus on this.

I remember when I was a young pastor and we used to do a gathering together with other churches on Good Friday. And I was amazed that the focus of that day was not on the death of Christ.

It was on Easter thoughts. It was on positive things. And I thought, why aren't we singing and dwelling on the death of Christ? Why are we afraid of thinking of those things?

And so, what do we do with Christ's suffering? What do we do with Mark 15, where the gospel writer records horrific details of Christ's suffering?

[ 3 : 42 ] Negative thoughts, dark thoughts. If he did not want us to consider these things, why didn't he simply say Jesus died?

And avoid all the other descriptions of what Jesus suffered and endured. What is the value of considering these things, especially at this time?

Some might be thinking today as we're looking at this, why would we look at this text in this kind of day and time? Things are negative enough. Things are difficult.

What is the value? Well, that's the wisdom of God. Here in Mark 15, we've seen the passion of Christ where he suffers both in spirit and in flesh.

We see many details that Mark spells out about Jesus being abused, about the cruelty imposed upon him. He is mocked and taunted, treated with scorn and humiliation and hostility.

[ 4 : 47 ] Why should we consider this, especially today? Is it of any value today through what we're experiencing today, the unknown and the difficulty and the fear of losing jobs or income and those

that are already dealing with those things?

Don't we want a message of hope? Yes, we do. And this is the hope. Listen to what the right says in Hebrews chapter 12.

He says, run the race with endurance. How? How do I keep going? How do I endure? He says, run the race with endurance by looking to Jesus who, who what?

Who was always positive, who loved people, who was encouraging. Is that what he emphasizes?

No, watch. Looking to Jesus who, what? Who endured the cross, despising the shame.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself. Why should we consider these things?

[ 5 : 56 ] Why should we think about the suffering that Jesus did? Why should we think about the hostility that Jesus endured? Listen to what the Hebrew writer writes. Consider him who endured this.

Why? So that you may not grow weary or lose heart. Did you hear that?

Consider his suffering that you may not yourself grow weary or lose heart. In other words, thinking and considering the suffering that Jesus went through will encourage us.

It will strengthen us to endure. It gives us hope. The very thing the world says won't give you hope, focusing on negative, is what God says.

It's the very thing that will give you hope. It's the very thing that will strengthen you. This is the mystery of God. So, let us consider this.

[ 7 : 02 ] This is very relevant to us today. When Jesus began his final year, way back in Mark chapter 8. Remember, little log folks, when we were in Mark chapter 8, probably about a year ago, maybe.

A year, when Jesus had just a year left, he began his deliberate walk to the cross. He began to tell his disciples, I am going to Jerusalem.

There I will be betrayed. I will be condemned. I will be delivered over to the Gentiles. I will be mocked. And I will suffer. And I will be killed.

And in three days, I will rise again. So, Jesus began a year before talking about this. Three times in Mark chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 10, Jesus foretold details of how he would suffer and die and rise again.

So, what I want us to see is that as we come to Jesus dealing with the cross, Jesus has already been dealing with the cross for many, many months before this.

[ 8 : 19 ] He's already been denying himself. We see that all along. And then in the last week, in the day before, he was in Gethsemane denying himself.

Remember, he prayed three times, Father, let this cup pass from me, yet not my will, but your will. Not my will, but your will.

Not what I want, but what you want. He's denying himself. And then in his trial before the chief priests and the elders, he was silent. He did not defend himself.

He did not give a defense. And actually, they had nothing to charge him with, so he gave them a confession.

They asked, are you the Christ, the Son of God? Excuse me. He said, I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on clouds of glory.

[ 9 : 20 ] With that, the Sanhedrin tore their robes and claimed he was blasphemous, claiming to be equal with God himself.

Now, Jesus had actually endured five different trials or examinations. Mark only shows us the one before the high priest and then the one before Pilate. But as we put all four Gospels together, we see that there were two Jewish parts to this trial.

He was before Annas, the former chief priests, and the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the present high priest. There he's charged with blasphemy.

Then they sent him to the Romans, and he comes first to Pilate. Pilate tries to get rid of him and sends him to King Herod, so in quote-unquote King Herod. And then Herod sends him back to Pilate.

So he's been examined five different ways. And the Roman phase, they would not care about the charge of blasphemy, but they do care about the charge of claiming to be a king.

[ 10 : 30 ] And so the Jews who bring him to Pilate, the Roman governor, spin it. They spin it to, he's a political danger. He is a rebel king.

He's stirring up the crowds, and he's forbidding the payment of taxes. And of course, in all these things, they've twisted the words of Jesus. But what's remarkable is in all of this, Jesus does not defend himself.

He is laying down his life. He is denying himself. And now as we come to Mark 15, our text today, Mark 15, 15 and following, Jesus is confronted with the cross.

And as the Hebrew writer says, he endures the cross by despising the shame. And I find that is a fascinating phrase.

He despises the shame. What's despising? Despising is when we literally, we think down on something. We look down on something. We regard it of little import.

[11:37] So Jesus, in regard to the shame that he's enduring, that he's experiencing, is actually looking down on that experience. People are despising him. He's despising not them, but the experience that he's going through.

He's despising, looking down on, not regarding as big importance, that he goes through shame and humiliation and suffering. That's remarkable. But that's what the Hebrew writer tells us.

That's how he endured, by despising the shame. By looking down on it, not thinking much of it, not fearing it. Accepting it. Enduring it. So as we look at Jesus despising the shame that he goes through, I want to ask this question we asked earlier.

Why do the Gospels, and Mark particularly, why do they detail the suffering of shame and humiliation of Jesus? Why do they detail that? Why do we consider that?

How is that of value to us? Well, we've already read from Hebrews 12 that talks about how it can encourage us. It gives us hope. It strengthens our own endurance. But from Mark himself, I want you to see two things.

[12:52] He emphasizes two things in verses 15 through verses 32. First, he emphasizes God's plan.

And he does that by giving echoes of prophecy from the Old Testament. Psalm 22, Psalm 69, Psalm 50, Isaiah 53.

We hear through Mark's description echoes of the prophecies. So it shows us God's, he's reminding us this is something God has planned. And then secondly, we see in Mark's description, irony.

He talks about those who are condemning him and being sarcastic and taunting him and mocking him. The ironic thing is while they're doing that, they're actually proclaiming the truth.

They're taunting him as king. And they think a false king, but in reality, he is king. So even from these folks who are doing blasphemy, they're actually speaking truth.

[14:02] So we see the irony. And what we see then as well is God's wisdom. So two reasons we should consider this and look at the detail of what Mark has described for us.

One is we see God's plan and two, we see God's wisdom. So first of all, in verses 15 to 24, Mark's description is he's writing to emphasize God's plan of his suffering Savior.

To emphasize God's plan of his suffering Savior. And he's emphasizing it by these echoes from Psalm 22, 50, 69, Isaiah 53. He's put those words in there that remind us if we've read those terms, we recognize those words we've seen before.

So Mark shows us that Jesus suffers in two ways. He suffers spiritual abuse, the mocking and the shame.

And he also suffers physical abuse. Now spiritual abuse, you might call that psychological, emotional. I'd rather categorize it as spiritual because as they're taunting him as king, he really is king.

[15:14] As they're taunting him for the temple, he really is the temple. As they taunt him for not being able to save himself, he really is the Savior. So it's spiritual abuse.

And I want you to notice the way Mark describes his emphasis is not on the physical suffering, but on the spiritual, psychological, emotional kind of suffering.

Notice verse 15, the soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is the governor's headquarters. And they called together the whole battalion, at least 200 to 600 Roman soldiers.

And they clothed them in a purple cloak. Why purple cloak? Well, that's royalty. He put the robe of the king on him, a mocking king. And they clothed them with a purple cloak.

And then they twisted a crown of thorns. I've got to be careful here. We have a crown of thorns right here. They twisted a crown of thorns and put it on his head. A mocking again, a wreath kind of crown, but with thorns to have a biting edge to it.

[16:24] They put it on him. And then they began to salute him. Hail, king. They're taunting him as if he's the king with his robes and his crown.

And hail, king, they say. King of the Jews. And then they strike him with a reed. And they spit on him. And they kneel down and pretend to worship him.

Mark says this is mocking. They're mocking him. They're putting him to shame. They're taunting him.

They're humiliating him. And Mark's description focuses more on this kind of humiliation and shame and spiritual abuse than it does on the physical elements.

In fact, Mark is quite restrained about the physical torture Jesus went through. He does not... So that's interesting as well. That ought to teach us about what we focus on and what we...

[17:27] How we share the message of Christ is... Mark is not sensationalizing the physical torture. He's not sentimentalizing it. He's just simply describing in very concise language.

So the spiritual abuse comes from the soldiers who are bullies. And then we see later in verse 29 it comes from others. We're told in verse 29 that there are those who passed by, are deriding him, literally blaspheming him, using abusive verbal abuse language.

They're bypassers. You've heard of drive-by shootings? These are passerby shootings, verbal shots at Jesus. When Jesus was on this Golgotha Hill and he is hanging on this cross, it's on the road.

The Romans put him public where all could see him, where people are walking by and they can see the criminals and deride them and mock them and taunt them.

And isn't that the case when somebody's dying? Even when we have folks facing lethal injection, crowds show up, don't they? One way or the other to support him or to taunt him.

[18:52] It's still the same. And so we see that these drive-by and pass-by blasphemers are railing abuse at him.

Verse 29, wagging their heads. That's a sign of contempt. Saying, aha, you who had destroyed the temple and rebuilt it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross.

Come on, show us the power that you have. They're taunting, bullying him. So we have spiritual abuse, but we also have physical abuse.

Paul, excuse me, Mark, shows great restraint in talking about the kind of physical torture that Jesus went through. He states it without describing it.

He states that he's crucified. He states that he was flogged, but he doesn't describe what that was, what that looked like. Of course, he's writing to most likely the Roman population.

[19:50] And Romans in the Roman church would know exactly what crucifixion is. They would know exactly what flogging was. They didn't need a bloody description of it. Verse 15 says that before Jesus was crucified, he was scourged or flogged, whipped.

This was a manner of preparing the criminal for crucifixion in order to shorten the duration. Many people under Roman flogging died.

That's how difficult it was. And we see that when Jesus was let out to be crucified, he starts carrying his own cross.

But then in verse 21, we're told, Mark says that another passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, was asked to, not asked, but compelled to carry the cross of Jesus. Why? Probably because Jesus was so weak, so beaten by the flogging and the hitting and all that was going on.

[20:57] He could not carry it all the way. Interesting, Mark in verse 21 mentions this Simon and he even says he's the father of two other names.

It's very unusual for Mark to give all that detail about this person that was just carrying the cross. But most believe that Simon, by giving him the name and then referring to his two sons, were well known in the Roman church.

These were likely believers or became believers later. We know Rufus, who one of his sons, Rufus, was in the Roman church later that Paul writes to. So just interesting, more connections of the Roman church going on in Mark's gospel.

So Jesus was flogged or scourged. And then verse 20 says he was crucified. They led him out to crucify him. This term is mentioned seven times here. They crucified him, verse 24.

They crucified him, verse 25. They crucified him on and on, seven times. And to crucify literally means to nail to a cross.

[ 22 : 07 ] Now sometimes when they crucified people, they would tie them with ropes to the beams of the cross. But we know Jesus was nailed to the cross because the gospel of John tells us that his hands and his feet were nailed to the beams.

So he would be first, he would carry the cross beam out to Golgotha. He would carry the big beam out to Golgotha.

Once they got there, then they would nail his hands. Well, not his hands. We know from archaeology that they nailed the spikes through the wrists.

But in Hebrew, the hand refers to that whole section. So through the wrists and then through the ankles so that he wouldn't slip, he would be on there. I don't want to go into a lot of detail about it. You understand? It's a brutal, violent thing. It was the most cruel torture that the Romans could come up with. They had borrowed it from another culture and taken it because they found it to be very detrimental to future crime.

[ 23 : 19 ] That's why they also made it public. This is what happens to you if you rebel against Rome. This is what will happen to you. And so they were deterring crime.

Even the description, verse 22, of the place where they go, Golgotha, is an intimidating place. Golgotha is the Aramaic. Calvary is the Latin, the Roman language of the same word that means skull place.

So you have skull and crossbones. It's kind of like this is the skull place. You see poison with a label and it has skull and crossbones on there. You read that and you go, okay, whoa, that's dangerous. Well, you come to Golgotha and that's what you think. That's the skull place. That's where people are executed. That's where people die. And so this is where they take Jesus, the place of the skull. Verse 23, they offer him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. The myrrh, this mixture of wine and myrrh was a narcotic. It was to lessen the pain.

[ 24 : 33 ] It's probably not the Roman soldiers offering it to him. It's probably the women. There were women there. We find out at the end of chapter 15, there were women there that probably would have, let's offer Jesus some relief.

Jesus wouldn't take it. Doesn't want to be affected apparently. Or numbed in this process. So Mark is emphasizing to us God's plan.

We hear the echoes of Psalm 22, which foreshadows the suffering of a righteous man.

And we know that Psalm 22 was on Jesus' mind as he hung on the cross. He quotes it. He speaks the first verse of Psalm 22 when he cries, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

This Psalm, listen to the words. I'm just going to read some of Psalm 22. You can hear the echoes of what Mark is describing. Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[ 25 : 46 ] Why are you so far from saving me from the words of my groaning? Oh, my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer.

And by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you, our fathers trusted.

They trusted and you delivered them. To you, they cried and were rescued. In you, they trusted and were not put to shame. But I am a worm and not a man.

Scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me. They make mouths at me.

They wag their heads. They say, he trusts in the Lord. Let him deliver him. Let him rescue him, for he delights in him. They mock me.

[ 26 : 50 ] Be not far from me, for trouble is near and there is none to help. I am poured out like water. And all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax.

It is melted within my breast. My strength is dried up like a potsherd. And my tongue sticks to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs encompass me. A company of evildoers encircles me. They have pierced my hands and my feet. That's pretty specific, don't you think?

They have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them. And for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, do not be far off. O you, my help, come quickly to my aid. Undoubtedly, these words of Psalm 22 come to Jesus' mind as he hangs on the cross.

[ 27 : 57 ] They are clearly on Mark's mind as he is relaying the information of what Jesus went through. He uses some of these words. The mocking, the scorning, the despising, the wagging of

the heads, the piercing of the hands, dividing of the garments and the casting of lots.

This is no coincidence. The psalmist, a thousand years before, writes these words that describes a spiritual and physical suffering of a righteous person who trusts in God.

And so we see in Jesus' suffering, his endurance. And his endurance through suffering helps us to endure.

God's plan is not a Savior who triumphs by force. Not a heroic man who overcomes all evil that is physical.

But he triumphs by taking our place and bearing our shame and paying our debt. What is the effect of looking at these words and considering the spiritual abuse and the physical abuse that Jesus endured?

[ 29 : 16 ] I don't know about you, but the effect is to awaken hatred of my own sin. It's my sin that put him there. It moves me to want to repent more genuinely.

And his suffering stirs in me as I consider how he endured. It stirs in me that in him I can endure too. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Because he walked the path before me and now he gives me strength to walk a difficult path as well. Is that not hope? So what is the value of considering the sufferings of Christ?

Well, first, we see God's plan. God has planned it that way. It is his way. The second, we see an emphasis in Mark's writing that shows us not only God's plan, but God's wisdom.

Mark writes in such a way that he shows God's wisdom in the foolishness of the cross. Mark displays that in his writing by the use of irony.

[ 30 : 24 ] The mockers are unintentionally proclaiming the truth. They are speaking sarcastically of him as a king and as a savior. And yet, in reality, that's exactly who he is.

So it's the foolishness of the cross. It's not man's way of doing it. Everything that appears one way is not how it's really going.

That's what Mark wants us to see. And Mark knows that his readers have heard enough about Jesus in the 14 chapters before this to know this is not a surprise.

This is not evil winning. This is not a disaster. Jesus has been talking about it all along. God has talked about it in the past all along.

Excuse me. Got allergies. So I want you to notice the allergy. No, I don't want you to notice it. I want you to notice the irony. In verse 26, first he's called king.

[ 31 : 31 ] Now, in verses 16 to 20, the soldiers were mocking him as king. But then again, in verse 26, we see that verse 25, it's the third hour when they crucified him.

So that was 9 a.m. And later he tells us that darkness came at 12 p.m. And then at 3 p.m. is when Jesus cried out and died. So he was on the cross for at least six hours.

But in verse 25 or 26, he says, there was an inscription of the charge against him that read king of the Jews. So when the Romans crucified somebody, when they were executing them, they would put a placard.

They would either hang it around their neck or in this case, we're told that it was nailed above Jesus' head on the cross. And it gave the reason why he's being crucified.

It gave the charge. This is his crime. King of the Jews. That's his crime. In other words, he's a rebel. He's a false king, obviously.

[ 32 : 32 ] A pretend king hanging on the cross. Not a king to be admired. It's a joke to Pilate to write that he's king.

But then I want you to notice Mark's language in the next verse. His charge is king. But verse 27, he says, And with him they crucified two robbers.

Okay? So we have three crosses. Jesus in the middle. But notice that Mark says, instead of saying he was crucified between two robbers, which would be the economical and normal way of writing.

Notice how Mark puts it. He says, with him were crucified two robbers. One on his right and one on his left.

What language is that? When do we talk about people sitting on the right or on the left? Remember James and John said, Master, when you come to your kingdom, we want to sit on your right and on your left.

[ 33 : 41 ] That's enthronement language. Here's Jesus the king, Mark is hinting, who is enthroned on a cross. And there are those on his right and his left.

But it's ironic because the picture, what we look at is, that's not a throne, that's a cross. That's not glorious, that's defeat.

He's a failure. Look at him hanging on the cross, he's a failure. Evil wins. The devil has won. He has bruised him on the heel.

He has tripped up the Christ. But Mark wants us to know that not all is as it seems.

The world views the cross as something foolish and weak. What savior saves people by dying on a cross? That's ridiculous. No, you have to go rescue them.

[ 34 : 45 ] You have to beat up the bad guys. And you have to deliver them and capture them. Yet, it is by the cross that Jesus is, in fact, rescuing his people.

He is delivering the captives. He is conquering sin and guilt and making the enemy ineffective.

There's the irony of the king. There's more irony in verse 29 and 30 about the temple. Now they taunt him about the temple. Verse 29, 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 and come down from the cross. The temple. They taunt him about the temple. And, of course, they've got his saying wrong. That was one of the charges the Jews brought against Jesus, that he was going to destroy the temple and then rebuild it in three days.

Well, look, here he is hanging on a cross. Obviously, he's a failure again. Obviously, his efforts are futile. He did not destroy the temple. He did not raise it again.

[ 36 : 03 ] He's a fraud. God, that's what we see with our eyes. Yet, what Jesus really said was, Destroy this temple, speaking of his own body.

You destroy this temple. And in three days, I will raise it up. Well, what is happening right now on the cross? They are destroying the temple of Jesus' body.

And in three days, he will, in fact, rise from the dead. He will not just as a body risen from the dead, but he is now saying, I'm the new temple.

There's a new way to worship God. There's a new way to come to God. Instead of going through all the sacrifices, you come through me. I'm now the new temple. That's where you meet God face to face through my name.

Irony again, verse 30 to 32. Is he a savior? They taunt him as a false savior, as an ineffective, powerless, helpless savior.

[ 37 : 13 ] Verse 30, save yourself. Come down from the cross. Obviously, he can't do that. Verse 31, also the chief priests and the scribes mock him to one another, saying, he saved others, but he can't save himself.

Is he a savior? They scoff at him as a savior. He saved others. And by that, they probably mean he healed people. We've heard about all the reports how he healed the blind and the deaf and the leper was cleansed.

And there's even reports that Jesus raised the dead, which Lazarus had been raised just a couple of days before this. He healed others.

He saved others. He made others well. He rescued them from harm. But he can't save himself. He's helpless and powerless. How can he be a savior?

Well, here's the very irony. And I think this is where Mark writes it so well, that if we have eyes to see, we can see it. The irony is they said he saved others.

[ 38 : 19 ] Yes. Yes. And he still is. And that's exactly what he's doing because he's about others. He's not about himself. I did not, Jesus said earlier in Mark 10, I did not come to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for others.

So when we read these words, we who are careful readers of the gospel of Mark, remember those kind of words. And they go, no, no, no. Mark has put it so brilliantly.

He's let the enemies of Christ actually tell the truth. Oh, he saved others. Yes. He's still saving them.

That's what he does. He does not use his power to serve himself. He uses his power to save others.

It is not nails that hold him to the cross. It is his love. It is his obedience to the father that holds him to the cross.

[ 39 : 32 ] Did he want to be on that cross? No. We remember in Gethsemane how he prayed, please let this cup pass. I don't want it. But what?

Obedience. Not my will, but your will. That's what holds him to the cross. And we know he's a loving savior. He cares about his people. And so he doesn't let the taunting and the scorn and the scoffing get to him.

Mark shows us this irony. He shows that there's God's wisdom in the midst of the foolishness of the outward looking cross.

A cross. Is the cross a symbol of power? Isn't it a symbol of death? The cross to the world's eyes and to the physical eye looks like a defeat.

Looks like a failure. Looks like tragedy. But really, it's God's wisdom overcoming man's wisdom.

[ 40 : 52 ] This is what Paul describes in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and chapter 2. He talks about the cross, which seems like weak and foolish, is actually in truth power and wisdom of God.

Listen to how Paul describes it in Colossians. Not Colossians. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 beginning at 17. He says, Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

How shall I preach? Not with words of eloquent wisdom. Not with words of persuasion. Not with words of twisting and manipulating people.

No. Not with words of eloquent wisdom. Why? Lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Power. You see, if we try to make the cross look good in men's eyes, we empty it of its power.

He's saying, I don't use eloquent wisdom. I don't try to dress it up. It is what it is. And that's its power. For the word of the cross, the whole message of the cross, is what is folly, foolishness to those who are perishing.

[ 42 : 15 ] But to us, to us who are being saved, what is it? It's the power of God. And we only know that after we've been saved.

We don't know that before. It's foolish to the ones who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is power of God. Paul says, we preach Christ crucified.

There's those words. He doesn't say we preach Christ who died. We say, we preach Christ crucified, nailed to a cross, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Paul goes on in chapter 2.

He says, when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech and wisdom. I didn't use the persuasive language of the philosophers.

[ 43 : 19 ] For I decided to know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified. Just the bare facts. Just the straightforward truth. Not dressing it up.

Not sentimentalizing it. Not dressing it up in some fancy way. Not making it look good to men. And he says, as I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling in my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, meaning men's wisdom, but my words were in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

Why? Why does Paul deliberately make sure that his message is not a manipulation, not a fancy, it's just straightforward preaching?

Why does Paul do that? Why is he deliberate about his method? I thought methods were open. No, Paul says his method is, this is God's method. It is preaching.

And I know preaching, even then, was outdated, by the way. It's God's way. It's just a simple proclamation. It's just a declaration of what's true without trying to dress it up.

[ 44 : 31 ] So why does Paul say, I do this? Not in wisdom, not with lofty speech, but in demonstration of the spirit and power. Why? So that your faith will not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

See, when I preach the gospel, I don't want people who think they get saved because they grabbed onto an idea. No, I want to know people got saved because I just simply preached the straight gospel truth and God miraculously changed them.

God suddenly gave them ears to hear. God suddenly gave them eyes to see. See, conversion and being reborn is a miracle, not a process we can just take people through, through step one, two, three.

I can testify. Because for 15 years I lived in the church and I thought I was a Christian. I was not. And I did everything they told me to do.

And it wasn't until God changed my heart that I truly believed and was changed. Why does Jesus not come down from the cross?

[ 45 : 42 ] They taunt him in the end of verse 32. Come down from the cross. Then we will see and believe. Oh, wouldn't have that been, wouldn't have that have been, I got to figure out the English on this sentence.

Wouldn't have that been, would that have been great? No, does that work? Never mind. I lost you by now. If he's hanging on the cross and he comes down, wouldn't that, they would see and believe then, right?

No, they didn't believe when he did the miracles. They didn't believe when he spoke them through. They're just taunting. Why doesn't he come down from the cross?

Why doesn't he show his power? Well, ironically, he is showing his power. Because as he hangs on the cross, he is effectively saving people.

Because he is paying their debt. Listen to how Paul puts it in Colossians 2. He says, You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

[ 47 : 03 ] This, the demands, the debt, he set aside how? Paul says, by nailing it to the cross. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, so were your sins.

So were your debts. That's how you're forgiven. This is God's way. Your life comes from his death. He is the substitute for you.

He was pierced for our transgressions. He bore our sin. He paid our debt so that we might be right with God, have peace with God, and have hope that even through difficult times, we have hope that God has a plan, God has a purpose.

While we were yet enemies, Christ died for us. So, why should we consider such a negative subject like the suffering of Jesus?

Why should we consider such dark things? once again, Hebrews 12 says, looking to Jesus, who endured the cross, despising the shame, consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

[ 48 : 38 ] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for that even in what looks like foolishness, you bring about wisdom.

We thank you, Father, that in Jesus we see love, we see obedience, we see God's plan, and we see God's wisdom.

Open our eyes, O Father, that we might see and move us through these considerations to awaken in us a hatred of sin, to stir in us, Lord, a desire to repent more fully and encourage us and strengthen us, Father, by recognizing Jesus walked before us in these things, and as I trust in him, I too can endure difficulty.

For this we thank you in Christ's name. Amen.