

The Two Crucifixions of Christ

- * I've come to appreciate that the Gospels are radically different
- They all speak of the same events, but their emphasis is dramatically different
- God intends us to receive different lessons from each one
- God understands that we are all different, and that we go through very different periods in our lives, and He intended different messages for us all
- This is no different when we come to the death of Jesus
- Mark and Luke tell two radically different stories of the death of Jesus
- Of course, the facts are the same, as Jesus only did die once
- But, the tenor and emotional impact of each story is dramatically different
- I'd like to show this morning that there is more than one lesson that we can get from the event that we are here to remember this morning
- Mark's message that God's purposes are worked out **THROUGH** suffering, not by avoiding it
- And Luke's message that sometimes you just have to be strong and persevere
- First, let's look at **Jesus' Death in Mark**
- **Mark 15**
- 1 - Jesus is delivered to Pilate
- 2-5 - Pilate questions Jesus, but he doesn't say a thing to Pilate
- 6-14 - Pilate tries to release him, but the Jews won't have it
- 15 - Jesus is condemned to death by Pontius Pilate

- 16-19 - Jesus is mocked and beaten by the Roman Soldiers
- 20 - Taken off to be crucified
- 21 - Simon of Cyrene carries his cross
- **NOTICE** That Jesus says nothing the entire time
- 25 - The Soldiers crucify Jesus, and he still says nothing
- 29 - Those passing by mock him
- 31 - The Jewish Leaders mock him
- 32 - Both of the thieves being crucified with him mock him
- 34 - Jesus is silent until the very end, when he utters the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
- 36 - Someone gives Jesus a sponge with sour wine to drink
- 37 - He breathes his last and dies
- 38 - Immediately the Curtain in the Temple is ripped in half
- 39 - The Centurion looking on acknowledges, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

- This is an emotional and a pathetic scene
- Jesus is silent, as if in shock
- When he speaks, it is just to question God about why this has happened to him
- Jesus has been rejected by everyone
- Betrayed by his own
- Denied three times by his closest follower
- Abandoned by all his Disciples
- Rejected by the Jewish Leaders

- Condemned by the Roman Authorities
- Mocked by the Priests
- Mocked by the Passersby
- Even mocked by the criminals being crucified with him
- It's reasonable that under these circumstances Jesus would feel forsaken by God
- This is a terribly sad and depressing moment
- Jesus is in the absolute depths of despair and heart-wrenching anguish
- And that is how he dies
- That is how the story comes to an end in Mark
- Mark wants us to feel our Lord's pain
- Mark wants us to appreciate how terrible a thing this was
- Mark doesn't want us to take solace in the fact that God really was there with Jesus
- Mark wants us to realize that Jesus died in agony, all alone and unsure of why
- But, Mark doesn't leave us there...
- Immediately after his death the Curtain rips in half, and the Centurion makes his confession
- The Curtain ripping in half shows that with the death of Jesus, God is made available to His people directly and not through the Jewish priests' sacrifices in the Temple
- Jesus' death has brought atonement
- We are no longer separated from God by a ceremonial veil
- We have direct access to the love and mercy of our Father
- And the first person to realize this isn't his followers, or even the Jewish onlookers, but the Centurion

- It's a Gentile who realizes that Jesus' death brings salvation, and it is Gentiles who are going to continue to recognize this years after his death
- Mark gives us the facts of what happened on that mournful day, but he also provides us with a moving message that ultimately ends in hope
- A message of hope of salvation for each one of us here
- It's also a message of hope for those who suffer
- It's a message that understands what it is like to experience pain and misery
- Even if you may not know why you are suffering, the message is clear: **God knows**
- God is watching and He cares
- God is working behind the scenes to make sure that your suffering is redemptive
- God's purposes are worked out **THROUGH** suffering, not by avoiding it
- Even when those purposes are not obvious at the moment
- Jesus suffered silently strengthened by his knowledge that God was in control of what lay ahead of him
- Romans 8:17-18 NLT
 - 17) And since we are his children, we will share his treasures—for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.
 - 18) Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later.
- When we face struggles, and feel like we are not going to make it through another week, that is all the more reason for us to come here
- That is the reason for us to reach out and take this Bread and Wine, and remember the suffering that our Lord endured for us
- That is the time for us to remember that God doesn't promise that our lives will be trouble free, but He does promise that He will be there for us
- To care for us, and to carry us **THROUGH** our suffering

- Now, let's look at **Jesus' Death in Luke**

Luke 23

- Just like in Mark, Jesus is betrayed by Judas
- Denied by Peter
- Rejected by the Jewish Leaders
- 1 - Delivered to Pontius Pilate
- 3 - But, when Pilate asks him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?", Jesus answers him
- 4 - Pilate tell the Jewish Leaders that he finds no fault in Jesus
- He is not mocked and beaten by Pilate's Soldiers
- 6-7 - Pilate tries to get King Herod to deal with Jesus and sends Jesus to him
- 11 - It is Herod's Soldiers who mock Jesus before Pilate finds him guilty
- 14 - Pilate tells the Jewish people that he finds no fault in Jesus
- 14 - Pilate also states that Herod didn't find any fault in Jesus as well
- 15-23 - Pilate tries to release him, but the Jews won't have it
- 24 - Jesus is condemned to death by Pilate
- 25 - Jesus is lead away to be crucified, and Simon of Cyrene is compelled to carry his Cross
- **BUT** - Jesus is not silent on the way to his Crucifixion
- 28 - He speaks to a group of women
- He warns them about the coming destruction that they will face
- Jesus does not appear to be in shock over what is happening to him
- He appears to be more concerned about the fate of others than his own
- Jesus is not silent when nailed to the cross

- 34 - He prays, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”
- Again, he seems more concerned about those who are doing this terrible thing to him, than he is for himself
- 35 - Jesus is mocked by the Jewish Leaders
- 36 - Jesus is mocked by the Roman Soldiers
- 39-41 - But, he is not mocked by both men being crucified with him
- Instead, one mocks him, but the other rebukes the first for doing so, insisting that while they deserve what they are getting, Jesus has done nothing wrong
- Jesus’ innocence is stated over and over again in Luke
- 42 - The thief asks for Jesus to remember him in the Kingdom
- 43 - Jesus tells him that he will be with him in Paradise
- Again, Jesus seems to be looking out for the welfare of those around him
- Jesus isn’t questioning or wondering about what is happening
- He seems very calm and in control of the situation
- He knows what is about to occur, and he knows what will happen afterward
- He knows that when he wakes up he will be with God
- His concern is for those who also have to “suffer” through this tumultuous time
- He seeks to comfort and encourage anyone that he comes in contact with
- 44 - Darkness comes over the land
- 45 - The Curtain is ripped while Jesus is still alive
- His death represents the hour of darkness for the Jews, and marks the Judgment of God against the Jewish People
- The ripped Curtain represents that God is rejecting the Jewish system of worship, which is symbolized by the temple

- 46 - In the end, Jesus calls out a prayer to God in a loud voice, confidently stating, *“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”*
- This is not a Lord who feels abandoned or forsaken
- This is not a Lord who wonders why he is going through the pain of desertion and death
- This is a Lord who feels God’s presence with him and is comforted by the fact that God is on his side
- He is totally cognizant of what is happening to him and why
- He is confident of what is going to happen next
- He commits himself to the loving care of his Heavenly Father
- 47 - The Centurion then confirms what Luke has already told us over and over, *“Surely, this was a righteous man.”*
- Luke’s message to us is one of confidence and hope
- Rather than stressing, like Mark did, about how God is at work behind the scenes, even when you don’t understand why things are happening to you in your life...
- Luke wants us to understand that sometimes you just have to be strong and persevere
- Luke wants us to understand that often suffering is necessary for the rewards of being with Jesus in Paradise, and that it will soon be over
- Luke wants us to be confident, and to be calm and in control, even when terrible things are happening, knowing full well, that this too will pass, and the reward is soon to come
- Luke wants us to keep our eyes on Jesus
- Hebrews 12:2-3 NLT
 - 2) Keep your eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God’s throne in heaven.
 - 3) Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don’t become weary and give up.

- Now, I want to be very clear with you about what I believe...
- There **IS** only One Death, One Burial, and One Resurrection
- But, clearly, in Mark and Luke, there are two completely different sides of the story
- Two, distinct and different, valid and complete understandings of the same event
- When you read through the Gospels, and you see different versions of the same story, don't just try to piece them together, and blend them into one homogenous version
- God intends us to hear from multiple writers about completely different, yet equally helpful interpretations of the same verses
- You see, there are more than two Crucifixions
- I'm sure that there are others that I haven't noticed, and you've always looked at it a different way
- God intends each one of us to be spoken to directly by this event that is central to our faith and our belief
- The whole Bible is intended to be read, understood and interpreted by each one of us
- That's the beauty and value of us reading, studying, speaking and sharing the Bible together, here on Sunday Morning, Wednesday at Class, and every time we get together
- There isn't simply one way to look at things, and only one lesson to be gained
- This death that we are here to remember this morning touches each one of us
- And as surely as each one of us is unique and individual, this death speaks in a different way to each one of us
- One is not wrong, and one is not right
- As long as the message of salvation represented in this Bread and Wine comes to you personally, not to us as Christadelphians, not to me, or to anyone else, but to you
- As long as you hear your own story of this Crucifixion...
- Then the death of our Lord is not in vain