The Crucifixion of Jesus

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Such great songs today about the salvation we have in Christ and His work on the cross and His willingness to save.

I know that song has a very special place in the hearts of so many. It's a reminder for us today at our church that we love to sing music that's biblical, that helps people know the Bible and know doctrine, know Christ.
We want to sing songs that are old, songs that are new. The songs we sing here are songs that are biblical and edifying and singable.
And we love songs that have been around for years, and we love songs that are new expressions of our praise to the Lord. We do—I love—I love the old hymns so much, and that's why this Wednesday we're going to take some time just to invite any of you that want to come at 10 o'clock to sing some of the old hymns with us.
I'm thankful for every new song. We remind ourselves every old song we love at once was a new song. So, it's not about being old or new. It's about being biblical and edifying for the body of Christ.
[1:19] But Marcy and I do love to sing the old hymns as well. And so, this Wednesday at 10 o'clock, we invite you to come and join us as we do that.

I can't help but think of the uniqueness of this day. 24 years ago, on this Sunday, Marcy and I began our time of ministry here at First Baptist Mustang.
It was our very first Sunday. I started on a Sunday, so I didn't really know anybody. We had a one-year-old, and Marcy was pregnant with a second baby on the way. 24 years later, we have two sons, both married.
The Lord's blessed us with two grandchildren. And in some ways, I guess it feels like 24 years have flown by. In another way, it's hard to even think of our life not connected with you here.
You probably know how that feels. Just time hurries, and also it's just the way it's always been at the same time. When the Lord brought me here 24 years ago, if I remember correctly, I think I preached the very first Sunday I was here.
[2:29] I think it was on Daniel chapter 3. And I remember wondering—in fact, I shared this with our staff Monday a little bit. I remember knowing the Lord had called us here.

We were thrilled the Lord had called us here. But I remember wondering, would this ever feel like home? The church we were at, we had been there for about seven years. We'd been married in that church.
I was ordained in that church. We had our first baby while at that church. First full-time ministry job was at that church. Sweet people in a church we still to this day are so thankful for. And I remember thinking, I know God's called us here.
We're glad God's called us here. But would this ever be home? Would this ever feel like home? And by God's grace, it is the joy and honor of our lives to have been able to have called this place home for 24 years.
And if the Lord should so allow, Mars and I would like nothing better than to live the rest of our lives here. Here's the plan, as my wife has it.
[3:32] We serve here. She dies first. And then she doesn't care what happens to me after that. She's made me promise that I will outlive her. She doesn't want to go the other way around.

I have such little control over anything, especially of that. But so far, so good. So far, so good. So, we are thankful. And also, you know, the first Sunday we were here, we had one baby.
Marcy was pregnant with our second. And it was a very difficult transition for our one-year-old. He was not—that very first Sunday, he was not doing well. And I will never forget Marcy won't either.

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The sweet preschool workers who just said, give us your son. You guys go and do what you're here to do. Don't worry about a thing. And we felt bad handing him over because he was going crazy. And they said, we'll take him. We'll love him. He's fine. We're fine. You guys go and just do what you need to do. And I'll tell you, the blessing of people who care for the little ones in a church cannot be overstated.
[4:39] Every person in this room right now who has a little one in our preschool, you would not be in here this second if you did not feel safe with your children there. And I remember feeling that very same way.

And so, it has been such a joy and such a delight. There's nothing I like doing more than being with you on the Lord's Day and opening God's Word and studying Scripture together.
So, let's do that once again. We find ourselves today in Mark 15 as we continue our verse-by-verse study through this gospel. And we have come now to verse 21, the crucifixion of Jesus.
All of the gospel of Mark that we've studied these last two and a half years has been leading to this place. Everything in Mark's gospel, we've walked verse by verse, word by word, Sunday after Sunday, all of it pointing toward this event of Jesus on the cross paying the price for our sin.
It's not even—it's not an exaggeration. We could say it even in a bigger scale. All of the Bible from Genesis 3 has been pointing to this moment where Jesus would go to the cross to pay for our sin.
[5:52] Genesis 3.15 is our first prophetic mention of Christ. It doesn't give us all the details, but in the very beginning, God created. It was good. Genesis 3, Adam and Eve sin.

Sin enters the human race. And right at the very onset, the Lord promises to send a Redeemer. That Redeemer will be a singular male who will be uniquely born of woman who will give up his body in the conflict but will crush the serpent's head.
All of the Old Testament points toward this very event that we look at this morning with Jesus on the cross. Acts 2.22 and 23 very uniquely sums this up.
It says, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.
This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
[7:03] Those two verses summarize this reality that the cross was God's plan.

God was sovereign. The events of the cross took place according to his definite plan and his foreknowledge. This was the will of God.
Yet, on the cross, it is lawless men, guilty men, who are carrying out what their hearts desire to do. And so, what you see on the cross is not only the perfect presentation of justice and grace, it's also where we see the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man face to face.
Because men are absolutely accountable for what they do, for their sin, for the longings of their sinful hearts. And yet, even in that, no sinful man is sovereign.
Only God is. And we see that here on the cross. It's not just that Jesus will die. He's going to die specifically by crucifixion.
[8:17] And as the Romans would carry out crucifixion, in their mind, it wasn't just about death. It's more than that. The purpose of crucifixion is death of someone that they've claimed a criminal.

It's also about shame. It's a shameful way to die. It's an embarrassing way to die. It's also about deterrence, because it is a public way to die.
It is a gruesome, brutal way to die. Their goal was not simply to let's get this criminal and end his life.
It was let's get this criminal and end his life in the most shameful way possible, the most public, painful way possible, so that as people go by and watch this, which they would do, because they would crucify in public places, people would hear the screams of pain and torture.
They would see the bodies just ripped to shreds. The bodies would hang there on the cross for birds to come and feed off the flesh. The bodies would then be taken and most often thrown into a common grave for criminals.
[9:29] Everything about crucifixion was designed, yes, to take life, but more than that, to deter people from ever thinking they would dare want to rise up against the power of Rome.

Crucifixion is about punishment, but it's also about intimidation, even of the innocent, intimidating those, anybody who would dare to think they might want to one day take on Rome.

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We've spent the last number of Sundays walking in, in pretty good detail, I think, on the arrest of Jesus, the trials of Jesus, all that was taking place in those six trials.
I hope if you've been with us, that is clear in your mind and will forever be a part of your understanding of the crucifixion. And we come now to verse 21, the crucifixion of Jesus.
Let's look first at the walk to the cross. The walk to the cross, and they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.
[10:46] Simon of Cyrene is introduced to us here. Simon is a Jewish name. Cyrene was a Greek settlement, modern-day Libya.

Cyrene was known to have a large population of Jewish people. So, put that together, most likely Simon is a pilgrim who's come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.
It mentions his sons, Alexander and Rufus. We don't know anything about them. But the fact that Mark mentions them makes it almost certain that by the time Mark writes his gospel, that they were well-known believers to the people who would read this.
That would be the reason for making note of them. It's possible that this is even the very day that Simon becomes a true believer in Jesus Christ.
Almost certainly his sons, by the time Mark is written, have come to a place of faith in Christ. Simon is tasked to carry the cross piece, the beam that would go across that Jesus was carrying.
[12:06] He collapses. At this point, he's been beaten and flogged at least once, maybe twice. He is nearly unrecognizable because of all that he has endured physically.

What he has already been through was enough that many people died just from the flogging and scourging that he's already undergone. Many victims didn't even make it to the crucifixion because they died first from that.
They're in a hurry to get this done, and so as Jesus falls with that cross beam, they take Simon and tell him to carry the cross.
Verse 22, they brought him to the place called Galgotha, which means the place of a skull. Galgotha is from Aramaic.
When the Latin Vulgate was translated by Jerome, the word that was used there is the word that in English we get our term for Calvary.
[13:05] So you'll hear referred to as Galgotha or the place of the skull or Calvary, all referring to this same place. They would be crucified according to John 19 outside the city.

And as Jesus walks to the cross, they conscript Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross.
In verse 23, we see the work of the cross. What work is Jesus accomplishing? What's actually taking place on the cross?
Verse 23 tells us, There are some different things you can read about what is happening when they offered this to him and he refused it.
Myrrh was used primarily for two things, an anesthetic and perfume. In the case of crucifixion, almost certainly what's happening here is they are offering Jesus this myrrh as a brief anesthetic.
[14:16] And you say, Well, why are these who are trying to torture and trying to inflict maximum pain, which the cross is designed for maximum pain, why would they offer any even brief anesthetic?

And I think the reason is, if they could give some short, brief, temporary relief, it would make it easier to nail the victim to the cross.
You can imagine the excruciating pain of having nails that would be up to seven inches long, half an inch in diameter, that would be driven through your wrist and your feet overlapped and then driven through your feet.
It would be so excruciating, and they would be fighting that. And so you offer a brief kind of anesthetic to enable them to get them nailed more quickly, more easily with less struggle.
Then that wears off, and now the maximum pain kicks in. But when Mark mentions the work of the cross, it's a bit stunning to me.
[15:24] Mark is the shortest gospel as we know, and Mark is known to be very quick moving. He gives us plenty of information, but often withholds some details that the other gospel writers give us.

Mark seems to be more interested in the quick statements and moving on to the next. Verse 23 and 24, we see this same writing style under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

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Verse 23, they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. Now look at verse 24, and they crucified him. That's it.
Mark doesn't give us much of the gory details. Mark doesn't give us play-by-play description of how awful it was.
He just focuses on the work of Jesus. They crucified him. Christ is enduring death for us.
[16:44] And I wonder if maybe it's because if I were to describe in the most accurate, blunt, and gruesome way what crucifixion was, at the end of that, all of you would feel sympathy for Jesus.

It would be impossible for you to have played out and played back for your ears to hear and your minds to consider the awfulness of crucifixion and feel anything other than sympathy.
But sympathy is not the same as repentance. And the purpose of the gospel is that you would know the truth of Jesus that you would repent.
Not just feel bad. Not just feel sorrowful. Not just weep. Not just feel sympathetic. But that you would repent.
And so Mark wants you to focus on the work of the cross. Christ is crucified.
[18:29] Verse 25 says, or back to verse 24, I'm sorry. They divided his garments among them, casting lots for them to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him.

Just a word of explanation for you. When John writes of the crucifixion, he thinks and writes in Roman reckoning, Mark uses the Jewish reckoning.
Both agree what is happening as Christ goes on the cross at nine suffers at the hands of men for three hours from nine to noon. Then the earth goes dark at noon and Christ is on the cross suffering the wrath of God upon him from noon to three p.m.
Verse 26, the inscription of the charge against him read, the king of the Jews. If you've been with us the last several weeks, we've walked through this and I trust very in-depth detail, the trials and all that went on and what he was accused of and how the charge was changed and why it was changed, how it landed on treason.
And Pilate writes, the king of the Jews. Why? Because this was about intimidation. This was a deterrence. If you're passing by and you see Jesus crucified and you witness the awfulness of what he is experiencing and you see above him this charge that he claimed to be the king of the Jews.
[20:05] That's what the people said. Don't say he's the king of the Jews. Say he claimed to be the king of the Jews. Pilate says, I've written what I've written. And what he wants people to know is that anyone who has any association with being a king that you would meet this same end.

The charge is written in three languages so that all who pass by can see it. Everyone who sees Jesus would see the result of what happens to somebody who says they are the king of the Jews.
The work of the cross is that Jesus is bearing the brunt of our sin and paying the price for our sin and being what the New Testament calls our propitiation.
that word that means to satisfy the wrath of God. On the cross our sin is going upon Christ. God's wrath is poured out upon Christ so that his righteousness would be imputed, credited, reckoned, given to us.
That's the work of the cross. It's true that these are real people and real soldiers and there's a real execution with real nails and real blood and real death and real gruesomeness but the work of the cross ultimately is not that a man died.
[21:33] Men died by crucifixion all the time. The work of the cross in this moment at this particular situation in human history is that on this cross the sin of believers is put upon Jesus, the wrath of the Father is poured out upon the Son and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who believe and he is accomplishing the definite work of salvation for all who believe.

That's the work of the cross. And that brings us thirdly to the words at the cross. Verse 27 And with him they crucified two robbers.
one on his right one on his left. Probably these two men were a part of that insurrection that Barabbas tried to lead.
This cross likely intended for Barabbas but they have demanded Pilate release Barabbas and keep and crucify Jesus. 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.
This is this is a crucifixion unlike any other. Not in its method but in its purpose.

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[23:16] Jesus is crucified the same way the other two men on his right and left are crucified. And they were crucified the same way that other people were crucified.

Happened all the time. About four decades before this event historians tell us that that some two thousand people were crucified in one day by Rome.
About three decades four decades after this the Romans would crucify so many people that they ran out of trees and wood to do it. Crucifixion was quite common in that sense.
What made this crucifixion unique is not the method it was the same it was the purpose this crucifixion was special because of the accomplishment that it provided.
Only the death of Jesus can deal with your sin because only Jesus was the perfect spotless lamb.
[24:29] Let me just remind you turn back in Mark to chapter 10 for just a moment. Let's go back to verse 45 where Jesus tells his followers this truth that the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Everything about his life has been leading to this. Everything about his ministry has been leading to this. He dies on a cross as a picture that he is being punished.
His Jewish enemies thought this was the fulfillment that Christ was cursed by God. In reality it's just the demonstration Christ is fulfilling every prophecy of the redeemer who is sent by God.
And these people pass by back to verse 29 in chapter 15 and they are taunting him and deriding him thousands and thousands and thousands of people who would have passed by that day and seen him religious people that are there for the Passover who are seeing him.
Verse 30 the people went by they're deriding him saying save yourself and come down from the cross.
[26:09] You can just sense their mocking their vitriol their hatred just had a fever pitch here is a man dying a gruesome awful death and their final words to him as he hangs there is to mock him and to laugh at his torture and say if you're who you say you are why don't you come down off the cross and unbelievably look at verse 31 so also the chief priest with the scribes mocked him to one other saying he saved others he cannot save himself what do they mean he saved others!

he would heal him would heal a man born blind and bring sight to him they have seen evidence that he could take someone whose ears have been unable to hear and with nothing more than his word and decree open ears that couldn't hear they had seen him tell someone who was unable to walk rise and walk take up your mat and go you're healed they've seen evidence that he says to the daughter of Jairus to little lamb arise and this little girl who was dead is brought to life they've seen evidence that he went to the tomb of Lazarus who was dead for four days and nothing more than with his words Lazarus come forth a man who had been dead four days came back to life he saved others and they still won't believe they still won't repent they still won't submit their life to the authority of who he is they've seen evidence he can heal and restore and yet even raise the dead yet their heart and heart still would not believe
Luke 23 adds this the people stood by watching the ruler scoffed at him saying he saved others let him save himself if he is the Christ of God his chosen one and the soldiers also mocked him the religious people mocked him the religious leaders mocked him the soldiers mocked him the unbelievers!
mocked him Luke 23 39 one of the criminals who were hanged beside him said are you not the Christ save yourself and us the only thing all these various groups could agree on is in Jesus dying moments to mock him it's quite astounding how Jesus and the gospel does divide divides truth from error right from wrong believer from unbeliever but the gospel has a strange way also of uniting even people who don't like each other with nothing more than a common hatred of the things of God verse 32 let the Christ the king of Israel come down now from the cross that we may see and believe and those who were crucified with him also reviled him these words are just dripping with sarcasm and dripping with unbelief this is all just one final game to them one last time to be able to get their words of hatred and unbelief directed at him if you're really who you say you are perform for us and ironically the reason
Jesus stays on the cross is because the purpose of his life was to pay for our sin and if he doesn't die in our place we have no salvation he's literally fulfilling his mission for the very people who mock him at the very moment they revile him!
[31:00] this is grace unlike anything the world has ever known this is this is frankly beyond any ability I have to be able to articulate that the depth of the love and mercy that Christ is showing can you imagine!

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not only dying for sinners but doing so for the very people who at the very moment are crucifying you driving nails into your flesh mocking you cursing you taunting you hating you and the only thing that keeps you on the cross in that moment is knowing this is the perfect will of heaven and the very reason for which he came because his heart is to pay the price for sinful people I hope you can see how utterly foolish and unnecessary it is to think of what Christ has done for us to think that somehow our works could add any merit to what Christ has done turn with me to Luke 23 as I've tried to mention many times you put all the gospels together to try to get the full picture Luke 23 verse 39 one of the criminals who were hanged railed at him saying are you not the Christ save yourself and us but the other rebuked him saying do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation and we indeed justly for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds but this man has done nothing wrong and he said Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom and Jesus said to him truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise this is an amazing conversion known to those who are familiar with their bible as the conversion of the thief on the cross often this conversion is brought to mind and mentioned to talk about how as long as you have breath it's never too late to repent never late to cry out to
God that is true but just as Jesus is about to take his final breath before he dies mentions this word of grace and assurance to this thief let me give you both an encouragement and a word of caution the encouragement is from the thief on the cross who in his final moments cried out for forgiveness the encouragement is it's not too late for you this man is in the literal final seconds of his life and somehow in grace the Holy Spirit has worked to open his eyes and to show him by seeing how Christ died by hearing the words Jesus spoke by being familiar with the message of Jesus the Holy Spirit opens this man's spiritual eyes and enables him to have faith and belief and this man in the last moment cries out for mercy from the
Lord and I want you to find the encouragement that if he can be saved then you can be saved now but let me also give you a word of warning the reason the Bible mentions the conversion of the thief on the cross is to help you to understand the depth of the gospel and the depth of his grace not to give you a strategy for a deathbed conversion too many people have misunderstood this and they are familiar with this story and their takeaway is okay good so this guy was a criminal this guy was involved in all kinds of sin he is arrested he is then executed but in the last moment he's able to cry out for mercy to Jesus so that will be my strategy too
[36:15] I'll just live like the world I'll sin all I want to come to church but in my heart of hearts I'll just keep living like the world and I know enough of the facts enough of the doctrine enough of the truth that when I get really old and when I get really sick and when I am still in my good full mind right before I take my last breath then in that moment I will have a heart that believes and trusts and loves the Lord Jesus that is not why this conversion is here this is an encouragement to you to show you that the grace of Jesus Christ is so rich and so deep and so full that with a man who has literally nothing to offer Jesus other than a heart of faith that that's all salvation is it's belief it's trust in the work of Jesus Christ this man had no works he had no church attendance so to speak he had no good works he had no spiritual resume he had nothing at all that he could rely on to say this is why

I made it to heaven his only credential his only credential is that Jesus pardoned him but don't misunderstand the depth of grace and think it is some strategy for you to file away and to use in your last moment if you don't love Jesus today if you hear and understand the gospel and don't believe today it would be utterly foolish to expect that that would be different down the road not to mention to think that God owes it to you to let you live a long life with a death that is somehow known and planned out and orderly and systematic and that you would be able on your last moment on this earth to have the mental acuity to be able to make sense of anything is to assume
God owes you something he simply does not this is a picture of grace not a strategy as Hebrews 3 15 says today if you hear his voice do not harden your heart Jesus died on the cross so that sinners would be saved according to his foreknowledge God is sovereign but he was put to death at the hands of lawless men men are held responsible for their sin my encouragement to you this very day is that if you know Christ as savior that you would take heart to know whatever the world may do may say may throw your way they did the same thing to
Jesus they insulted him they hated him they arrested him and Jesus has told us if they hate me they are going to hate you too don't be surprised by that if you're a believer just know that Christ and grace has given you everything you need and if you're not a believer God in his infinite grace has

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once again brought you to a place to hear his word it's unbelievable really that this very day if you're not a believer that he has brought you here you have heard the gospel in the baptistry waters you have heard the gospel in song you have heard the gospel read to you you have heard the gospel explained to you he has been so gracious to you so this day in the hearing of the gospel do not harden your heart cry out to him in prayer acknowledging your own sin believing he is who he says he is proven by his life his miracles and the empty tomb and know that while you are not worthy of salvation

God in grace saves sinners through the work of his son even this day would you call out to him saying nothing more than God be merciful to me I'm a sinner I need you and I trust in you clinging only to the finished work of Jesus Lord we thank you today for your word and pray that it would be clear for all who are here we pray Lord that you would in kindness and grace once again open the eyes and ears and the hearts of any here who may not know you that even this day would be their day of salvation in Christ's name amen before you're dismissed let me just remind you of a few things because this time of year we have so many important things going on we've got a number of things the ministry connection encourage you to walk by there and look at what's available there for you out in the lobby we've got information there ladies for

[42:50] Jingle Bell Jamboree that's coming up this Tuesday want you to be aware of that we also at our church bookstore have a table with a number of Christmas resources for you and your family some are just books about Christmas some are devotionals for you as a person or your family to go through at Christmas time we've got a number of titles we've pulled out for you that are there for sale on that table encourage you to stop by and look at that tonight we have evening service at five o'clock again we're studying through first Thessalonians we'd love to have you come and join us for a great time of fellowship and singing and Bible study together our choirs are meeting encourage you to be involved there as well love you church family God bless!

God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God fathers God fathers God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God Thank you.

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