

Jesus Before Pilate, Crucifixion, Death, and Burial

1. Jesus Before Pilate (Mark 15:1–15)

Early in the morning, Jesus was handed over to Pilate after being condemned by the religious leaders during an illegal night trial. But because the Jews didn't have the authority to execute anyone under Roman law, they brought Jesus to Pilate, hoping to secure a death sentence.

Application:

It's sobering to see how determined the religious leaders were to silence Jesus. They were willing to manipulate truth and power to get their way. This reminds us how dangerous pride and spiritual blindness can be—even in religious circles. Am I ever tempted to use spiritual reasoning to justify personal agendas?

Pilate asked Jesus directly, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* Jesus answered, *"You said it."* When the priests launched a series of accusations, Jesus said nothing. Pilate was amazed at His silence.

Application:

Jesus didn't feel the need to defend Himself before a worldly authority. Sometimes, silence is a stronger testimony than words. When we are misunderstood or falsely accused, are we more concerned with defending ourselves than representing Christ well?

Pilate, sensing Jesus was innocent, offered the crowd a choice between Jesus and a known revolutionary, Barabbas. Pressured by the mob—coached by the chief priests—the crowd chose Barabbas. Pilate gave in and sentenced Jesus to be crucified.

Application:

"What shall I do with Jesus?" Pilate asked. That question still hangs in the air today. Each of us must answer that for ourselves. Pilate tried to wash his hands of Jesus, but you can't remain neutral. Either you receive Christ, or you reject Him.

2. The Scourging and Mockery (Mark 15:16–20)

Jesus was scourged—a brutal Roman punishment designed to extract confessions. But He had no crime to confess. He took the full force of the whip for us. The soldiers mocked Him, dressing Him in purple, crowning Him with thorns, and striking Him.

Application:

The crown of thorns was more than a mockery—it was a symbol. Thorns entered the world as part of the curse in Genesis 3. Jesus wore the curse so we could be free from it. The next time we see Him, Revelation says He will wear many crowns—not thorns.

3. The Crucifixion (Mark 15:21–32)

Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry Jesus' cross. Perhaps an unwilling bystander at first, Simon's life may have been changed forever. His sons are later mentioned in the New Testament, possibly indicating a household transformed by one divine interruption.

Application:

Sometimes we're "forced" into situations we didn't ask for—but those moments can become life-changing encounters with Jesus. How might God be using an inconvenience in your life to draw you closer to Him?

Jesus was crucified at 9 a.m. Two criminals were crucified beside Him. Soldiers gambled for His clothing. Passersby and religious leaders mocked Him: *"He saved others; Himself He cannot save."*

Application:

The irony of that statement cuts deep. He could have saved Himself—but He didn't, so that He could save us. Love kept Him on the cross, not nails. The love that held Jesus there is the same love that holds us now.

4. Darkness and Death (Mark 15:33–41)

From noon until 3 p.m., darkness covered the land. Then Jesus cried out, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*—quoting Psalm 22. In that moment, He bore our sin and experienced complete separation from the Father.

Application:

Jesus was forsaken so you would never have to be. He took the weight of our separation so that we could be reconciled to God. Let that truth settle deeply into your soul: you are never alone if you are in Christ.

Jesus cried out, *"It is finished!"* and breathed His last. The curtain in the temple—representing separation from God—was torn in two from top to bottom. The way to God was now open.

Application:

Jesus didn't just die *for* us—He opened the way *to* God. Do you take advantage of that access? Prayer is not a ritual; it's a relationship. The torn veil is your invitation to draw near.

Even a Roman centurion, witnessing how Jesus died, confessed, *"Truly this man was the Son of God."*

Application:

Sometimes people won't believe by hearing sermons or seeing miracles—but they may believe by watching how we suffer. How we handle trials can point others to Christ.

5. Jesus Is Buried (Mark 15:42–47)

Joseph of Arimathea, a respected council member, boldly asked Pilate for Jesus' body. He wrapped Him in linen and placed Him in a new tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where He was laid.

Application:

Joseph took a risk for Jesus, stepping out of the shadows and into the light. Are we willing to identify with Christ publicly, even when it's costly?

Closing Reflection:

Mark 15 is the most sobering chapter in the Gospel. Here we see the King rejected, the Creator crucified, the Savior suffering for sin. But we also see the ultimate demonstration of love.

Jesus didn't die so we could be religious. He died so we could be redeemed—restored to a relationship with God. If you've trusted Him, then your sin has been nailed to that cross and buried in that tomb. And if you've never trusted Him, today is the day to make that decision.

He died for you. The question is: will you live for Him?