

Truly, this man was the Son of God

Jeff Rogers / Empty Nesters Bible Study

Mark 15 (Selected Scriptures)

Philippians 2:5, *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus*, [Jesus is the model; conversion is the means of thinking as Christ]

Philippians 2:6–8, [John 1:1] *Who, though he was in the form of God* [2 Cor 4:4, image of God], *did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped* [though He had rightful claim as God's Son], *7 but emptied himself* [laid aside His privileges or divine prerogatives], *by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient* [Matthew 26:39, John 10:18, Romans 5:19] *to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Last week, we discussed the two natures (divine & human) of Christ, which were “unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably” united in His person. He was truly God and truly man.

This week, we will see “two obedience’s.” Shortly before his death on January 1, 1937, the theologian Dr. J. Gresham Machen dictated a final telegram to one of his friends. It was very short, only thirteen words. He wrote: “I’m so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it.”

“The active obedience of Christ.” What did he mean by that?

Question: If Christ had come to earth and earned forgiveness for our sin, would that have been enough to reconcile us to God forever? The short answer is, “No.” The longer answer is that we need more than forgiveness for breaking God’s law. We also need to have perfectly obeyed God’s law. It’s one thing to have our guilt removed, but we also need perfect righteousness.

Theologians use the term “active” obedience when referring to Jesus' life of obeying God’s law for us. In His death, He paid sins penalty on our behalf, his “passive” obedience. Our debt is paid, and we receive righteousness (Christ’s righteousness) (2 Corinthians 5:21) John Murray puts it like this: *“It is our Lord’s whole work of obedience in every phase and period that is described as active and passive, and we must avoid the mistake of thinking that the active obedience applies to the obedience of his life and the passive obedience to the obedience of his final sufferings and death.”*

I. The Soldier’s Parody (15:16-20)

- A. This was likely a borrowed idea from Herod’s men (Luke 23:11)
- B. To give him the appearance of royalty, Jesus was dressed in purple (faded scarlet).
- C. A crown of thorns was driven onto His skull. (Christ Thorn or Crown of Thorns)
- D. A reed was placed in His hand (imitate a scepter) (Matthew 27:29)
- E. He was mocked by the soldiers (Mark 15:19-20)
 - 1. Tortuous treatment predicted (**Mark 10:34**, *And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.*) (**Isaiah 50:6**, *I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.*)
 - 2. Pilate, hoping the Jews would relent in their bloodthirst,
 - a) John 18:38, 19:4-5, “...*I find no guilt in him...*”
 - b) Luke 23:16, “*Therefore I will punish Him and release Him.*”
 - c) John 19:6-7, “*I find no guilt in Him.*”

II. The Savior’s Punishment (15:21-25)

- A. Jesus was crucified.
 - 1. Crucifixion was a prolonged form of dying designed to induce maximum suffering and pain.
 - 2. The condemned was forced onto his back and nailed to the cross as it lay on the ground.
 - 3. The cross was slowly raised until vertical and then dropped into the posthole, landing with a jolt.
 - 4. The agony-inducing nails did not cause death. The condemned died from slow suffocation.
 - 5. As the condemned tired, his slumping would hinder breathing until the carbon dioxide build up suffocated him. Soldiers often broke the legs of the victim to hasten death.

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- B. The Soldier's gamble (15:24)
 - C. The clock's time (9:00 AM)

III. The Sneering Participants (15:26-32)

- A. **Psalm 22:7–8**, *All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; 8 "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"*
- B. The Accusation (15:26) (This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews)
- C. The Company (15:27) (Isaiah 53:12, {He} *was numbered with the transgressors*”) vs 28?
- D. The Crowd (15:29-30)(John 2:24-25, John 6:66)(wagging—sign of disdain, ridicule, scorn.)
- E. The Chiefs (15:31-32)
- F. The Thieves (Mark 15:32b; Matthew 27:44)

IV. The Supernatural Presence (15:33)

- A. The darkness at Calvary did not represent the absence of God but His holy, terrifying presence. The Father descended in judgment on Golgotha in thick gloom as the divine executioner to unleash His fury not against sinners but against the sin-bearer (cf. **1 Peter 2:24**, *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed*). The full weight of God's wrath was poured out on the Son of God (cf. **Isaiah 53:5**, *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed*), as the spotless Lamb of God was sacrificed for sin so that sinners might be justified through Him (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:28; cf. Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 John 4:10). Moved by His perfect justice, God's infinite wrath released an eternity of punishment on the incarnate Son who, as an infinite and eternal person, absorbed the tortures of hell in a finite span of time (**Isaiah 53:4**, *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted*.). This was the dreadful cup of divine judgment that Jesus anticipated while sweating blood in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36; Luke 22:44).

V. The Son's Passing (Mark 15:34-38)

- A. The gut-wrenching cry 34
- B. The continued mocking (35-36)
- C. The last breath (15:37)
- D. The dramatic end (15:38)

VI. The Centurion's Plea (Mark 15:39)

- A. The Centurion's Duty.
 - 1. Leader of 100 soldiers.
 - 2. Present for all the trials.
 - 3. Consented to the mocking.
 - 4. Supervised the crucifixion.
- B. The Centurion's Ear.
 - 1. *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34)
 - 2. *"Today shall you be with me in paradise."* (Luke 23:43)
 - 3. *"Woman, behold thy son! And Behold thy mother!"* (John 19:26-27)
 - 4. *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34)
 - 5. *"I thirst."* (John 19:28)
 - 6. *"It is finished."* (John 19:30)
 - 7. *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."* (Luke 23:46)
- C. The Centurion's Eyes.
 - 1. He watched as Jesus responded to the scorn, hatred, and cruel mocking on the cross.
 - 2. From noon to 3 P.M., he stood in the darkness that was not forecasted and unexplainable.
 - 3. He, no doubt, had witnessed many executions; he had never encountered one like this Jesus.
- D. The Centurion's Conversion
 - 1. **Mark 15:39**, *And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"*
 - 2. **Luke 23:47**, *Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"*
 - 3. By His passive obedience, our debt is paid. By His active obedience, we are made righteous!