

**ON GOLGOTHA'S HOLY GROUND  
JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED THERE  
FOR TELLING THE TRUTH -- FOR BEING A KING.**

**Mark 15:22-27**

**TEXT:** *They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. It was the third hour when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.*

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

For the past several decades, states have searched for more "humane" methods of carrying out a death sentence. The most accepted in this search for so-called humane methods has been "lethal injection." But after so many botched attempts and after studying the effects that lethal drugs have had on criminals who were put to death in this way, there are many who insist that lethal injection is actually a more torturous a method of execution than what would be the nearly instant demise of the human body quickly penetrated with a several expertly-placed bullets. Both Utah and Wyoming are working hard toward making death by firing squad the legal means of execution for humanitarian reasons.

In Jesus' day the legal method of execution was crucifixion. Crucifixion was one of the most inhumane methods of execution that was actually a legal form of executing criminals throughout the Roman Empire. Crucifixion was so horrible, however, that the Romans declared it illegal for the execution of any Roman citizen. Roman citizens guilty of capital offenses were executed by beheading. They had no problem, however, with crucifying non-Romans, like Jews, or like Jesus.

The Bible says: ***When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*** Ga 4 God had selected the exact time when His Son Jesus would enter time and history to leave His throne of glory in order to be the Redeemer of mankind. But why would God select a time when the legal method of execution was one of the most inhumane and torturous methods of putting anyone to death in the history of the world? Why not wait for a time when executions would be attempted in the most instant and humane method possible? There HAS to be a lesson in this fact, and indeed there is!

Our Theme for this year's Lenten Season is "On Golgotha's Holy Ground." The Bible says: ***They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull).*** It was a hill that some say even resembled a human skull. And then it says: ***Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him.*** Why? The Bible says that they crucified Jesus because they didn't accept what He said as the truth. They crucified Jesus: For telling the truth and for being a King.

You have to REALY hate the truth if you would crucify someone for telling the truth. Crucifixion was not humane. It was a long and torturous death. It was humiliating since men and women who were crucified were stripped naked and nailed to the cross to hang for as long as it took them to die. Since crucifixion was designed to force the human body to fight for every breath it took until adequate oxygen exchange eventually caused the internal organs to shut down one by one causing a great agony and pain before the heart finally stopped beating, the victims of

crucifixion would often hang on the cross for days before finally dying.

What truth did Jesus speak that brought about such hatred that that men would cry out: ***Crucify him! Crucify him!?*** The truth that makes people angry is that they have fallen short of the glory of God. Jesus once said, and if he said it once he said it a thousand times, one way or another: ***Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*** Mt 5 He once told a rich man who had achieved high self-esteem and who had lived an outwardly moral life in many ways: ***If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.*** Jesus had a way of pointing out this man's moral flaws. The Bible says about that man: ***When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.*** Mt 19 Do you know how many people do not go to church to worship the Lord because it makes them feel bad about themselves? Do you know how many people seek out churches that make them feel good about themselves? Can you recall a time when your own father or mother, your brother or sister or friend discovered your sin, and spoke to you about it?

How do you feel when after doing everything right and with all your best energy and with all your greatest efforts, all you get from Jesus is: Well, that's what you're supposed to do, but even then you didn't do it good enough for God! Jesus said: ***So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'*** Lu 17 So when Caiaphas the Jewish High Priest finally asked Jesus point blank: ***Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed one?*** And Jesus said: ***I am... And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty one and coming on the clouds of heaven.*** No wonder he tore his clothes and said: ***You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?*** The Bible says: ***They all condemned him as worthy of death.*** Mk 14 And that death would be by crucifixion!

They crucified Jesus for telling the truth – the truth that it was for this purpose of paying for the sins of man that he had come into this world. This also shows us how serious God is about the truth and what He thinks about those who despise it. If Jesus would suffer crucifixion at the hands of those who despise the truth, what will it be for them at the coming of the Lord on Judgment Day? Three years before He is crucified, Jesus said: ***God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*** Jn 3 And here is the irony of Jesus' crucifixion: we who have and know this truth sadly concur with the call to crucify Jesus, but for the fact that this was God's gracious plan to redeem us from our sins. We follow Jesus to His crucifixion with an incomprehensible blend of sadness and gladness.

Only the true Christian can know and understand the dynamic of the truth for which Jesus was crucified. But this knowledge and understanding is revealed in what is called repentance, and in our desire to worship and obey Jesus as our King as well as our Savior, for the truth is: that is what He is!

The Bible says: ***It was the third hour when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.*** At the third hour, at about noon, they crucified Jesus between two actual criminals. Above Jesus' head was the sign that was often posted to indicate the reason for the victim's execution. Scripture says: ***The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.*** Now, who on earth would believe that? Two criminals and a king? And not just a king, but THE KING OF THE JEWS! Pontius Pilate was somewhat

curious about Jesus' claim. The Bible says: *"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" Pilate asked.* Jn 18 Yes, Jesus is King and the reason why this King left his heavenly throne is that by his crucifixion, death and resurrection he would defeat and destroy, Satan, sin and death.

Pilate had no interest in pursuing this truth. Pilate wasn't looking for a savior, and he obviously had no desire to investigate this man whose claim to be a king was obviously rejected even by his own people. Nevertheless, the ONLY thing Pilate could honestly say concerning the reason for this man's crucifixion is that he said he was a king. But what a pitiful king he was to be rejected by his own people, turned over to a foreign government and shamefully executed as common criminal.

The fact is that many might still like the idea of a savior from sin, forgiveness and eternal life. But that Jesus is both Savior AND King is not what they want. Yet the two are inseparable. If Jesus is your Savior, then he also is your King. You cannot have one without the other. Those who try to divide the two have neither King nor Savior. They want the savior, but do not want to obey Jesus or to honor and worship Him as the Almighty King. Like Pilate, they do not know the truth. Let people who will not repent of sin and turn to Jesus as both Savior AND King listen to what he told Caiaphas, the High Priest before he was taken to Golgotha's holy ground. *The high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed one?" Jesus said: I am ... And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty one and coming on the clouds of heaven.* Mk 14 Yes, Jesus is our Savior and He also is our King. God help us never to try to divide the two!

As we spend the next six weeks of this Lenten Season on Golgotha's Holy ground, may we rejoice in both the salvation that is ours and the opportunities we have to worship our Savior King, who by His crucifixion won the victory over sin, death and Satan for us! Amen