



THURSDAY 03.25.10

Mark 15:16-20

The soldiers who abused Jesus knew very little about the man they were torturing. Jesus means nothing to these men, and what little they knew of him, they used to mock and ridicule him. Yet, Jesus endures their insults and this pain on behalf of those who delivered these physical and verbal assaults.

- In the same way that these Roman soldiers dismissed Jesus, our culture often scoffs at the notion of faith. As someone seeking to follow Christ, perhaps you have felt “assaulted” for what others have perceived as blind faith. How does Jesus’ example direct you in your response to a world that continues to “mock” Christ?
- As you consider your relationships, how might God be leading you to be a witness of the same grace and love Jesus displayed in the final hours of his life?



FRIDAY 03.26.10

Isaiah 53:1-12

When Jesus was arrested, he rebuked his disciples for drawing their swords in his defense. As he was led away by his captors, Jesus said, “All has taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” At the end of this 24-hour journey, Jesus will face his death in accordance with these words written generations before his birth.

Jesus said, “The last shall be first and the first shall be last.” He said, “If any would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Paul writes that Jesus “made himself a servant” and “humbled himself and became obedient to death.” Throughout scripture we are reminded that the way of Jesus is the way of sacrifice, service and, at times, suffering.

- Wrestle with this question today. Why have I chosen to follow Jesus?



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Series: *24 Hours That Changed the World*

Sermon: *The Rejection of Jesus*

Scripture: **Matthew 27:11-23**

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon:



Introduction

Following Jesus' trial before the Jewish council, he was turned over to the Roman authority. For this particular week, that authority was the governor, Pontius Pilate, who was staying, along with a large garrison of Roman soldiers, within the Antonia fortress in Jerusalem. It is to this military stronghold that Jesus is taken in the early morning hours on Friday.

For our readings this week, we will stay with Mark's account as we look at Jesus' interrogation before Pilate, his rejection by the people who favor the release of the criminal Barabbas, as well as the mockery and torture he suffers at the hands of his Roman captors. The disciples have all deserted Jesus. The crowds have turned their back on him, and in these difficult hours, men who know very little about Jesus' teaching and mission will not only seek to split his flesh, but also tear apart his heart. As we approach the final hours of his life, think about the emotions that would have filled the heart and mind of Jesus in this hour. May this prayer guide you:

Lord Jesus, we remember today those difficult moments of suffering that you endured for all humankind. You alone, Lord, have born our pain, and our hearts affirm that, by your wounds, we are healed. As we look back, help us to see and experience again the love and grace that filled your heart during these moments of anguish and pain.



TUESDAY 03.23.10

Mark 15:1-5

The Gospels are filled with stories of Jesus' encounters with religious leaders who come to question him. In each instance leading up to this moment, Jesus has amazed and frustrated his antagonizers with his ability to respond to their verbal assaults. In this final confrontation, Jesus provides a very limited response to their attacks which leaves Pilate, the acting Roman authority, amazed.

- Each person involved in this exchange would have known that Jesus' life was on the line. With that in mind, why do you think Jesus chose not to respond to their allegations?
- It has been said that great challenges reveal our true character. If you could place yourself in Pilate's shoes, what would this moment have revealed to you about the character of Jesus? How does this challenge you as you think about becoming more "Christ-like?"



MONDAY 03.22.10

Mark 14:66-72

While traveling to the Mount of Olives, Jesus had warned the disciples that "You will all fall away." Peter had replied, "Even if all fall away, I will not." Jesus' response must have wounded both men deeply. He said, "Before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will disown me three times."

- We often think of the physical pain that Jesus endured during his last day, but the heartbreak from Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial must have been equally devastating. Can you remember a time in your life when you experienced a similar emotional woundedness? How did you respond to those situations?
- Understandably, Peter was devastated by his actions. In your life, how has God restored your heart and brought healing to your life in these moments of deep regret and shame? In what ways might you need that restoration today?



WEDNESDAY 03.24.10

Mark 15:6-15; Matt. 7:13-14

In John's gospel, after Pilate interrogates Jesus, he reports to the chief priest, "I find no basis for a charge against him." Seeking to appease the religious leaders or perhaps to soothe his own conscience, Pilate offers the people of Jerusalem a choice: a known criminal committed to violent revolution or Jesus?

- The crowds choosing of Barabbas underscores the deep hunger within Jerusalem at that time for social change. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 7 that sometimes our choices that favor short-term results lead to long-term destruction. Can you think of a time in your life where you chose the "broad road" rather than the "narrow path"?
- In what areas of your life are you currently choosing the "narrow path" in order to follow Christ?
