

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

July 25, 2021

Gospel of Mark Series

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

God created

all things visible and invisible; none other.

God provides

food for your stomach and spirit; none other.

God is able to accomplish abundantly

far more than all we can ask or imagine.

Let us worship the Trinity, and none other.

*Hymn PH 288 "I Sing the Mighty Power of God"

1 I sing the mighty power of God

That made the mountains rise;

That spread the flowing seas abroad

And built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained

The sun to rule the day;

The moon shines full at God's command,

And all the stars obey.

2 I sing the goodness of the Lord

That filled the earth with food;

God formed the creatures with a word

And then pronounced them good.

Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,

Where'er I turn my eyes;

If I survey the ground I tread,

Or gaze upon the skies!

3 There's not a plant or flower below

But makes Thy glories known;

And clouds arise, and tempests blow,

By order from Thy throne;

While all that borrows life from Thee

Is ever in Thy care,

And everywhere that we can be,

Thou, God, art present there.

*Call to Confession

Let us confess to our God, for the Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

***Prayer of Confession** (unison)

God of wonder, we confess our sins and pray for your help so that we can truly repent and turn from evil. Deliver us from the temptation to hide from you, to lie to you, or to excuse ourselves because of the harm we have done to others. Restore your creation to full health and feed the multitudes from the abundance of your merciful power. Grow in us a deeper desire to love Christ with the fullness of your love, and to glorify him, along with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

The river of God's mercy runs deeper and wider than our sin. God removes our sins as far as the heavens are above the earth. Beloved in the risen Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

***Gloria Patri** (PH 579)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

***Passing the Peace**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

And also with you!

Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's Peace.

Prayer for Illumination

O Holy Spirit, creative power of God, strengthen us to the depths of our humanity. Help us to overcome temptations to abuse our neighbors; fill us with the love of Christ. Feed us the bread of heaven so that we will share with the world the saying that is true, I AM is with us. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. Amen.

First Reading Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Special Music Darrin Haynes, soloist

Second Reading Mark 15:27-47

And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

Children's Sermon Pastor Eric

SERMON "In the Shadow of Darkness...."

Mark 15:27-47

- It was late at night.
- 30,000 feet in the air sitting in a window seat, eagerly waiting and hoping to get to my destination on the West coast to see family and friends.
- I was fatigued and only had one more hour to go.
- Looking out the windows of the plane, I discouragingly saw only complete and total darkness.
- Now when you sit in a window seat during the day, there is much to see, but at night, I began to question why did I choose that seat.
- Then, as we were flying, I saw a tiny glimmer of light.
- What is that?

- Then I saw little more light of what looked like outlying communities of suburban neighborhoods.
- Suddenly, I saw an amazing light display from all the lights from the Las Vegas strip.
- All the giant hotels demonstrated their amazing beauty with light.
- Every stretch of darkness has an approaching light.
- In the same way, in Jesus' gruesome situation, the darkness of Jesus' pending, prophesied death contains glimmers of light and hope in light of the coming resurrection.
- This gave Mark's readers hope (and gives us hope) when we go through dark times that there is greater light coming our way as well.

1. Indicators of His Glory

27 And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.

- The only other time in Mark where we see places on the right and left of Jesus was when James and John came to Jesus and said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask"
- Jesus replied, "What do you want me to do for you?"
- *Mark 10:37 And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."*
- They wanted the best places to the right and left of the Messiah in glory so that they could have visible power and authority.
- But the disciples had it all wrong.
- Their understanding of the Messiah was a ruling, reigning, power producing leader.
- Here in our text, Jesus flips that imagery into the complete opposite.
- We see a different type of people on his left and his right before Jesus goes into glory.
- Jesus is with criminals!!!
- If you can picture it, Mark describes Jesus on the hill at Golgotha where one robber is on his right, Jesus in the middle, and one robber was on his left.
- According to Ron Kernaghan, he says, the scene at Golgotha was not a mark of shame, but a "glimmer of his glory. The scene at Golgotha is a symbol of the essence of his ministry that Jesus identified with sinners."
- Jesus is highlighted with sinners on each side rather than surrounded by people who thought they were "executive vice-presidents" to the Messiah.

29 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

- What is interesting about the comments is that Jesus did not say that he would destroy the temple.
- That particular accusation was part of the false testimony presented at his trial before the Sanhedrin
- As we see the same accusation here, we discover how much the people, who had been influenced by the high priests, had turned against him.
- No one living in Jerusalem or the whole region would ever rally support of someone who would destroy their beloved temple.
- The statement about destroying the temple is absurd.
- Notice the taunt: "Come down and save yourself."

- Jesus, who had all authority and power to do come down, refused to come down and save himself.
- Why? The only way for Jesus to save his life was to give it up.
- In Jesus' own words: *Mark 8:35* For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.
- To come down from the cross would be to turn his back upon God and everything Jesus had prophesied and taught.

31 In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. 32 Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

- In the mockery of the chief priests and scribes for Jesus to save himself "so that we may see and believe," tells us how far they were from faith.
- They never wanted to believe in Jesus, and coming down from the cross was not going to change their minds.
- Jesus performed all kinds of miracles, and not one changed their minds.
- Why would this miracle make any difference?
- What is ironic about this statement was that the religious leaders needed to believe what they saw.
- They needed to see that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, but because of their unbelief, their salvation, not Jesus' salvation, hung in balance.
- At the very end of verse 32, Mark says, "Those who were crucified with him, also taunted him."
- However, in other Gospel accounts, one of the robbers, **stopped** and asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom.
- The humble image of Jesus' glory: with robbers and the faith of one of the robbers where Jesus said, "Today, you will be with main paradise."
- These glimmers of hope are meant to encourage Mark's readers throughout the ages.

2. The Cry of Abandonment

33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." 36 And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." 37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

- This is the first time Mark is very precise about the details of time to create a timeline of the events leading up to Jesus' death.
- From noon to three in the afternoon, there is complete darkness over the land.
- There are no more words of mockery, but almost seems to be an erie silence.
- I like how Ron Kernaghan describes this scene, "With stark simplicity Mark leaves his readers to contemplate the mystery of the Son of God hanging on the cross, cursed by God and utterly alone."
- He continues to say that "the darkness was not an accident of nature. It came from God, and it symbolizes God's judgement on sin."
- Then there is this interruption from the silence, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani"

- Here we see the utter isolation of separation from God the Father.
- From the beginning of Jesus' ministry of "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." to end of his last breath, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- Did God's love and pleasure for Jesus ever change? NO!
- It was there the whole time!
- Jesus is the one who felt abandoned.
- This cry reflects the awfulness of fulfilling that task where Jesus is bearing the consequences of human sinfulness so that he can atone for the sins of the world.

3. Glimpses of Hope

*38 And the curtain of the temple was **torn** in two, from top to bottom. 39 Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"*

- When Mark writes that the curtain of the temple was torn into two, we are not sure if this happened literally or symbolically.
- The word for "torn" is the same word used to describe how the heavens were "torn open" when Jesus was baptized at the beginning of his ministry.
- In the temple, the central part of it was the Holy of Holies.
- It was where the ark of the covenant was stored.
- It was a symbol of the presence of God.
- From there, there were specific areas of certain groups who had access to God.
- There was the court of the priests, the court of Israel, the court of women, the court of gentiles.
- According to who you were, you had restricted access to the various parts of the temple.
- When the curtain was torn, he does not specify which curtain was torn, but theologically saying that all people had direct access to God.
- **Mark inserts this statement to theologically explain that the curtain that separated various groups was now eliminated.**
- All barriers between God and the people have now been removed.
- *Hebrews 10:19-20 Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh),*
- The next glimmer of hope is found in the response of the Roman centurion immediately after the death of Jesus.
- Immediately after the curtain that separated groups from the presence of God, the first person to symbolically go "past the torn curtain" is the centurion.
- He did not do this physically but because of his confession of faith, he believed in Jesus
- Here we have an unbiased observer in Jesus recognizing what the religiously trained leaders could not see.
- NIV says, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

4. Communicators of Good News

40 There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.

41 These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

- Here in our text, Mark introduces the women who will be significant players in communicating the Good News of the resurrection in chapter 16 which we covered on Mother's Day.
- Why are these woman mentioned?
- In the ancient world, women were regarded as symbols of weakness.
- Mark in his gospel is turning that narrative around.
 1. First, to bring the contrast between the disciples, may I add the chosen apostles who fled and denied Jesus, and these devoted women who bravely stayed with Jesus out of love and devotion.
 - These exhibit the courage and devotion one would have expected from the apostles.
 - Mark is identifying them and featuring them as positive role models for the church.
 2. Second, the women will become the key communicators of the Good News.
 - They are the ones who had witnessed Jesus being buried, and they are the ones who later return to the tomb to care for Jesus' body and become the first witnesses to the resurrection.
 - At each crucial stage of the gospel events (the crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection) these women are mentioned as being present and were able to testify to the truth of all that happened to Jesus.

5. Standing Up for What is Right

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

- Preparation day was a time to do everything needed so that the worshipper would do not work on the Sabbath.
- Mark tells us it is at the end of the day of preparation so if anything is to be done to the body of Jesus, it had to be done immediately or wait another day until the Sabbath was over.
- Joseph of Arimathea took the responsibility upon himself to request the body to be removed from the cross so that Jesus could properly be buried.
- Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent, respected member of the Sanhedrin.
- For him to go before Pilate to request the body of Jesus, it was a bold move because it would identify him as a Jesus sympathizer.
- Mark seems to emphasize that he was waiting expectantly for the Kingdom of God.
- In Matthew adds that Joseph had become a disciples of Jesus (Mt. 27:57)
- In other gospels he was described as a pious man who voted against Jesus' conviction of blasphemy.
- While the other did not believe Jesus, he did.

44 Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45 When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.

- Ordinarily a relative or close friend would have requested the body, but apparently Mary was not available nor siblings, nor his close disciples.

- After Pilate verifies that Jesus had died, he releases the body.
- According to John Kohlenberger in the Expositor's Bible Commentary, he writes — For Pilate to release the body of a condemned criminal—especially one condemned of high treason—to someone other than a relative was highly unusual. It suggests that Pilate did not take seriously the charge of high treason against Jesus and had only pronounced sentence against him because of political expediency.

46 Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

- After Jesus was handed over to Joseph, he had to act quickly because the Sabbath was coming quickly.
 - He wraps the body of Jesus, laid it in a tomb, and seals the entrance of the tomb with a stone rolled against the door.
 - Joseph of Arimathea did not have to risk his reputation to do what he did.
 - Because of his belief in Jesus, he took the risk to stand up for what he believed.
 - Q: Do we have the courage to stand up for what you believe, or we cave under the peer pressure to do something contrary to our beliefs?
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- In the midst of this dark chapter on the death of Jesus, God still continues to offer us hope of how various people faithfully responded to Jesus.
 - The light to come was the resurrection of Jesus Christ which became the message that Jesus' apostles were to take to the ends of the earth.

1. Indicators of His Glory
2. The Cry of Abandonment
3. Glimpses of Hope
4. Communicators of Good News
5. Standing Up for What is Right

***Hymn** PH 322 "Spirit of the Living God"

Spirit of the Living God,
 Fall afresh on me,
 Spirit of the Living God,
 Fall afresh on me.
 Melt me, mold me,
 fill me, use me.
 Spirit of the Living God,
 Fall afresh on me.

Offering

As God provides seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so has God provided enough for us to share as we give thanks and praise through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Let us present tithes and offerings.

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessing flow.
 Praise Him all creatures here below.
 Praise him above the heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

***Prayer of Dedication**

We rejoice with thanksgiving for all we have received. Multiply these gifts that we give so that the world may more deeply know fullness of life in you. Amen.

***Affirmation of Faith** (Apostle's Creed)

Minister:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

All:

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

O Lord, have mercy upon us;
O Christ, have mercy upon us;
O Spirit, have mercy upon us, and grant us your peace.

We pray for those who have no peace: for children, women, and men whose homes have been destroyed by war or weather; whose minds have been damaged by what they have seen or felt or done; who are hungry or thirsty or ill because they are refugees or poor or underpaid or trapped in human trafficking.

We pray for those whom you have called to be peacemakers: leaders of governments and businesses and nongovernmental organizations; leaders of the church and scholars and scientists and educators; community organizers and citizens and everyone of sound mind and body who can bear the burdens of the weak.

Give us strength and courage and faith to trust Jesus Christ and to be Christlike for the good of the creation you are redeeming and to the glory of the One who redeems all, who, with you and the Holy Spirit, we worship now and forever, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

***Hymn** PH 417 "Christ Has Made the Sure Foundation"

1 Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,

Chosen of the Lord and precious,
Binding all the church in one;
Holy Zion's help forever,
And our confidence alone.

2 To this temple, where we call You,
Come, O Lord of Hosts, today;
With Your wonted lovingkindness
Hear Your people as they pray.
And Your fullest benediction
Shed within its walls always.

3 Here bestow to all Your servants
What they ask of You to gain,
What they gain from You forever
With the blessed to retain,
And hereafter in Your glory
Evermore with You to reign.

4 Laud and honor to the Father,
Laud and honor to the Son,
Laud and honor to the Spirit,
Ever Three and ever one;
One in might and one in glory
While unending ages run.

***Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give
you peace both now and evermore.

***Organ Postlude** (please be seated for the postlude)