

The Death of the King Part 1

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Bible Text: John 19:17-30

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Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 19.

We come this morning to the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

John chapter 19, I will begin reading in verse 13.

Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"

So they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified. They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'"

Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another, "Let

us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS."

Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty."

A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.¹

These are the words of God. This is the death of Christ.

Let's pray.

Lord, as we have sung the words of the hymn writer, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul and my all," Father, this morning may we see the practical implications of the cross of Jesus Christ, that it does, indeed, demand our all. We were purchased with a price, a price that cannot be calculated that is of incredible worth. Father, help us to see that price this morning as we see your Son beaten, carrying his own cross, crucified and dying as he bears my sin, as he bears your wrath against my sin. Lord, may we not treat lightly such sacred things as this. We ask it in the name of Christ. Amen.

Without question, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ serves as the pivotal moment in the gospel of John and, indeed, the pivotal moment in all of redemptive history. All the way back to the Garden of Eden, another Son was promised to Eve, one who would be hurt by Satan, but who would, in turn, crush Satan's head, predicting, of course, Jesus Christ who would be crucified. But in that crucifixion, in that apparent deep defeat would ultimately be victorious over Satan, sin and death.

The cross of Jesus Christ is the central moment in all of history. This centrality is reflected in the words of the hymn writer John Browning when he wrote:

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;

¹ John 19:13-30.

All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

I want us to look at John's account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ this morning and see together that the cross of Christ puts on four displays for all to see. The cross of Jesus Christ put on four displays for all of us to see. Crucifixion was a very visible form of capital punishment.

We have progressed, I suppose, to some degree in our society in that capital punishment is now somewhat done behind closed doors and there is only a few people who are allowed in to witness the event—family members, press, et cetera—but not in those days, particularly not with regard to crucifixion. It was very public. It was a spectacle. People came out to see what was happening, to see who was being punished. And so there Jesus Christ is put on display for all to see. But in being put on display certain qualities come out that are unexpected and unintended both by the Jews and the Romans. Jesus Christ's glory is put on display in the cross of Jesus Christ.

This morning I want us to see four of those glorious displays.

First of all, I want us to see a display of Christ as the exalted king. The cross displays Jesus as the exalted king. Jesus, having been handed over by Pilate, is marched through the streets of Jerusalem to the sight of the crucifixion.

Verse 16 says that Pilate, "handed Him over to them to be crucified. They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha."²

Now John doesn't mention here the further beatings that Jesus received. He has mentioned one flogging that Pilate administered to Jesus with hopes that this would incur some level of sympathy from the crowd and that he could just release Jesus having beaten him. Well, that didn't work. Now, having been sentenced to crucifixion, Jesus would undergo the severest form of Roman flogging. His flesh would have been shredded, some of his organs may have been exposed, his bone may have been exposed. John doesn't go into this because that is not John's purpose by and large to present the sufferings of Jesus Christ at the cross.

John does not deny suffering at the cross. He doesn't shy away from it, but that is not what he focuses on whereas other gospel writers go into greater detail with regard to the suffering that Jesus underwent.

Perhaps John doesn't include this information because he knows the other gospel writers have already included it and John wrote his gospel last, not wanting to necessarily repeat everything. But I think a better reason why John doesn't include it is, again, because it is not his purpose to present Jesus as the suffering servant. His purpose is to present Jesus as the Son of God. That doesn't mean he manipulates history or he changes history. It

² John 19:16-17.

does mean that he is selective about what he records. Indeed, all the gospel writers are selective about what they record as well.

John is interested to present Jesus as the exalted Son of God. John tells us that Jesus went out bearing his own cross.

Now that is an important historical detail from an eyewitness. Likely John was there the whole time. He was watching the trial. He watched the sentencing. He watched the flogging. He probably saw much if not all of what went on and he saw Jesus carrying his own cross. That is an important eye witness detail. And throughout his account, as we have seen throughout the gospel of John, we will see tell tale signs of an eye witness to the scene.

He doesn't simply describe the scene in very broad general terms. He inserts very specific details. Why? Because he wants us to know that, indeed, Jesus was who he claimed to be. And as an eye witness he could verify and attest to that.

Jesus takes up his cross which calls to mind Isaac who carried his own wood up the mountain to be the sacrifice, certainly a picture there that comes to my mind anyway. But it also reminds me that Jesus doesn't call us to do anything that he himself hasn't already done to the fullest degree.

You will recall that in issuing a call to discipleship Jesus says, "Take up your cross and follow me. Deny yourself. Die to yourself. Crucify yourself and follow after me."

You see, the cross was a sign of submission. Rome was forcing submission upon those who were formerly rebellious and it was a sign for all to see that those who were formerly rebellious have now been brought into full conformity with Roman rule. And, indeed, that is what we are called to do. We who were formerly rebellious are called to come into conformity, to take up our cross and follow after Jesus Christ, to die to ourselves and our desires and live for Christ.

Jesus never called us to do anything that he himself hadn't already either been willing to do or actually done. And in this sense he doesn't do it spiritually, he does it actually physically. He takes up his own cross and he marches toward death.

Crucifixion, which Jesus is steadily heading toward, was a very crude, but very effective form of tortuous execution. It was used by the ancient Persians. It was practiced heavily by the Carthaginians and adopted by the Romans. Roman citizens were exempt from crucifixion because it was deemed so horrible and so demeaning. So if you were a Roman you didn't have to worry about being crucified.

The Roman statesman and orator Cicero speaks of how horrid crucifixion was in the eyes of a Roman citizen. He says, "Let the very name of the cross be far away, not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears." It was despicable, a despicable way to die, humiliating, shameful, excruciating.

Crucifixion was also especially shameful to the Jews, not only to the Jews, but to the Jews also. The law of God, God specified that someone who was hung on a tree was not to remain there overnight.

Deuteronomy 21 verses 22 and 23 said that:

If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.³

The one who hangs on a tree is accursed of God. It was a curse to be crucified. Paul, further enlightens us to this in Galatians chapter three and verse 13. He says, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.”⁴ What Christ was doing on the cross was becoming cursed on our behalf.

Paul goes on to say, “For it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE’”⁵

The curse of the law has been redeemed, has been removed because Christ became a curse on our behalf by hanging on the tree.

The primarily purpose of crucifixion was not to maximize the infliction of pain. Now that may seem surprising to you, because crucifixion did maximize pain very well. There was no shortage of pain to be experienced. But that was not the primary purpose of crucifixion. The real purpose of crucifixion was to publicly display submission on the part of the one who had formerly been rebellious. That was the purpose of crucifixion. That is why it was so public. That is why they have Jesus parade down the street carrying the cross beam of his own cross. They want everyone to see. That is why an inscription is placed over the cross. They put the formal charges there so all can see why this rebellious person is being condemned to death.

Yes, it was excruciating. Yes, it was torturous. But the primary purpose was to publicly display submission on the part of one who had formerly been rebellious. And that is crucifixion was largely limited to those who were insurgents and rebels, terrorists like Barabbas. They were the ones who were rebelling against the state and, therefore, they were the ones who needed to be publicly humiliated, publicly shown to be in submission to Rome.

And so crucifixion turned out to be a very effective deterrent to further rebellion because it was so public.

³ Deuteronomy 21:22-23.

⁴ Galatians 3:13.

⁵ Ibid.

So the primary purpose was not to inflict pain—though it did. It wasn't so much to inflict pain as it was to evoke compliance among the populace.

Historically around the year of Jesus' birth some 2000 Jews had been in a mass crucifixion killed for a rebellion led by Judas the Galilean. Can you imagine 2000 crosses, 2000 people hanging there? This great rebellion had taken place by Judas the Galilean and he, along with 2000 of his compatriots were publicly crucified, thus, putting down the rebellion and, thus, putting down any other thoughts of rebellion in the minds of others.

The cross, as you know, is comprised of an upright beam called a simplex and a lot of times the simplex—that vertical beam—was left in place. It was never moved and the person would carry the horizontal beam, called the patibulum. He would carry it to the place where the vertical beam was and he would be hoisted up upon that and affixed to it in that fashion.

There were three kind of Roman crosses. There was a cross that was the shape of a T. It was flat on the top. There was a cross that was the shape of an X and so in that case the person would be spread out on the cross, their legs not together, but spread apart. And then there was the traditional cross known as the *crux immissa*. It was the cross that had the upright beam that extends beyond the horizontal beam and it is the traditional cross that we typically see. And this is likely the cross that Jesus was crucified on as well because they affixed the inscription, the charges were affixed above his head upon that part of the cross that juts up above.

Jesus carried this horizontal cross beam, the patibulum, with the latter help of Simon of Cyrene that John doesn't mention, but the other gospel writers do. Because of his failing strength he is assisted by Simon. He carries it to Golgotha.

Golgotha, there, is a Greek transliteration of a Aramaic word, the place of the skull, here called a Hebrew word. Hebrew and Aramaic got somewhat jumbled up as they were used frequently as is often the case in places where multiple languages are used together and frequently. And Golgotha means the place of the skull.

Luke simply translates it as the skull. This place was called the skull, perhaps because it appeared like a skull. It had a shape like a skull. But perhaps more likely because it was so associated with death.

You recall I said that typically that vertical beam of the cross was often left in place and so they could use it so you are not always digging a hole. It made it a lot easier for the Romans. Just leave the one place in, the one stake there in the ground and then you just simply put the individual up on the cross. And so it is likely that this was the official execution grounds. This was the gallows of the day and so it was called Golgotha, the skull because it was so associated with death.

The Latin term for skull is *calvaria* from which we get our term Calvary. You won't find "Calvary" in the Scriptures, but, of course, you can see the association there with skull.

John then tells us that in verse 18 there, that is at Golgotha, "they crucified him."⁶

And then he adds in verse 18 that Jesus was not crucified alone, but that he was crucified with two other men, "One on either side, and Jesus in between."⁷

There were two other who were crucified at the same time and in the same place as Jesus. Although they are all three being crucified together there remains, however, a very fundamental difference between them. Two of them are guilty and deserve the punishment they are getting according to the Roman law. The third man Jesus, of course, is innocent.

This wasn't only something that the Jewish leaders knew or only something that Pilate knew or only something that the Romans knew. This was something that everyone knew. This was something that even these two insurgents who were being crucified along with Jesus. This is something they knew. They knew that Jesus was innocent.

Luke 23 verse 39 through 41 record for us some of the dialogue that took place between Jesus and these two individuals that are being hung, being crucified on either side of Jesus.

Luke 23 and verse 39. "One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, 'Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!'"⁸

Verse 40.

But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.'⁹

It was evident even to criminals that Jesus was innocent. It was evident even to those who were not an intimate part of the trial and the whole process that has led up to this point. It is evident that Jesus is innocent, that he has been condemned unjustly.

Mark 15:27 tells us that these two other men were robbers, thieves. And Mark uses the same word that John used of Barabbas. And if you will recall back there we saw that, yes, that is one possible translation of the Word there, thief. But another is one who is a terrorist, an insurrectionist, a zealot, one who is seeking to overthrow the government.

⁶ John 19:18.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Luke 23:39.

⁹ Luke 23:40-41.

And that is likely what these two men were. They were probably cohorts of Barabbas who has been released. The guilty go free while the innocent is condemned.

These were zealots who were trying to overthrow the Romans. They are being justly condemned. Jesus has been accused of that, but has been unjustly condemned.

Again, notice that John explains that Jesus was crucified between these two others. Again, note the attention to historical detail. These are not the musings of someone who is, you know, sort of made these things up in his own mind. He is calling for people to attest to the historical reality of what took place.

No doubt there would have been people still living in John's day, even as John was living when he penned this obviously, who could read this and attest and check out his sources and see if, indeed, Jesus was in the middle. Talk to other eye witnesses and confirm what had happened. And so we see the historicity of this account coming forth.

Now John tells us in John 14... You are wondering when we are going to get to the point and we are getting there quickly.

Verse 19.

“Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, ‘JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.’”¹⁰

Pilate wrote this inscription in Latin, in Greek and in Hebrew or Aramaic and, again, this was standard procedure. You were condemned. The charges that were brought against you and for which you were condemned were placed, placarded near you or on the cross or in some fashion like that.

Pilate writes out the reason why Jesus is being condemned. But what he writes is very interesting. Pilate does not write, “Guilty of treason against Rome.” He doesn't write that. That was really the charge. We have already seen that that was a trumped up charge, that there was no reality in it, that Pilate wasn't convinced of it, that Pilate is being strong armed into this. And he detests that fact.

But, nevertheless, that was the charge. It was treason. It was sedition, rebellion against the authority of Rome.

But that is not what Pilate writes on the inscription. He says, “Jesus the Nazarene.” There is the point of identification. This is who it is. This is Jesus. He is from Nazareth.

And what is he guilty of? He is the King of the Jews. Here it is for all to see. “JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”¹¹

¹⁰ John 19:19.

¹¹ Ibid.

Now, again, it is clear that Pilate wasn't convinced of this fact. They have had a little heart to heart talk, Jesus and Pilate about kingship and authority and where Jesus' kingdom is and it is not of this world and all those things have already been discussed and Pilate is convinced that Jesus isn't a threat to Rome. But he is certainly not convinced that Jesus is any real kind of king, at least not any kind of king that he is familiar with.

When Pilate writes this he is simply using it as another opportunity to get under the skin of the Jewish leaders. He doesn't like being put in the situation that he is in. In this case he doesn't like to condemn an innocent man. He knows he has to, at least from his own mental perspective he thinks he has to. And so he is going to take one more opportunity to put this placard up for all to see that Jesus is the King of the Jews. And he knows the Jews aren't going to like it. They are going to get what they want, but they are not going to get it in the way that they want.

So that is what he writes. He thinks it will bug them and he is correct.

Verse 20.

Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'"¹²

"That is the problem here. We don't want him crucified because he is the King of the Jews. We want him crucified because he said he was the King of the Jews. We want him crucified because we think he is crazy. According to him he said he is the King of the Jews. Let's do away with this one. But don't put up there that he is the King of the Jews. You are going to make us look bad."

Pilate gets his revenge. He answers in a very short manner, a very defiant way, "What I have written I have written."¹³

"I have already written it out. I am not writing it again. It is done. Put it up."

And so the inscription stands, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."¹⁴

Here it is for all to see. Jesus is the King of the Jews.

You see, Pilate wrote better than he knew once again. Once again God is sovereignly working through evil men to accomplish his purposes. Once again Jesus Christ is presented as, indeed, who he is, the King of glory. Here he is, Jesus the King of the Jews

¹² John 19:20-21.

¹³ John 19:22.

¹⁴ John 19:19.

with Rome's official validation. This is Rome. They have said, "Jesus is the King of the Jews."

This was what Jesus was born for, this very moment, that he might be lifted up for all to see and presented as the King of the Jews, crucified, yes, but king no less.

Luke chapter one records the words of the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary. The angel describes what Jesus will be like. He says:

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.¹⁵

Here he is, the King of the Jews.

Only a week earlier the crowds that had been following Jesus and had come back to Jerusalem for the feast, when Jesus came into the city the crowd—we read in John 12 and verse 13—"Took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, 'Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel.'"¹⁶

"Here comes the King. Here is the procession. He is the King of Israel."

And now he is being crucified and Pilate is the one who declares him to be the King of the Jews.

It brings even greater meaning to Jesus' words in John chapter eight and verse 28 when he said, "When you lift up the Son of Man,"¹⁷ speaking of the kind of death he was going to die, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He."¹⁸

This is another way in which they can know that he is, indeed, the Messiah, the King of David, the King of Israel. And it is validated by Rome.

In the cross of Jesus Christ we can see a great display of Jesus Christ as the exalted king.

Secondly, we see a display of Christ as the greater David. We see not only in the cross a display of Christ as the exalted king, but also a display of Christ as the greater David. Look with me at verse 23.

"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece."¹⁹

¹⁵ Luke 1:32-33.

¹⁶ John 12:13.

¹⁷ John 8:28.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Jesus was stripped of his clothes before he was nailed to the cross. That was a part of the humiliation. The Roman soldiers, four of them because they split Jesus' clothes into four parts.

You say, "Well, what four parts would there be?"

Well, probably sandals and perhaps a belt and an outer garment, an inner garment. There may have been other items that were Jesus' personal effects that were split up. We are not told specifically about that. But they are divided into four parts among these four Roman soldiers, each evening, each one to each soldier. But there was this tunic, a seamless large piece of cloth that was perhaps especially valuable or especially desirable to these Romans and so they had to decide who was going to get it. So they began to cast lots. They began to, as it were, gamble over the clothing of Christ to see who it was that would get to go home with this desirable article of clothing.

Verse 24 explains that to us. They say, "Let us not tear it,"²⁰ ripping it into four pieces, thus, degrading its value considerably.

"Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: 'THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.' Therefore the soldiers did these things."²¹

Why did they do this? Well, executioners typically got whatever... that was sort of their tip for doing the job that they had to do. They got to keep whatever belonged to the guy who is dead now.

But there is a greater reason why they did this. They did this to fulfill the Scripture. Normally they wouldn't cast lots over this, but they did this in order to fulfill the Scriptures.

Specifically here we are looking at Psalm chapter 22 and verse 18. Now Psalm 22 is a great messianic psalm. There are several references out of Psalm 22 that are associated with the crucifixion. David is in Psalm 22 being oppressed by his enemies. He feels laid low. He feels that God has abandoned him. He feels hopeless and helpless.

That is the context of Psalm 22. In verse 18 David says this very thing.

"They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots."²²

He is picturing himself as one who has been condemned to death and his enemies have condemned him to death. And as he is dying they are dividing up the spoils among

¹⁹ John 19:23.

²⁰ John 19:24.

²¹ John 19:24-25.

²² Psalm 22:18.

themselves, more concerned for his own material goods than they are for his physical life. They want him dead so they can have his stuff. And here this is attributed to Jesus, the greater David.

Notice what John says in the first part of verse 25.

“Therefore the soldiers did these things.”²³

They did these things not knowing the full significance of what they were doing and how they were unwittingly fulfilling Scripture by their jaded act of dividing the spoils at the foot of the one who is dying. They did these things to fulfill the Scriptures concerning the death of the Messiah.

You know, some might question the fulfillments that Jesus made of himself, that he orchestrated events, that he, you know, said things or did things so it would appear that he fulfilled Scripture and therefore he sort of was a self fulfilling prophecy walking on two legs. But here we have four Roman soldiers fulfilling prophecy concerning Christ. They certainly weren't concerned with fulfilling prophecy. That certainly wasn't at the forefront of their minds. But nevertheless they are unwittingly testifying and attesting to the reality that Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God, the King of the Jews, the King of kings and Lord of lords. They, just like Pilate and the Jews, are not ultimately in control. They think they are. It appears that they are, but the fact is, God is the one in control. And God is orchestrating events to put his Son on display for all to see for all time that he is the one sufficient Savior for all sins.

God is in control. But, again, as we said last week, that doesn't make them any less responsible for their actions. Pilate was responsible. The Jews were responsible. And these Roman soldiers are responsible for their callous actions.

You see, Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures in every detail of his crucifixion showing himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of David, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We are going to see more about the fulfillment of Scripture next week. As we continue to go through the crucifixion we see Jesus fulfilling prophecy after prophecy. In this particular fulfillment we see Jesus as the greater David, the Son of David who would have a kingdom that would have no end.

Thirdly, we see a display of Christ as the obedient Son. We have seen him as the exalted King, as the greater David and here as the obedient Son.

A sharp contrast is painted between the callousness of the soldiers who at the foot of the cross divide up the spoils for the one who is wracked with pain. That is contrasted with the concern and the care and the weeping and the lamenting of those whom Jesus loved and those who loved Jesus.

²³ John 19:25.

Verse 25 says, “Therefore the soldiers did these things. But...”²⁴ a strong contrast there, “standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.”²⁵

Four women are here with Jesus, four women named anyway: Mary, here simply described as Jesus’ mother; a second woman goes unnamed and that is his mother’s sister. This is Mary’s sister.

You say, “Well, who was Mary’s sister?”

Probably Mary’s sister is named Salome, Mark 15:40 names her. And elsewhere she is said to be the mother of James and John, Matthew 27:56. So who is this lady? She is not only the sister of Mary, she is the mother of John who writes this gospel. Not only was John there, he was there with his mom.

Notice that she goes unnamed as well. Isn’t that interesting. John has frequently throughout the gospel of John referred to himself, but never by name. He typically refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved and he does so even in this passage here. How does he refer to his mom? Not as Salome, but as the sister of Mary. Another good indication that, indeed, this is his mother.

There is another Mary there, Mary the wife of Clopas and then a third Mary, Mary Magdalene, three Marys, one Salome, four women.

Jesus from the cross looks down and sees his mother.

“When Jesus then saw His mother,”²⁶ verse 26, “and the disciple whom He loved...”²⁷ That is John. He sees Mary his mother. He sees John. “...standing nearby, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.”²⁸

You see, what we see here is a real picture of Jesus’ humanity. That is one thing. We see Jesus concerned for his mother who is no doubt weeping to see her son treated as he is being treated, knowing that he is going to die. And here we have Jesus in his moment of greatest personal crisis, the heat is on. He is in excruciating pain. He is on the verge of death and what does he do? He looks out and he cares for his mother. He is caring for the needs of others. He is not so focused on himself and his own miserable circumstances that he cannot see the pain and the needs of those around him.

So Jesus says to his mother, “Woman, behold your son!”²⁹

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ John 19:26.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ John 19:26-27.

²⁹ John 19:26.

And to John he says, “Behold, your mother!”³⁰

Jesus is making arrangements here from the cross for John to take care of his mother, to make sure that she is ok, to provide for her needs, to watch out over her.

“Mary, consider John your son. John, consider Mary your mother. Watch over her. Care for her.”

Jesus is at the same time showing honor to his mother and expressing love in one of the deepest ways you can for John by entrusting his dear mother into his hands.

You see, Jesus what he is really doing here is, I believe, fulfilling the law of God to a T. One of the commandments is to honor your father and your mother. It is very, very likely and we are pretty certain that by this time Jesus’ father Joseph had already died and so Mary is alone.

And one of the ways that Jesus is honoring his mother here is by seeing that she is cared for. And in doing so he is, once again, from the cross itself fulfilling every letter of the law of God, perfect in his obedience, not missing a single command.

And by doing so he shows himself not only to be an obedient son to his mother, but even more so he is showing himself to be the obedient Son of his heavenly Father who was the one who issued the divine command to honor your mother in the first place.

Therefore Jesus is the obedient son to his earthly mother, this heavenly Father by perfectly fulfilling the law in every respect. And so the cross puts on display Jesus as the obedient Son. All along Jesus has said his bread is to do the will of his Father. Jesus’ mission was a mission of obedience.

We see that issue surface here in the next point, the final point this morning. Not only do we see a display of Christ as the exalted king, Christ as the greater David, Christ as the obedient Son, but it also displays Christ as the all sufficient sacrifice.

Christ is the all sufficient sacrifice.

Verse 28. After he has taken care of his mother and made arrangement there.

“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, ‘I am thirsty.’”³¹

John says here that Jesus knew that all things had already been accomplished. Everything was set in motion. Everything had been basically tied up and wrapped with a

³⁰ John 19:27.

³¹ John 19:28.

neat bow. It was all but done. All the prophecies had been fulfilled for the most part. Everything was coming to a head. It was all but completed.

The Greek word that he uses there is τετελεσται (te-tel'-e-stai). All things had already been accomplished. Now that is important because it is going to come into play again in verse 30.

The responsibilities had been fulfilled, the tasks had been completed and knowing this he fulfilled—same root word there as the word used in τετελεσται (te-tel'-e-stai)—he fulfilled the Scripture and said, “I thirst.”

Now, again here in Jesus saying, “I thirst,” we see another picture of the real humanity of Christ. Jesus’ sufferings were real. He didn’t just appear to be a man and sort of skate through the crucifixion. He was fully man. And, as such, he fully felt the pain and he fully knew the longings even for drink.

How did the soldiers respond in verse 29?

“A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth.”³²

The other gospel writers tell us that as they were doing that they were mocking him even while they were seeking to give him some relief they were mocking him. This was to fulfill the Scriptures. This sour wine was a kind of vinegar wine. It was unlike the sedative like wine that was offered and refused by Jesus early on in the crucifixion. You can read about that in Mark chapter 15 and verse 22. That would have dulled the pain a little bit. Jesus refused it.

But here he asks for some drink and they give him this vinegar wine that would not dull the pain. And there is some indication that it would actually make things more intense. You know, as some drugs tend to deaden you, other things make experiences more intense. This one tended to make the experiences more intense. So even while they might quench his thirst they might also be creating even greater agony for him.

They gave him sour wine to fulfill the Scriptures again. This is in fulfillment of Psalm 69 and verse 21. Jesus fulfilled this. In Psalm 69 verse 21 it says, “They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”³³

Now vinegar is not a very good thing to drink. It doesn’t quench the thirst very well. It is a slap in the face, essentially and that is what Jesus gets here. Jesus is, again, fulfilling Scripture.

³² John 19:29.

³³ Psalm 69:21.

Having received the drink, Jesus utters his last words from the cross. Look with me at verse 30.

“Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”³⁴

“It is finished.”³⁵

Again, it is actually only one word. It is τετελεσται (te-tel'-e-stai), completed, accomplished, done, finished.

It is the same word that was used back in verse 28 to speak about how all things had already been accomplished. It is the same root of where Jesus fulfilled the Scripture. The last words of Jesus are, “It is finished.”³⁶

Jesus has completed the mission. He has fulfilled his responsibilities perfectly.

You go back and look at this word τετελεσται (te-tel'-e-stai) and words that are related to it throughout the gospel of John, it is a very central theme, accomplishing the work the Father sent him to do.

John chapter four and verse 34, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work,’”³⁷ τετελεσται (te-tel'-e-stai).

“That is what I am all about, accomplishing the work.”

John 5:36. “But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John [John the Baptist, that is]; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.”³⁸

John 13:1. “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”³⁹ “To the end,” there, the word “end,” same root as the word used in τετελεσται (te-tel'-e-stai). He loved them to the full. He loved them to fruition. He loved them to completion. He went the distance for them.

And so what Jesus says here on the cross is simply a shortened version of what he had prayed hours before in the upper room. Turn back to John chapter 17 and verse four.

³⁴ John 19:30.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ John 4:34

³⁸ John 5:36.

³⁹ John 13:1.

Jesus praying there to the Father on behalf of his disciples. He says in John 17:4, “[Father,] I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”⁴⁰

He looks prospectively toward the cross as though it is already a done deal because he is so committed to fulfilling and accomplishing what God has given him to do and therefore he can pray that in his prayer.

“I glorified You on the earth, [how?] having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”⁴¹

And what does Jesus say as his final word from the cross? Accomplished.

“It is finished.”⁴²

“You sent me on an errand, Father, and I have been successful.”

The sacrifice for sins has been made. The law has been fulfilled. The prophecies have come to fruition. Justice has been served. And, therefore, mercy will be able to be meted out. The Lamb of God has been slain.

“It is finished.”⁴³

And having said that, Jesus bowed his head and gave up his spirit voluntarily. The cross put men on display and the cross put Jesus on display. It displayed him as the exalted King. It displayed him as the greater David. It displayed him as the obedient Son. And it displayed him as the sufficient sacrifice. No more sacrifices need to be offered.

Accomplished in Christ.

Let’s pray.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we thank you for your humility. Though you are the Creator of all things, you stepped into time and space, you submitted yourself to death, even a death on the cross for our sakes. And while it seems like the cross was the moment of defeat, the moment of greatest humiliation, it is also at the same time the moment of supreme exaltation. For you are at that very crucial moment fulfilling, accomplishing, completing the plan of your Father from all eternity past. And you did it flawlessly. So this morning we say, “Thank you,” for salvation we can have in your submission to your Father’s will. We thank you that you declared for all time, “It is finished.” No other sacrifice needs to be made. What sacrifice could compare to the sacrifice you have made already?

⁴⁰ John 17:4.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² John 19:30.

⁴³ Ibid.

I pray, Lord, that we would be truly appreciative of that sacrifice. I pray, Lord, that we would make the most of what you have provided for us and honor you in your death because your death does, indeed, demand our all and that just as you took up your cross physically, may we do so spiritually and may we follow you as our pattern.

Thank you for the salvation we have, that we are cleansed. That there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in you. We rejoice in these things. We rejoice in your cross. In your name we pray. Amen.