

## Mark 15:1-15

<sup>1</sup>As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, along with the elders, the experts in the law, and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. <sup>2</sup>Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “It is as you say.” <sup>3</sup>The chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup>Pilate questioned him again, “Are you not going to answer anything? See how many charges they are bringing against you!” <sup>5</sup>But Jesus still did not answer anything, so Pilate was amazed. <sup>6</sup>At each Festival, Pilate used to release to the people one prisoner whom they requested. <sup>7</sup>There was one named Barabbas, who was imprisoned with the rebels and had committed murder in the rebellion. <sup>8</sup>The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them what he usually did. <sup>9</sup>Pilate replied, “Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?” <sup>10</sup>In fact, he knew that it was because of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas to them instead. <sup>12</sup>Again, Pilate replied to them, “Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” <sup>13</sup>“Crucify him!” they shouted back. <sup>14</sup>But Pilate said to them, “Why? What has he done wrong?” But they shouted even louder, “Crucify him!” <sup>15</sup>Since he wanted to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. After he had Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Sermon for Midweek Lent, March 3, 2021, Sermon 3, Solemn Hours of Lent,  
Hour of Injustice

Text: Mark 15:1-15

Intro: We pride ourselves on being a nation of laws, a nation where there is liberty and justice for all. The laws of our country are supposed to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. Yet we know there are often miscarriages of justice. When prosecutors, lawyers, judges and defenders follow the law and do their jobs in an honest and upright way the system works. But sometimes we know people have something to lose or something to gain and they break the law perhaps in a subtle way, in a way not easy to detect, or crafty lawyers know how to use loopholes and technicalities in the law, or juries are manipulated. Innocent people have been convicted, even of murder and sentenced to death. And we know sometimes even a guilty person is acquitted, either because of a lack of evidence or for any number of other reasons. And as Christians, there is no doubt that we want to see justice prevail, for the good of the innocent and because we want a peaceful society where we can use our freedom for the spread of the gospel.

## Page 2

But sometimes we become aware of a legal system that has become corrupt not because it is designed poorly, but because those operating it are corrupt and want to gain the outcome they desire, regardless of what the consequences are. When Jesus lived, the Jews lived under the Roman legal system, though they were allowed to prosecute and try a variety of legal as well as religious cases. They were allowed to pass judgment but when a case called for the death penalty, the Romans reserved that right for themselves. As we know one of the darkest hours in the entire passion history was the hour of injustice, when Jesus enemies wanted one outcome and one outcome only. They wanted a death penalty for Jesus, and they wanted it by any means. They wanted to get rid of Jesus as scripture says, "in some sly way" so that it would all happen quickly, out of sight of the people.

They hated a Rabbi who had become very popular with the people because of his miracles and teaching. What they did not understand is that Jesus did not seek personal popularity. He too wanted justice, but he wanted the justice that God had planned for the human race. And while they Jewish leaders believed they had carried out their plan, they failed to take the OT prophecies into account and understand that God sent Jesus, His Son into the world bring God's justice for every human being. Because, you see, God's justice was that of mercy. He sent his Son to endure the hour of injustice so we would not have to endure his eternal justice. During this dark hour of injustice we see Jesus enduring false accusations, we see him taking the place of a rebel and accepting the death sentence from the one who should have granted him justice.

### I. Jesus endured false accusations

A. Mark capsulizes the events. **Jesus endured false accusations.**

1. The primary accusation against Jesus was that he claimed to be a king and that with that claim, he was plotting a rebellion against the established Roman government.
2. They had also claimed that Jesus opposed paying taxes to Caesar. Those accusations were completely false.
3. Isaiah made it plain 700 years earlier that God's suffering servant would be one who was innocent namely his Son: "**He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors.**"
4. Accusations against Jesus were completely false. He taught openly in the temple. Those who brought charges could have heard his teaching in the temple. He did not teach the overthrow of Rome. And the fact is well known he taught people they SHOULD pay taxes to Rome.

## Page 3

B. The fact is, the charges Jesus put up with, the false charges he endured were accusations each of us have been guilty of in one form or another. But I'm not guilty of rebellion. How could I be?

1. What about the rebel in my heart--the rebel that says, "I don't want to do what God tells me to do. I can gossip, after all it's still partly true, and it doesn't hurt anyone. I will tell a lie that will have just enough truth that no one will really know. And besides, other people do things that are a lot worse. At least I'm not a criminal."

2. But aren't we criminals in God's eyes? But you see, Jesus took those accusations on himself. Isaiah wrote: "**Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows...He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed.**"

3. Jesus was unjustly charged, not only with crimes that the Jewish leaders brought against him, but with all of our crimes because God brought those charges against him. He was the Son of God. Who was going to pierce him and crush him and bring on him punishment so that you and I can have peace with God? Was not God the Father going to bring those charges against him?

C. The Jewish leaders all thought they were getting just what they wanted. Get rid of Jesus, and he cannot expose our hypocrisy and our dishonesty and the sin in our hearts that he so easily exposes.

**Transition:** In the dark hour of injustice we see Jesus allowing injustice to come on him in many forms. He endured false accusations for us. But part of the injustice he endured also included taking the place of one who was guilty.

## II. Jesus took the place of a rebel

A. How ironic, the one who complied with his Father's will in every way takes a rebel's place and in so doing fulfills his Father's will again. "**At each Festival, Pilate used to release to the people one prisoner whom they requested.**<sup>7</sup> **There was one named Barabbas, who was imprisoned with the rebels and had committed murder in the rebellion.**<sup>8</sup> **The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them what he usually did.**<sup>9</sup> **Pilate replied, "Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?"**<sup>10</sup> **In fact, he knew that it was because of envy that the chief priests had handed him over.**<sup>11</sup> **But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release**

## Page 4

### **Barabbas to them instead.**

1. The maneuvering of the priests and teachers of the law tried to back Pilate into a corner so he would give them what they wanted--injustice.
2. Pilate wanted to do the right thing and had all authority to do the right thing, but the Jews backed him into a corner. Pilate tried to get the Jews to do what he was supposed to do, namely ask for Jesus release. As governor he should have released Jesus because he was innocent; what Pilate did was put Jesus on the same level as the rebel Barabbas. Ironically, that is just what God was doing also when he sent his Son to the cross. He was putting Jesus on the same level as us rebels against him and caused him to take our place. "**The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed.**"

**B. Jesus took the place not just of Barabbas.** We can look at the release of Barabbas and see in it, something of a picture of how God has caused Jesus to take our place even though he was innocent. That was unjust in terms of what we should be able to expect from a human court. But that was exactly what God did--he was unjust to his own son. He required his Son to satisfy his justice by taking our punishment so that he could show us his merciful forgiveness.

**Trans:** While we are and should be against injustice at any level in human dealings, and we should understand the injustice of Pilate in this instance, we need to understand that it was God who saw to it that those who were evil, those who committed wrong doing were playing into God's hand so to speak. Yet, God's Son was innocent, but

### **III. He was put to death by the one who should have granted him justice.**

#### **A. Pilate truly turned his back on Jesus.**

1. Jesus' disciples had deserted him and fled. Zechariah 13 had prophesied that event. But surely he could expect the government authority to do what was right couldn't he? Yet, that is not what the prophets said either: Isaiah 53:8 "**By oppression and judgment he was taken away.**"
2. While the Romans and Roman governors prided themselves on justice and holding court in the open, now Pilate's injustice was out in the open. Transparency: Punishment for the guilty and justice for those who are wronged. True, If all these events got back to the emperor, he wouldn't

care much about a Jewish Rabbi who was crucified, because after all, by crucifying Jesus Pilate avoided a riot among the Jews and kept the peace. But it was only an earthly peace. Jesus died, to bring us eternal peace with God. By his injustice, by turning his back on Jesus, by God carrying out his will on his Son, God through Pilate's injustice brought us peace, as Isaiah says, "**The punishment that brought us peace was upon him.**"

**B. God the Father showed he had turned his back on his Son**

1. Isaiah 53:4b "**Yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted.**"

2. 6b "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." It was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. The Lord makes his life a guilt offering.

5. Shouldn't the Son have been able to expect justice from his father. But friends, Jesus was treated unjustly; he was made sin for us so that we could have his righteousness.

Jesus willingly accepted what he didn't deserve, so that we can receive what we don't deserve. The only thing we can do is receive it in faith as the free gift it is.