

THE LOVE OF GOD

In Mark chapter 15 we see the absolute worst in humanity as contrasted with the absolute best God has to offer to us. The contrast of the utter darkness of sin with the astounding love of God could not be more stark than at the scene of the cross.

Late in chapter 14 the religious leaders, the chief priests, elders, and the scribes are assembled to put Jesus on trial (Mark 14:53). These men are the ones who had a God-given responsibility to lead God's people by offering sacrifices, by shepherding the people, and by keeping and relaying God's word to the people. Now they were aligned against God's chosen One, seeking to find false testimony against Him that they might put Him to death (Mark 15:55).

In chapter 15, this group, knowing they did not have authority from Rome to put anyone to death, took Jesus before the Roman procurator Pilate (Mark 15:1). They then stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas, an insurrectionist and murderer, in place of Jesus (Mark 15:11), the only truly innocent man to ever live (Heb. 4:15). Pilate, though he recognized Jesus' innocence (Mark 15:14), gave in to the will of the crowd and released Barabbas. Having Jesus scourged, Pilate sent Him off to be crucified (Mark 15:15).

In the next scene the Roman soldiers, who likely knew very little about Jesus, beat Him, spit on Him, and mocked Him (Mark 15:16-20). Likewise, those who passed by Jesus hanging on the cross mocked Him (Mark 15:29-30). Even the chief priests and scribes mocked Him while He hung on the cross (Mark 15:31-32).

In these events leading up to and including the crucifixion, the worst in humanity is on display. This is where sin leads; this is where our sin leads. While it is amazing the extent of the evil involved in these events, what is more amazing is the love of God on display in response. Jesus died to save the very ones who put Him to death (Luke 23:34). God sent His Son to die for us while we were ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God (Rom. 5:6-10). It is amazing that in the face of such evil, God's response is sacrificial love.

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His Only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1John 4:9-10). This is life-changing love. Have you allowed the love of God to change your life?

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