

# **The Cross of Jesus: His Suffering and Sacrifice**

Mark 15

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So Mark chapter 15. What I aim to present to you this morning is the sobering reality that we often miss when we talk about the cross. We talk about the love of God demonstrated through His Son on the cross, and that's as true blue as you can imagine. But there's also an ugly side to the cross. The judgment of God was also thrust upon the Son. The weight of sin was cast upon the sinless One. We don't really talk about the excruciating circumstances of the cross in today's world because we live in a generation that is quite sensitive. They are disillusioned with living outside the authority of God and living in denial. People don't like the idea of blood. People don't like the idea of sacrifice, of suffering. It's uncomfortable to think about.

Today, I want to look at the cross in its bare and brutal context and what Jesus needed to endure to satisfy the wrath of God poured out because of sin. This may not be a light sermon. I don't intend it to be, but I hope to present a clear picture of what Jesus went through and how our sin put Him there. This isn't a guilt trip. I'm merely peeling back the layers to uncover the brutal nature of Jesus' crucifixion so that we might appreciate it more.

One of the first things we are confronted with at the start of Mark 15 is the motivation by wicked men to kill Jesus. All throughout the Gospels, we read about the contentious situations Jesus had with these religious leaders or these religious elders of His day. He contended with the Pharisees, the scribes, the Sadducees, who were all well-versed in the Old Testament. Some of the issues that arose through Jesus' ministry were sometimes His interpretation of the Old Testament. It was different. It was more radical than the established traditions of the Jews.

One example is the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus calls His disciples to radical discipleship. Another example was His teaching of the Parable of the Vineyard, where He makes inferences to being God's beloved Son. In several other cases, Jesus was highly critical of the religious teachers, often calling them hypocrites, liars, deceitful in doctrine and practice. You'll find this in places like Matthew 23 and John 10.

Now, I say this to highlight the tense exchanges and the threat Jesus posed to the religious establishment of His day. It got quite serious that the Pharisees, quote, "plotted to kill Him." In the previous chapter, chapter 14:1, it says, "After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery, by deceit, and put Him to death. But they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar by the people.'"

Now, the chief priests authorized the killing of Jesus by accusing Him of religious crimes, and the scribes were in place to justify His killing by the law. Jesus was accumulating a large following, and people believed the divine claims He was making, backed up by the miracles He was performing. The fact that this was happening alongside the honest criticisms of Jesus against the leaders meant that it set a course for their demise because they were jealous. Mark 15 says they were envious. They wanted Jesus' silence by any means necessary.

Now, if you look at verse 3, Jesus was, quote, "accused of many things." They said He was a demon. They said He was a sorcerer. They accused Him of breaking the Sabbath. They said He would destroy the temple. They called Him a blasphemer, a liar because He equated Himself with God and claimed to be the Messiah. At His trial, they planted false witnesses. If you look at Mark 14:56, it says, "For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree."

And as you read on, you see the great lengths they embark on to destroy Him. But even though they bring the accusations of religious crimes against Him, they cannot put Him to death because the evidence is weak. It is disputable. It cannot stick. They do not agree. And so they changed their tune and accused Jesus of political crimes by trying to make Himself a king above Caesar. If Jesus was found guilty, then immediate execution would follow by Roman law because it is considered high treason.

In this Jerusalem versus Jesus travesty, Pilate, the governor, involves himself as a sole tribunal in settling the matter. And of course, the accusations of Jesus as a rebel king did not hold up or merit death, but it led to it anyway. Pilate caved into the demands of the people who wanted Jesus dead, and he washed his hands of all responsibility. And Jesus is then led to be scourged before His execution.

The part of the process involved Jesus being mocked with sarcastic humor and beaten physically by Roman soldiers. They crowned Him with thorns that cut His forehead open. Blood would flow down His forehead, distort His vision. And so a bruised and bloody face is something that we come to grips with first. A prophecy in Isaiah 52:14 says, "His visage

was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."

This in mind, you can imagine a face that has been beaten beyond recognition. The passage says that the whole Roman garrison was called to witness and inflict various forms of abuse on Jesus. They sarcastically said that He was the king of the Jews. They pretended to worship Him. They clothed Him in purple, which was a royal color for the Caesars. They struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him.

Jesus endured mockery, the mockery of evildoers, in one of the saddest displays of injustice. This injustice led to His scourging, which can be hard to stomach. If anyone has seen the movie "The Passion of the Cross," you will know what I mean. I remember crying as a 15-year-old watching this movie at my auntie's house, seeing Jesus' flesh ripped open by the flagrum. The flagrum was the whip used by the Romans. It was a very unpleasant experience to be on the end of it.

The whip had a handle with at least three leather strands or rope protruding from the handpiece. Sometimes the whip could have more than three strands. Sometimes it had as much as nine. That's where we get the cat o' nine tails. But on the end of these leather strips would be attached metallic balls, metallic shards, or glass shards, even sheep bone. Basically, anything that could severely cut the flesh open.

Under Roman law, there was no limit to how many lashes one could receive, but the Jewish law states that no person should receive more than 40 lashes. Now, if we use the Jewish standard as a metric, we can estimate that Jesus maybe received 40 lashes minus one, so 39. But with the three strands on the end of each lash, it makes it around 117 lashes in one session. That's if we go by the Jewish metric.

Can you imagine 117 deep lacerations on the back of Jesus, on His flesh ripped open by these metallic balls, by sheep bone? No language can deliver the excruciating pain He must have felt. His body carved by the barbaric tool reserved for criminals. How did the righteous Son end up as a sport for the depraved?

A book I was reading for this described in adequate detail the process of the ancient practice of scourging. It says, quote, "The victim was usually stripped naked and shackled by the wrist to a fixed object like a low column, causing him to assume a bent-over position to make the executioner's task easier. The bits of metal would dig deep into the flesh, ripping small blood vessels, nerves, muscles, and skin. Breathing became shallow because it is painful to take a deep breath. This is called splinting. Splinting often led to rib fractures, which cause severe pain when breathing. And sometimes

the victim would suffer a collapsed lung."

Now, it's very likely Jesus was breathing very short breaths. He's not breathing as deep breaths like you are now. You would have to take short breaths. Short, quick breaths manage the pain, especially when the lung collapses and fills with blood and water. You can imagine how excruciating it was. You can't take deep breaths. Too much pain.

The Bible then says they led Him out to be crucified. Now, Jesus is led by His persecutors to carry the cross on which He will die. His body, too bloodied and weakened by torture. And so the guards compel a certain man to help Jesus carry His cross. This certain man is Simon of Cyrene. The town of Cyrene was located in North Africa, in the country now known as Libya. It was established as a Greek colony under the conquest of Alexander the Great and later incorporated into the Roman Empire in the height of its power under the Caesars.

But we're not completely sure whether Simon was a Jew or a Gentile because the Bible doesn't say. But we can assume that he was there for the Passover. But the Bible tells us that Simon was coming out of the country, and some have interpreted this to mean that Simon was working earlier during the day. He's come out from the field. Now, the argument is he can't be a Jew because he's working during the feast. Okay. It's perhaps a valid reason.

Another reason is his name and his son's names are not Jewish but Greco-Roman in origin. This leads many to speculate that Simon was not Jewish at all. But what we can establish is that it bears no relevance whether he was Jewish or Gentile. The main point we should be seeing from verse 21 is that Simon performs a role in the most pivotal events in world history. Simon is forced to help carry the cross of Jesus. We don't know the mind of Simon at this time, having been singled out for forced labor, or even what he was thinking. Maybe languishing in the shame that he may have felt, associating himself with a condemned criminal. But one thing's for sure, he handled the cross of Christ. What a privilege it is to help carry the cross of Jesus Christ.

Imagine for a moment you're walking through the streets of Jerusalem after a morning shift or a commute, and you see the streets lined up with spectators observing the procession of criminals being led to their deaths. And you venture over there, and you see what all the commotion is about. And at random, you are chosen to help carry the cross of Jesus. You could say that this was planned by man and ordained by God, but Simon wasn't nobody. He became someone we read about in the Gospels every year. Simon was a part of world history. Simon was blessed to be in this position

at this particular time, at this particular place. Out of all possible human agents, Simon was chosen. Now, he probably had no idea what was going on, but God used him. The Bible mentions his sons, Alexander and Rufus. Many believe that they became Christians, which is why Mark mentions them, as they may have been part of the early church community. But what a story to tell your kids: "I saw Jesus down the track; I carried the very cross that secured my peace with God. I saw His marred visage. I saw His lacerated back. I saw His body inching closer to death. Yet, I also saw His determination—determination in His eyes to fulfill the plan of God. I saw the profound sacrificial love where one dies for His enemies. I was a witness to that."

A thousand years later, Christians are invading the Holy Land to capture Jerusalem, using relics such as pieces of the cross, using it as luck charms to gain divine favor and blessing. And so we have pieces of the cross weaponized to achieve selfish ambition and also draw people into a cult of ambition. Don't fall into the trap of valuing icons more than the Savior. Let us not also go beyond what Scripture reveals.

In some depictions in the Catholic tradition, like the Stations of the Cross, Simon is illustrated as carrying the cross of Jesus while Jesus is walking behind with His hands tied. I think the danger of such icons misinform our worship and elevate man beyond his goodness. We must remember that Simon is not a substitute for Christ. Any good deed from mere man is not suffice to cover the sin of the world, let alone the sin of one. What is more important than the relic of the cross is the God-man who hung upon it. And this is both the great spectacle and the great scandal. It is a spectacle in the sense that it secured, in the most unique way, our salvation. Yet, it is the greatest scandal because the only sinless person to ever walk the earth becomes the greatest sacrifice at the hands of wicked men.

Now, I mentioned the word "substitute" earlier, and I believe a very clear picture is evident in the text through Barabbas. Verse 7 tells us Barabbas was a murderer in the rebellion, and so we have a man convicted of murder and insurrection, or treason, and the people want him released instead of Jesus, who is innocent. So there is a perversion of justice that occurs on all levels, and it makes for a scandalous headline, doesn't it?

Last year, I taught the book of Mark to my two year seven classes, and it took about half the year to get through it. At the end, I gave them an interpretation task. Part of the assessment was from Mark 15, the first 15 verses. What they had to do was they had to pretend they are a reporter, write a newspaper article interviewing witnesses and detailing the events of what's happening in Jerusalem at this time. Some of them had catchy titles like "Breaking News: Killer Walks Free." Some of them wrote for the

Jerusalem Times. They had to dig into the background of what led Jesus to be condemned, what led to His death, and look at the other events that may have led to it.

So what they had to go through and look at is how Jesus rubbed the religious elite the wrong way. Students mentioned that Jesus was forgiving people's sins, performing miracles, healing on the Sabbath, which all culminated in His unjust trial and execution. But in the last part of their task, which would have tested them a lot more, they had to relate Isaiah 53:4-6 to Mark 15. They had to say how it relates prophetically and explain why Jesus died even though He was innocent. So it was a good exercise for them to expand their knowledge.

The last question they needed to answer as part of their article was what happened to Barabbas. Help us understand why Jesus died. So essentially, all they had to do was talk about the gospel, rephrase it. What you see is the idea of substitution. What you see is Jesus taking the place of a sinner, and the sinner walking free. Jesus took the place of Barabbas, who should have been crucified. He was a rebel. But Jesus took his place. If you can dig deeper into this, you'll notice that Barabbas is us. We are Barabbas. Jesus died because of the sin of others and for the sin of others. He bore the punishment that we deserved. The words of "In Christ Alone" capture the essence of what I'm talking about. Verse 2 says, "In Christ Alone, who took on flesh, born of God in helpless babe, this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save. So on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied, for every sin on Him was laid. Here in the death of Christ, I live." That's substitution.

Jesus is taken to the place of execution known as Golgotha, or the place of the skull. It was called that because the place was shaped or appeared to be like a skull. He's offered wine mixed with myrrh, but He refuses to drink it. And you're probably thinking, well, what's the significance of myrrh? Well, myrrh has medicinal properties. It was resin or sap from trees that was collected and used in religious ceremonies as incense and as anointing oil. It was also used as antiseptic and as a painkiller. So Jesus refuses the anesthetics and, in a sense, embraces every ounce of punishment until His final breath. He didn't take shortcuts. He chose to take on the full extent of judgment. He didn't seek any reprieve from the hurt and pain but endured as a suffering servant.

Now, the Bible reveals to us that at the third hour, which is 9 a.m., Jesus was crucified. He was stripped almost naked, and the soldiers gambled for His seamless garments. We see the idea of shaming an individual by removing their clothing. And of course, shame and guilt are very much a part of sin. So the consequences are very much a part of Jesus' suffering.

Jesus is nailed to the cross and suspended in the air for Jerusalem to see. The idea behind crucifixion was a victim would experience extreme pain but a slow death. As their body hung, it would make it harder for them to breathe, and they needed to push themselves up by their feet because their diaphragm has been crushed. And over time, their body would give in, become too weak, and eventually, they would suffocate. And this process could take several days. To speed up the execution of the two thieves beside Jesus, John 19 says the soldiers broke their legs to hasten their deaths.

Some of the bystanders continued to mock and scorn Jesus even as He lay on the cross. They blasphemed Him, then shook their heads in disappointment, carrying the grudge of when Jesus said He would destroy the temple. They held on to the lie they created and believed it. They taunt Jesus, saying, "Come down from the cross if you be the one, and we will believe." Now, what would happen if Jesus came down from the cross? Have you ever thought about that? What would happen? Firstly, it was not part of God's plan for Him to come down. So this is a temptation for Jesus to act against God's will. The human tendency is always, "I'm going to vindicate myself." Jesus, in strict obedience and to ensure the success of the Father's redemptive plan, stays on the cross. It was a temptation for Jesus to succumb to the pleasures of this world and the wilderness, like so. He was tempted on the cross to come down and refuse suffering and refuse God's plan.

Secondly, the chief elders are not serious about their offer. The disposition of their hearts is still one of mockery and unbelief. Even if Jesus came down from the cross and healed Himself in front of them, they still would not believe. Why? Well, Jesus performed miracles, and they still hardened their hearts. They refused to believe during His earthly ministry. Jesus even said at one point, even though a dead man was raised to life, they still would not believe. The testimony of the law and the prophets is enough to bear witness of who Jesus is. And they refused to see it. This really is a stark picture of the darkness of the human heart, that men love darkness rather than light.

In the sixth hour, darkness came over the whole land, and this darkness is symbolic of God's judgment. This darkness did not come by accident. At midday, the whole land is dark. This isn't normal because it's a supernatural act of God. There are Old Testament texts that show connections between darkness and judgment. Some examples are Zephaniah 1:15, Joel 2:2, Micah 3:6, and Exodus 10, with the ten plagues, one of them being darkness. On the cross, in verse 34, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" Now, some have actually said that this was the greatest point of His suffering, to experience abandon-

ment by the Father. This wasn't simply emotional anguish on display. This was a real moment of broken intimacy, of broken fellowship, because Jesus was made to be sin.

Now, R.C. Sproul says this cry represents the most agonizing moment in the life of Jesus. At that moment, Jesus was utterly forsaken. He was alone. He was bearing the sin of His people. You see, the holiness of God demanded the forsaking of sin, even if it's a person. Now, if you're here this morning and still struggle to reconcile this mystery of the moment, then may I encourage you to take comfort in the words of Martin Luther, who said, "God forsaken by God, who can understand it?"

What we can also say is the events of the crucifixion align perfectly with Psalm 22, our call to worship. Jesus quotes David, who said the exact words, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" Now, David experienced isolation, abandonment, and ridicule while he was on the run from Saul, who wanted to kill him out of jealousy. Doesn't that sound familiar? Jesus very much experienced human suffering in all points as a man. Hebrews 2:9 says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

Now, the people thought that He was actually calling for Elijah when He made these cries. Back then, a tradition developed that Elijah would actually come down from heaven and deliver those who were innocent, who were righteous. Even in this critical moment of history, people still misread the situation. There's a spiritual irony at play here, where they expected Elijah to save the Messiah, but they completely missed the point that the Messiah was securing their salvation.

Now, one of the soldiers, the Roman centurion, present at the crucifixion, may have been the leading officer overseeing the execution of Jesus. The centurion was a Roman military officer who trained and led about a hundred Roman soldiers. Centurions were hardened veterans, accustomed to fighting and warfare, and they were architects of death. The shocking thing about this soldier is he proclaims Jesus to be innocent, and he proclaims Jesus to be the Son of God. Now, something like this can only come by divine revelation. No one truly confesses Jesus as God without the Spirit's work. Confession is a fruit of regeneration. 1 Corinthians 12:3 says, "No one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit." 1 John 4:15, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." Matthew 16, Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah and as the Son of the living God, and Jesus tells him, "Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven." So there's an element of divine revealing in this situation involving the centurion.

We don't know much about him other than his confession and witness to Jesus' death. Jesus had died quickly, to the surprise of Pilate and many others, and the centurion was brought before Pilate to testify whether Jesus had died, and he confirmed it. Now, I've been talking to a Muslim student in one of my classes, and he asked me to look at some Islamic commentaries on the death of Jesus, and so I did. And I came across one of the objections that Islam presents against Jesus dying on the cross. The Qur'an says that Jesus was made to appear that he died, but he didn't actually die. They say, quote, "We are certain he didn't die." So I asked my friend ChatGBT. I asked him, "Why do Muslims believe this? Like, where did they get this factual evidence?" My mate said, "Well, they disregard historical evidence, and because the Prophet Muhammad said so, it is so, 600 years down the track." So they disregard manuscript evidence, they disregard eyewitness testimony, and say that Jesus only appeared to die to fit their narrative. They actually believe he fainted or swooned and fell into an unconscious state and later woke up in a tomb to explain the resurrection. So this idea is actually known as the swoon theory. It was a theory created by German thinkers in the 18th century to explain away the resurrection. They say Jesus only appeared dead on the cross, but really, he was still alive. He just fainted.

This argument is used by many others to disprove the effectual work of the cross and the significance of the resurrection. Now, there are problems with this argument because the claim is Jesus didn't die, but present at the crucifixion is a centurion who has spent 15 to 20 years of his life in warfare and perhaps crucifying individuals. They question his testimony, especially after Pilate sought confirmation from him about whether Jesus had died in verses 44 and 45. So it's obvious a centurion would know whether a person is dead or not because Roman soldiers were professional executioners. So this centurion plays a crucial role in countering claims against Jesus not dying on the cross. And I actually pointed to this to my fellow student, and he said, "Hmm, it's okay." You know what I came to grips with? Sometimes people are looking for more than truth. They're looking for an experience. Sometimes the truth is not enough for some people. They need to feel it. They need God to rip open the sky and point exactly to the place or to the point that they need to see.

Turn with me to John chapter 19. John chapter 19, from verse 32, it says, "Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true. And he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were

done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.' And again another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.' Now, what do we do with all this information? What do we do with the narrative, this historical record in Mark 15 and John chapter 19? If you're a Christian, here's what you need to do: Carry your cross. This means follow Jesus. This means bear burdens. This means deny your will. Putting sin to death and living for the glory of God is our purpose. Walking the hard path of holiness may require you walking alone. Are you still going to do it if it were so? Remember, we are not called to happiness; we are called to holiness. Amid all the loud noise and confusion the world offers, the gospel offers clarity. It offers strength against temptation and ridicule.

I say this because the gospel affords you a level of confidence that you've not had. This is because this confidence is not your own. You stand in the power of Christ and in His finished work. That's where your peace comes from. That's where your assurance comes from. That's where your joy comes from, and your strength. Without the gospel, our faith is vain, and our existence is futile. The gospel is our strength. Hebrews 12:3 says, "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls." Jesus is the model example of endurance. To persevere in an evil world is a hard thing, but it is possible. The encouragement from the writer of Hebrews is to look to Jesus, consider Him. Meditate upon Him, lest you faint. Meditate on what the gospel is able to achieve. Meditate on God who made it possible. Therein lies your strength.

Lastly, we remember the gospel through the Lord's table. This is a sacred expression of our worship on our part. We remember the sacrifice of our Lord for the sin of the world. We remember the hurt, the suffering, the death. And this is a solemn moment that we should not take for granted. Not only is it a command for us to observe, but we also participate in this remembrance. The table is a visible sermon where we handle the elements, symbolic of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We proclaim His death, we proclaim His resurrection, and the blessed hope of His return. The gospel is what unifies us into one body. We nourish our souls with this remembrance. We grow in our compassion and gratitude for the gospel because of it.

Now, if you are non-Christian, here's what you need to do: You need to repent and believe the gospel. You're not in a position to negotiate with the Lord because the chips are stacked against you. There is no bargaining in the royal court. There is no court of appeal. You either accept what the Scriptures teach, or you live in mockery of what the Lord has done and continue in unbelief. The Bible says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." There are no two ways about it. If the Bible says we

have sinned, then we have sinned. We fall short of God's holy standard because we've broken His commandments. And before a holy God, this merits eternal separation and death. What is holy cannot mix with that which is unholy. We saw the Father turn away from the Son who was made to be sin. How much more will the Father remain estranged from you who dwell in darkness? There will come a time when all bills must be paid, and the currency provided by the sacrifice of Christ is the only thing that can pay for the sin debt of the world.

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." What we have here is a contrast between life, death, sin, Jesus. Those who continue to serve sin will reap destruction, but those who receive the free gift of eternal life through God receive peace with Him. Jesus is the avenue of grace whereby He is the only way we can seek peace with God. Remember, the veil in the temple was torn in two. Jew and Gentile have full access to worship God. The veil of separation between God and mankind is removed because of the death of Christ. We have the Roman centurion, a Gentile, confessing Jesus as the Son of God immediately after the veil was torn.

Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Despite the sin, despite the hate and mockery, Christ endured the cross. Hebrews 12:2 says, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God." This love that God demonstrated is an active love. This verse tells us that God's love is not based on our worth or goodness. It is His ultimate expression through sacrifice because God is love. This plan of salvation was founded upon it. The power of love is an amazing thing. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Love is the only force capable of transforming enemies into friends." You will never have a greater appreciation for love until you have experienced hate.

Finally, Romans 10:9-13 says that, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." There is a promise from God that those who exercise true faith in Jesus will be saved. If you believe His death, burial, and resurrection, and repent of your sins, you will be saved. That's the promise. This goes beyond the vain repetition of "Jesus is Lord." We use it and toss it around like it's a slogan. But do you actually believe it? Does your life reflect it?

Confession is more than just stringing words together. There is a heart posture of humility and contriteness associated with it. This proves that the Spirit's working in your life.

It doesn't matter if you're black, white, rich, poor, slave, free. If anyone comes to the cross, there's a place for you at this table. As the saying goes, the ground is level at the cross. The gospel goes beyond social and ethnic boundaries. The gospel makes a holy priesthood out of rebel sinners. Your heart must be made right. Only then can you truly confess Jesus as Lord and Savior. Have you come to that point, friend? Ask Him to reveal Himself to you. Ask Him to show you the value of the cross. Ask Him to soften your hearts for the truth. And taste and see the truth, that the Lord is good.

Let's bow for prayer.