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May memory verse Romans 6:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Commentary on Mark chapter 15 verses 27-47, by Chuck Smith 5.8.22

And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross (Mar 15:27-30).

Jesus one day said to them when they asked for a sign, "Destroy this temple and I will build it in three days." And they thought that He was talking about the temple that Herod had begun construction on. They said, "Forty-seven years have we been building this temple, and You say that You're going to rebuild it in three days." But they didn't realize He was talking about the temple of His body. And they were indeed destroying the temple of His body, but in three days, He was going to raise it up; He was going to rebuild it. He said, "No man takes My life from Me; I give My life. I have power to lay down My life; I have power to take it up again."

"Wagging their heads..." Get now the mental picture, and you have to almost have visited the East to get the mental picture and to catch the fervor of these people and their temperaments, when you see them on the streets as they are bargaining or dealing with each other as they are expressing their views. They are very demonstrative people. When you go to the sheep market and watch the haggling for goats and sheep and all, you'll see them yelling at each other. They stomp, they wave their hands, they wag their heads, and they are just very demonstrative that way. And as you stand there listening to them, you swear that they're going to pull out knives and kill each other. Of course, you can't understand what they're saying as they're yelling at each other and stomping and shaking their heads and everything else. And finally you'll see them strike their hands and it means, "It's a deal!" They made a bargain. So the guy will take the goat and give the guy the money and walk off with it. And that's just a part of their culture, their temperament, their nature. And so you can visualize these fellows just full of emotion, shaking their heads as they yell these taunts at Jesus.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save (Mar 15:31).

Two statements: one of them was true; one of them was false. It is true He saved others, and they recognized that. It was an admission that they had to make. People all around them had been saved by Jesus. There were blind people who could see, there were lame people who were walking, there was Lazarus who was raised from the dead. He saved others, that they had to admit. They could not deny the evidence. "He saved others," an interesting confession of His enemies. The false statement was, "Himself He cannot save." That is wrong; He could have saved Himself. Actually, He could have appealed to Pilate. Pilate was doing his best to free Jesus. As you get into John's gospel, he points out even more clearly how anxious Pilate was to set Him free. But Jesus was not cooperative with Pilate at all. Jesus wouldn't answer him. He could have just said the right thing to Pilate and Pilate would have just said, "Well, you know, you Jews go your way." I think that Jesus probably could have appealed to the crowd. Emotions were high, but He could have just appealed to the crowd and saved Himself. Or, as He had said to Peter earlier, "Hey, Peter, put away your sword. Don't you realize that at this moment, I could call for ten legions of angels to deliver me from their hands? The cup that the Father has given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" He could have saved Himself by calling on the angels to come and deliver Him out of the hands of these wicked men. He could have saved Himself, but He didn't save Himself.

Now, there's a bit of irony here. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." The whole statement taken as a whole is true as a whole statement. Though a part of it is false, as a whole statement it is true. If He is to save others, He cannot save Himself. You see, if He saves Himself, then He can't save others. The only way He can save others is by not saving Himself. So, the statement as the whole is true. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." You can't do both. You can't save yourself and others. You can only save others. He can only save others by giving Himself as a sacrifice.

They said,

Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him (Mar 15:32).

Now Luke's gospel tells us that later on one of them had a change of heart, and we will get to that when we get to Luke's gospel.

And when the sixth hour was come (Mar 15:33),

Six hours on the cross...remember it was nine o'clock, the third hour when they put Him on the cross? The sixth hour would be high noon.

there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour [three o'clock in the afternoon] (Mar 15:33).

It became midnight at noon, darkness over the whole land. There is no particular phenomena that you can blame for the darkness. It could not have been an eclipse of the sun, for this was Passover and it was full moon. And the sun and the moon were

opposite of each other during the Passover or during full moon, so it's impossible that it could have been an eclipse. It was as though heaven was veiling itself from this horrible crime that man was committing. This dark shroud covered the earth from the sixth hour, or from twelve o'clock noon until three o'clock in the afternoon.

And at the ninth hour [three o'clock in afternoon] Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mar 15:34)

Mark gives the words of Jesus in the language that Jesus spoke them, and very rarely do we have the actual words of Jesus. We have the translation of the words of Jesus, and usually he translates it into Greek and then from Greek to English. But here he gives us the actual words in order that we might understand why some of those who were standing by thought that He was crying for Elijah. "Eloi, Eloi." They thought He was crying, "Elijah, Elijah." But in reality He was crying, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The answer to it is found in Psalm 22, which begins, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from the cry of my roaring? I cry unto thee in the daytime and thou hearest not; and in the night season and I am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of thy people." It was because of the holiness of God that Jesus was forsaken of God. For sin always separates a man from God, and when the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus, that fellowship that He had experienced, that coexistence, that oneness with the Father was broken. He who had existed with God from the beginning, He who shared the glory of God before the world ever existed was forsaken of God when God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. He tasted of death for every man. He tasted of death for you. He experienced the consequence of sin, spiritual death, separation from God. And thus, the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was forsaken of God in order that you would never have to be forsaken of God.

God help you, that you never echo that prayer of Jesus. Those who live in sin, those who refuse Jesus as their Savior experience separation from God, spiritual death. And the Bible says, "They are dead while they yet live." But it will eventually result in eternal death, the second death, as Jesus said, "And I will say to those on my left hand, 'Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity. Depart from Me.'" Separation from God. Thessalonians 1:9 speaks again of that eternal separation from God.

And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias [Hey, he's calling for Elijah]. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed and gave him to drink (Mar 15:35-36),

They thought He was getting delirious, the one did. The others said,

[Hey,] let [Him] alone; let us see whether Elias [Elijah] will come to take him down (Mar 15:36).

You know, this might be interesting, exciting.

And Jesus cried with a loud voice (Mar 15:37),

And we are told in the other gospels, the cry was, "It is finished!"

and gave up the ghost (Mar 15:37).

Or, He dismissed His spirit. As He said, "No man takes My life from Me; I give My life. I have the power to lay it down; I have the power to take it up." That is why it is so wrong that the church for so many years tried to blame the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus. They're not responsible; we're responsible. Jesus gave His life. No man took His life from Him; He gave His life. "He bowed His head and dismissed His spirit."

And the veil of the temple was rent [torn] in twain [two] from the top to the bottom (Mar 15:38).

At this point, God took the veil of the temple, which some say was eighteen inches thick, woven cloth, and God took the thing and just ripped it from the top to the bottom. What did the veil of the temple represent? The unapproachableness of God by man. Only the high priest dared to go in behind that veil, and he only one day of the year. God was unapproachable by man, by sinful man. But when the death of Christ was accomplished, God ripped that veil of the temple and was in fact declaring, "Now, we may come boldly unto the throne of grace to receive mercy, because Jesus has made the way to God for every man." God is no longer unapproachable. But you and I can come to God today through Jesus Christ. The veil has been rent; the way has been made. The approach to God is now possible for just the common person like us. Oh, how glorious that we can come into the presence of God through Jesus Christ! And we don't have to go through a lot of washings and sacrifices and everything else. There has been one sacrifice for all. It's so complete, it's so full that it satisfies for all of us and God is now approachable. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). But the glorious thing is, we can come to the Father through Him.

And when the centurion, which stood over against him [was standing by], saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost [was able to dismiss his spirit], he said, Truly this man was the Son of God (Mar 15:39).

He saw that He had the power of just saying, "Okay, that's it; spirit, you can go now." And he marveled that the Man had the power to lay His life down.

There were also women who were looking on afar off [perhaps over on the city wall, which is not that far away, maybe two hundred feet]: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome (Mar 15:40);

Now His mother Mary was standing right there near the cross. She was close enough that Jesus could speak to her from the cross, which He did. John was standing with the

mother of Jesus close by the cross. But these other Marys, Mary Magdalene (and she is always identified as that title, Mary Magdalene), a woman from whom Jesus had delivered from seven devils, and Mary the mother of James the Less, so not James and John, but James the Less and Joses, probably the wife of Cleophas, or Altheus. And so, you have in the disciples, James the Less, who is the son of Altheus. So, this is Mary, the wife of Altheus, the mother of James the Less and Joses and Salome.

Who also, when he was in Galilee, [these women] followed him, and ministered unto him; ([Mar 15:41](#))

Now, you've probably not thought too much about when Jesus was traveling around the country with His disciples and all. They have to eat. If they rip their clothes, they've got to be sewn and all. And so, there were the group of women who went around and fixed the meals and ministered to those practical aspects of life, and took care of those things. And so these are three of the women who were following with the disciples and ministering unto Jesus.

and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem. And now when the even[ing] was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath ([Mar 15:41-42](#)),

Remember, it's three o'clock in the afternoon that Jesus dismisses His spirit. You have now three hours before the Sabbath begins, sundown. So, they had to prepare for the Sabbath, because you couldn't cook on the Sabbath Day. You had to get everything all set. So everybody is scurrying. Usually the businesses over there close down Friday afternoon at about one o'clock. And everybody goes home and starts to prepare for the Sabbath Day; get all the food cooked and everything all set, so that you get all the hot plates plugged in so you don't have to plug anything in on the Sabbath. And you get the whole thing set so you don't have to kindle any fires or anything on the Sabbath Day. So you have to prepare for the Sabbath. So, time is running out. They didn't want anybody hanging there on the Sabbath Day, so they had to get the whole thing over before sundown.

And so it was evening, it was the afternoon, preparing for the Sabbath.

Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved [or begged for] the body of Jesus. And Pilate marveled if he were already dead ([Mar 15:43-44](#)):

He couldn't believe that He was dead this quickly.

and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead [if Jesus was already dead]. And when he knew it of [found out from] the centurion [that Jesus was dead], he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. And Mary Magdalene and

Mary the mother of Jesus [those who were afar off, they] beheld where he was laid (Mar 15:44-47).

One of the gospel writers tells us that near the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden. And in the garden, there was a tomb that had never been used, and that it was this tomb where Jesus was laid. They have discovered right near Golgotha, in fact just over the edge of Golgotha, the remains of an ancient garden. There are the cisterns there that were used to water the garden. And in this garden, of course, there is a tomb. And it is my feeling, conviction, that this is the actual tomb where Jesus lay for three days and three nights. It's always a very moving experience to step in that tomb and to look at the slab that is there, and to realize that is probably the place where Jesus' body lay for three days and three nights. In front of this tomb, there is a track which they often had in front of the tombs, where they would roll these stones along the track and cover the opening into the tomb. There is no stone at this particular tomb, but there is the remains of the track where a stone once rolled.

We are told here that the tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. He was a wealthy man. He begged the body of Jesus. He wrapped it in this fine linen and laid Him in the sepulchre. However, because of the timing, they did not have the opportunity to put the spices and all on the bodies, which they often did. But, He was wrapped carefully. And they wrapped bodies in a scientific way, wrapping around and around this shroud around the body.