

JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION (Jesus' obedience to the point of death on the cross)

Mark 14:1 – 16:20

Key verse 15:34

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

We thank God for richly blessing the 4th Leadership Master Course this weekend. Through the in-depth Factual Studies on 1st and 2nd Peter, Romans, James, Hebrews and Revelation, we completed the study of the New Testament. May God use us as righteous, blameless gospel workers for this generation. Over the past few weeks, we have studied the Gospel of Mark in five lessons, learning more deeply about the mystery of Jesus' spiritual authority. Today's text covers the last three chapters of Mark's Gospel and is about Jesus' suffering, death on the cross, his resurrection and his Great Commission. Let us learn about the deep significance of Jesus' obedience to the point of death on the cross, the resulting redemptive work of God, and the commission to preach the gospel in all the world.

1. Jesus' suffering (14:1 - 15:20a)

Following Jesus' end-time discourse in chapter 13, the evangelist Mark tells us about Jesus' suffering all the way up to the cross of Golgotha. There were still two days until the Passover. The Jewish rulers had a plan to seize Jesus with cunning and kill him so that they could celebrate the Passover "undisturbed." But what they did not know in their spiritual blindness: that Jesus, whom they hated so much, as the true Passover Lamb, would sacrifice his life on the cross for the redemption of all mankind. While the superiors were making their evil plans, a heart-stirring incident took place in the house of Simon the leper. Let us look at verse 3: "While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head." This woman had personally experienced Jesus' power to heal and change and

was heartily grateful for Jesus' work in her life. She decided to pour out her most precious thing, namely the precious nard oil, entirely for Jesus. She gave her whole heart for Jesus, but she earned harsh criticism from those present. Let's look at verse 5: "It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly." Very different from the people, however, Jesus understood this woman's heart perfectly. Therefore, in verses 6 to 8, he said, "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial." Like this woman, numerous servants of God to this day have testified to their love and gratitude for Jesus by pouring out their entire lives completely for Jesus. They too received criticism and misunderstanding because their devotion was seemingly too extreme. We think of our missionaries who came to Germany with a life decision for world mission and give their whole life for Jesus and prepare the environment for the work of spiritual revival in Germany and Europe with their selfless devotion. Let us remember what hopeless and filthy sinners we were and what undeserved grace we received through Jesus, so that out of pure love for Jesus we may commit our new lives to Him.

During the heart-stirring anointing in Bethany, one of the disciples, Judas, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. Let's read verse 11: "They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over." Judas, just like the other disciples, had received so much trust and love from Jesus for more than three years. Now the day had come for Jesus to have his

last supper with the disciples. In the evening, the twelve gathered for the meal. Let us read verses 18 and 19: "While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me--one who is eating with me." They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?" Jesus ministered to His disciples through this Last Supper to prepare them for the events immediately ahead. He also gave Judas, who was about to betray Him, an opportunity to repent. Let's look at verses 22-24: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them." Through this Last Supper, Jesus taught his disciples the deep meaning of his sufferings and crucifixion. Just as bread was broken and wine drunk at the Last Supper, Jesus, as the Lamb of God, would give His body and blood completely for the salvation of sinners. Jesus knew how hard Satan was attacking the disciples, tempting them to run away and abandon Jesus in this important hour. Without the disciples' preparation, none of them could pass this severe test.

When they had eaten the meal and sung the hymn, Jesus and the eleven went out to the Mount of Olives. Let us read verses 27 and 28: "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." Jesus here planted his promise in the hearts of the disciples. Although they would soon be scattered like sheep, Jesus wanted to meet them as the Risen One. But when Peter heard this, he countered and said, "if they all take offense, yet I do not!" (29b) Peter was very proud. He thought that he would never deny Jesus. But Jesus told him, "today--yes, tonight--before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." (30b) Peter replied, "Even if I have to die with you, I will not disown you!" Jesus' announcement was also very important to Peter, so that he could later remember and realize that Jesus knew him much better than he knew himself.

At the foot of the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane. Verses 32-42 tell us about Jesus' prayer struggle that he had in this garden. Late in the evening, Jesus went there with his disciples. Let's read verses 32 to 34: "They went

to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Peter, James, and John were Jesus' top disciples. Jesus took these three aside so that they would learn His spiritual warfare and cooperate with Jesus in prayer. Let's read verses 35 and 36: "Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Jesus was fighting a hard battle of prayer. Humanly, Jesus must have wished that he could be spared this difficult hour. But at the same time, Jesus was absolutely determined to respect God's will more than his own. Therefore he prayed, "... take this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will!" Jesus knew that his most important task was to fulfill God's work of salvation through suffering and death on the cross. Therefore, Jesus completely subordinated his human will to God's will and plan of salvation. Jesus taught his disciples the importance of spiritual warfare in prayer.

Let's read verses 37 and 38: "Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." While Jesus was fighting the hard battle of prayer, the disciples remained passive and fell asleep. Not praying and not watching, they eventually ran away and even denied Jesus. This incident reminds us that without spiritual preparation in prayer, we cannot obey the will and counsel of God to the end. If even Jesus, who is God, had to fight such an intense battle of prayer, how much more do we!

We must not despise prayer and especially the early morning prayer time. Prayer is our strongest weapon in the spiritual battle against Satan's temptations. No one can lead a life of faith by his own strength or self-confidence. Through Jesus' prayer struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane, He made a decision for the will of God, no matter what the cost. Now the betrayer, Judas, along with an armed band of the chief priests, scribes and elders, came to take Jesus captive. Immediately all his disciples deserted him and fled away. Let's look at verses 48-50:

"Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." Then everyone deserted him and fled." How Jesus' heart must have ached when he was betrayed by Judas and all his disciples fled away. Yet Jesus bore no grudge against them.

Now Jesus was brought before the high council to interrogate and accuse him. His adversaries brought false testimony against Jesus. They had only one goal, to put Jesus to death. The high priest asked, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" (60) But Jesus kept silent and answered nothing. Why did Jesus keep silent? Why did he answer nothing? Jesus' silence testifies to his determination for the will of God and his spiritual authority. Jesus did not need to defend himself with words. He did not try to prevent his condemnation in any way. Nor did he compromise with the accusers. Then the high priest asked again, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" What was Jesus' answer? Let us read verse 62: "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Jesus did not defend himself in the midst of false witnesses and malicious accusations. He testified that he is the Christ and Son of Man, who sits at the right hand of God and who will also come again with the clouds of heaven.

What reaction did this clear confession of Jesus evoke? Let us read verses 63-64: "The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" In the eyes of his adversaries, Jesus was nothing but a blasphemer. Now they began to spit on him and to cover his face, beating him with fists, and they said to him, "Prophecy to us!" And the servants struck him in the face. While Jesus was enduring all this, Peter was outside in the courtyard warming himself by a coal fire. Then a maid of the high priest came and saw Peter and said to him, "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said." Peter was frightened and finally denied three times that he even knew Jesus. Then, when the rooster crowed, the scales fell from Peter's eyes. He had denied his beloved Master three times. And he began to weep. Now Peter realized what a fearful and weak sinner he was. His tears were tears of re-

pentance. And his repentance became the basis for him to later embrace Jesus' forgiving love for him anew and be spiritually restored.

Early in the morning, after Peter's denial, Jesus was taken to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" (2) Jesus said to him, "Yes, it is as you say." Let's look at verses 3 through 5: "The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed." Jesus' silence fulfilled the word of the prophet Isaiah: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." (Isaiah 53:7) After the interrogation, Pilate considered how he could release Jesus through a political compromise. As verse 10 says, he had realized that the chief priests had handed Jesus over out of envy. Since it was a tradition to pardon a prisoner on the occasion of the Passover, Pilate wanted to release Jesus in this way. Pilate asked the people, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" But contrary to his expectation, the people, who had been incited by the chief priests, shouted that Pilate should rather release Barabbas, the leader of a riot. Let us read verses 12-14: "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they shouted. "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" Although Pilate recognized Jesus' innocence and the envy of the superiors, he did not act according to the truth. Verse 15 says, "Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified." Pilate's spirit of compromise, that he did not want to mess with the superiors, caused Pilate to go down in history as the person who condemned the innocent Son of God to crucifixion. Pilate was not a man of truth, but of compromise. His example admonishes us as Christians not to compromise with the spirit of the age, but to stand clearly on Jesus' side, even though this may mean misunderstanding, hostility and even persecution for us.

After Pilate had Jesus scourged and handed him over to the superiors for crucifixion, soldiers led him into the palace and summoned the whole department there. They put a purple robe on Jesus and placed a crown of thorns on his

head. Let us read verses 18 to 20: "And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him." Jesus was thus despised, mocked, ridiculed, beaten and humiliated. But not for his sake. Jesus went this way for all of sinful humanity. Also for me and for you Jesus carried all this burden! In hymn no. 69 it says: "Now what you Lord endure is all my burden. I myself am to blame for what you have borne. Look, here I am poor, who has earned wrath. Give me, O my compassionate one, the sight of your mercy."

In this passage we learned about Jesus' prayer struggle in Gethsemane and his decision for God's will: "Not what I will, but your will be done." This decision became the basis for Jesus to obey God's counsel to the point of death on the cross.

2. Jesus' Death, Resurrection and Great Commission (15:20b - 16:20)

Let's look at verses 20b and 21: "Then they led him out to crucify him. A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross." Simon was from Cyrene in North Africa. Perhaps he had never heard of Jesus. But by having to carry the cross for Jesus, he involuntarily participated in Jesus' passion. This incident changed his life - and that of his family - forever. His sons Alexander and Rufus witnessed Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection and became important workers in the early Christian community.

Let us look at verses 22 to 33. On Golgotha, they gave Jesus myrrh in wine, a numbing potion. But Jesus did not take it, for he was determined to take all the pain upon himself for the salvation of sinners. They drove long iron nails through Jesus' hands and feet. Then they raised the cross. Every shock caused Jesus indescribable pain. The soldiers were cold and hardened. They were not interested in the suffering Christ, but only in his clothes. Above Jesus was a sign attached to the cross that read in three languages, "The King of the Jews." Jesus was crucified between two felons, as if he were the worst of them. Passersby shook their heads and

shouted, "Help yourself now!" Let us read verses 31 and 32: "In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him." In this way, Satan tempted Jesus to avail himself of the help of the heavenly hosts and prove to everyone that he was truly the Son of God. But Jesus did not allow himself to be helped and saved, because in the struggle of prayer he had decided to obey the will and plan of salvation of God to the end. Thus, Jesus paid the ransom for the redemption of all mankind by shedding His holy blood on the cross and giving His body completely unto death. Let us look at verses 33 and 34: "At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, the whole creation had to weep and even the sun lost its glow. For three hours there was a darkness over the whole land. But besides the physical pain and all the cunning temptations of the devil that happened to Jesus on the cross, it must have been the worst for Jesus to be abandoned and separated from his heavenly Father. Jesus was one with God from eternity. But God is holy. Now, when the whole burden of sin of this world was on Jesus on the cross, he had to be abandoned even by his heavenly Father and suffer the bitter death of the cross in complete loneliness. Thus Jesus bore the whole burden of sin. He was forsaken by God and died in complete loneliness so that you and I, who had to be separated and condemned by God for eternity, may now have a personal love and life relationship with God and even have access to His eternal Kingdom. Jesus was forsaken by God so that we may no longer remain forsaken, but be restored to God's children and God's people.

Verse 37 says, "With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last." In that hour, what the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 53:4-5) had promised was fulfilled, "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But 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." Because the punishment of our sin

was on Jesus, we have been set free. Free from the power of sin. Free from the power of death. Free from the wrath judgment of God. And also free to serve God with our new life from now on. Jesus' total obedience to the point of death on the cross accomplished something great: God's plan of salvation for the world was fulfilled. By faith, all people who personally accept Jesus' accomplished work of redemption on the cross and repent have access into the kingdom of God. Just as the curtain that separated the holy from the holy of holies in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, the way into the kingdom of God was opened for all people. Whoever believes in Jesus, the Son of God, and in his work of redemption on the cross, will be saved.

Through the death of Jesus on the cross, even the heart of a Roman centurion was moved. Let us look at verse 39: "And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" This centurion must have witnessed many crucifixions. It is all the more remarkable that he was able to recognize God's Son in the crucified Christ. Many women were also gathered under Jesus' cross, such as Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome and many other women. They were faithful disciples of Jesus who stayed with Jesus until the end, while almost all the disciples had run away out of fear. In the evening of the same day, a respected councilor, Joseph of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked to be allowed to remove Jesus' body and place it in the rock tomb. Pilate was surprised that Jesus had already died. But the centurion confirmed it to Pilate, and so he agreed. Joseph took down the body, wrapped it in a linen cloth and placed it in the prepared tomb and rolled a stone in front of the door of the tomb.

Let us thank Jesus for his obedience unto death, even death on a cross. Through Jesus' total obedience, we too were bought dearly with His blood. Now we may build our new life on this perfect and accomplished redemptive work of Jesus. Jesus' obedience brings about something great in every person who accepts this redemptive work of Jesus in faith until this day. Saul, a persecutor of the early church was changed into Apostle Paul, a light to the Gentiles. God used him to preach the Gospel all the way to Europe. Martin Luther, who did not find peace with God although he struggled and even entered a monastery, was changed by Jesus into a determined fighter of the gospel who

served God's work with "Deep work" and translated the Bible into the German language for us. When Korean students learned about Jesus' redemptive work through Bible study in the 1960s, they were so changed that they decided to go on world missions. Thus, Korea was changed into a missionary-sending nation and sent lay missionaries to Germany, Europe and many countries around the world. We also see the mighty work of God in our Next Generation. Through the Factual Studies of Samuel Abraham, Joshua and Andrea during the Master Class this weekend, we could see that God is raising and using them as excellent Bible teachers and spiritual leaders. Through Jesus' obedience to the point of death on the cross, I may choose to be used by God with Isaiah 6:13 / Acts 19:9,10 / Deuteronomy 15:5,6 as a holy stump, father of many nations and as a disciple maker and as a shepherd and Bible teacher to put my life and my house church at God's disposal for the pioneering work in Rhein-Sieg and for the spiritual revival in Germany, Europe and as far as the Muslim world. Let us thank Jesus for His obedience to the point of death on the cross. Through obedience, we may put on the spiritual authority to prepare for the pioneering of the 1700 Unis in Europe through 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams and establish three bases in the Muslim world.

Chapter 16 tells us about Jesus' glorious victory over the power of death. Jesus' resurrection testifies that Jesus was victorious and destroyed all sin and death power. Early on the first day of the week, the women who had followed Jesus to under the cross came bringing fragrant oils to anoint Jesus with. On the way, they worried about who might move the stone from the tomb for them. But when they came to the tomb, they found that the tomb was open and the stone had been rolled away. They were very frightened. But when they went in, they saw an angel in a white robe speaking to them. Let us read verses 6 and 7: "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" The resurrection of Jesus testifies that His obedience in suffering and His obedience through death were not in vain, but that God fulfilled His plan of world redemption. All generations of people suffered endlessly under the power of sin and death. They not only suffered but also had to die, be judged and con-

demned by God. But through Jesus' obedience to death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, the way to eternal salvation is wide open for all people!

Verses 9 to 13 tell us how the risen Jesus first appeared to Mary of Magdala and changed her into a witness of the resurrection. She went to the disciples with the good news, but they did not believe her. Even Jesus revealed himself to two of them on the way, as they were going overland. They also went and told the other disciples, but they did not believe them either. Here we see that it is not easy for a witness of the resurrection. There are always those who doubt and do not believe. But Jesus patiently ministered to His doubting disciples. Verse 14 says, "Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen." From the shepherd's heart, Jesus rebuked the doubt and unbelief of his disciples. Unbelief is not to be ignored. Unbelief prevents the work and activity of God and makes a person useless to God. But thanks be to God, who has established numerous witnesses of the resurrection even among us. Dasom passed her German exam through resurrection faith and God gave her the victory of faith. Today we will hear her gracious victory report. Shepherd Dr. Johannes struggles through resurrection faith to glorify God through his habilitation. Most importantly, through resurrection faith, we may build the campus prayer altar in the midst of this pandemic and form one-to-one Bible study teams with young people. Through resurrection faith, we may each overcome our own limitations, impossibilities and fatalistic element of life and write a story of faith to glorify Jesus.

What glorious vision did Jesus have for his disciples? Let us read verses 15 and 16: "He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Jesus believed that his disciples, who were now still fearful and weak, would, through their obedience to Jesus' Great Commission, put on spiritual authority and go out and preach the gospel in all the world. The gospel they preached was not a feel-good gospel, but a clear message calling for decision: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Jesus also promised them spiritual authority through the signs that follow. Let us

see and verses 17 and 18: "And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." Disciples of Jesus have the wonderful promise that the Risen Lord is with them and works mightily through them. So we may also boldly challenge all the false teachings of the spirit of the age with the spiritual authority of the risen Jesus, boldly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection.

When Jesus gave the Great Commission to the disciples, he was lifted up to heaven and returned to the eternal kingdom of God. Let us read verses 19 and 20: "After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it." The Risen Jesus is seated, as He promised, at the right hand of God, the Eternal Father. And from there he will also come again and lead all who believe in him to himself in his eternal kingdom. Until Jesus returns, it is our sacred mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus, his sufferings, his obedience to the point of death on the cross, and his glorious resurrection among all peoples. With spiritual authority, we may cooperate with our Lord Jesus for the fulfillment of God's plan of world salvation and the Great Commission, and raise up disciples of Jesus in all 1,700 universities in Germany and Europe, in the Muslim world, and as far away as North Korea.

Let us thank Jesus for His prayerful struggle in Gethsemane and His decision to surrender Himself in total obedience for the will of God even to the point of death on the cross. Jesus gloriously triumphed at Calvary and solved the sin and death problem of all humanity once and for all. His resurrection from the dead testifies that God has accepted this work of redemption. The risen Jesus also empowers us to obey his Great Commission and go and preach the gospel to all nations. We may also share with others the grace we have personally received from the Master Course. The Letter to the Hebrews taught us Jesus' superiority as the eternal High Priest (Hebrews 4:14) who passed through heaven. He gave Himself completely for us as the perfect sacrificial Lamb. Through the book

of Revelation, we came to know Jesus as the eternal King and righteous Judge (Revelation 22:14) who will come again. All who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb will partake of the tree of life and will enter the gates into the eternal city.

Today we have learned Jesus' total obedience to the point of death on the cross. Let us learn His obedience so that we receive the spiritual authority to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission to the ends of the earth. Through 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams, let us prepare the environment in which all 1,700 universities in Germany and Europe will be pioneered, three base camps for the M-mission will be established, and the spiritual revival of this generation will happen.