

Mark 15:16-20  
The Final 24 Hours of Jesus: His Torture Due to Our Evil  
March 25, 2012

Pastor John Ortberg tells the story about his wife purchasing a beautiful white sofa chair. She gave strict rules to everyone in the family, including her husband to make sure the chair was not stained. The children were not to sit in the chair to color in their coloring books with crayons and markers, and no one was to eat and drink while they sat in that chair. But even though everyone in the family knew her rule, one day she found a red stain on the arm of the white chair. When she questioned the family members how the stain occurred, their 7 year old daughter confessed she was using magic markers to color in her coloring book. It was her red marker that stained the arm of the chair. The stain on the chair was always a reminder that in spite of knowing the right way to act their children were capable of being disobedient.

**The biblical account of the cruelty Jesus endured. Mark 15:16-20**

The scriptures were about to hear remind us about the depth and capability of people to be disobedient to God even though we are created to know better.

**Read scripture Mark 15:16-20**

**Mark says:**

- A cohort/battalion of soldiers = 100 soldiers or more surrounded Jesus.
- A crown of thorns were placed on his head
- He was mocked when they saluted him as a king
- Struck in the head with a reed
- Spat upon
- John's gospel said they struck him with their hands (JN. 19:12)

- Matthew's gospel says they stripped him (naked) and put a scarlet robe on him only to use to mock and shame him. (MT. 27:3)

What does this scene tell us about the human capacity to do evil in many forms?

**The biblical account of the motivation behind the cruelty:  
Mark 14:1-2**

Just like that stain on the arm of the sofa said something about the capability of a child to disobey, this scene describes something about us as human beings.

It would be one thing if we could say that people back then were only that cruel in those times because the culture was much more primitive. But even though we have advanced to the point where we can create human life in a test-tube and explore the outer reaches of space, the news continues to shock us about the potential people have to commit evil. Think of some of the top headlines in recent days.

- An American soldier, killing innocent women and children in Afghanistan.
- A Jewish rabbi gunned down along with two of his children in front of their place of worship,
- Women like Holly Bobo vanish without a trace
- I saw a story on the internet this week about burglars who broke into a home and along with stealing things like laptop computer and camera, they stole the artificial leg of the man that owned the home.
- I was speaking with a local member of the Gideons this week, Kevin Klutts. Kevin told me the Gideons have learned that sometimes when the bibles are distributed to prisoners, the prisoners use pages out of the bibles to smoke tobacco and Marijuana.

We might think, well people do really evil things because of mental illnesses or they are caught up in extreme circumstances of abuse or distorted religious views. Sometimes that can explain it; but that is not always the reason.

### **Hamilton's Illustration - Shock test**

In 1963, Stanley Milgram at Yale University invited people to come in off the street to take part in a scientific investigation. They were paid four dollars for one hour in which they were set in front of gauges and dials and told to deliver shocks when someone in the others room gave wrong answers to questions they asked.

The experiment was designed to see how far people would go if an authority figure told them they must go on increasing the shock until it reached apparently fatal levels. No one was actually shocked; but the subjects did not know that, since they could hear but not see the person they supposedly were shocking. Before the experiment, researchers estimated just one percent of the population would administer what they thought were lethal doses of electricity. What the researchers found was sixty five percent of the subjects were willing to increase the electricity to four hundred volts, despite the apparent cries of pain coming from the person in the other room. Even after the cries fell silent, the subjects were willing to give electrical jolts to that person because an authority figure told them they must complete the experiment. Sixty five percent.

Pastor Hamilton goes on to say, **“Ordinary people can be persuaded to do extraordinary and awful things. Given the right combination of ideology, authority, and gradual desensitization, all of us can become monsters, capable of destroying others with weapons that range from words to gas chambers. It is a reality we must face and guard against, looking instead to God and trying to understand who he has called us to be.”** (24 Hours that Changed the World, Hamilton,

p.57)

The story of Jesus reminds us is that even though scripture like **Psalms 139:14** describes how we are “**fearfully and wonderfully made,**” the passage from Mark’s gospel and others, reminds us about the depth at which we can wade into waters of cruelty to participate in various forms of evil because we are being influenced by the wrong authorities.

The people who treated Jesus badly were not a group of soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. They were not limited to a group of religious extremist or political activist. **The reason why Jesus was treated horribly was because he was a threat to the control and power that people falsely presumed they held.**

- He spoke the truth that contradicted their traditions.
- He demonstrated courage that defied their intimidation.
- He lived to please God; rather than people who held positions of authority and influence.

The final 24 hours of his life, Jesus revealed how dark and uncaring people can behave. **The worst treatment of another person begins with a heart and mind that chooses to distort truth, disrespect and disregard another person.** The choices we make wind up on continuum of wrong or evil; but it all is part of the darkness that mocked, shamed, hit Jesus and placed a crown of thorns upon his head.

### **To illustrate continuum**

I take our dog Sandy to run out here in the back lot. She like to jump across the ditch which this time of the year usually has water laying in it. There all some places along the ditch where the water

is obviously polluted and yet other spots it may not look that bad but anyone knows that the water in that entire ditch is contaminated to lesser or greater degrees.

In a spiritual sense the Bible warns us that the evil we do is all apart of the ditch or stream of sin that influenced the people that mistreated him.

This is why he once said (Matthew 5:22) if you just call someone a fool you stand in danger of hell; because that attitude is somehow drawn from that stream of evil that influenced people to wrongfully condemn him.

This why Jesus said when we lack compassion to feed someone who is really hungry, or have compassion on those in need of clothing or in prison, we have failed to love him. (Matthew 25:41-46) Because that lack of compassion is a part of that flow of cruelty that influenced the guards that struck him. **Disregard, disrespect, and distortion of truth toward others is all from the same stream of poison that affects our souls.**

### **The reason Jesus endured the humiliation and torture: John John 1:6-11**

If we believe Jesus was truly the son of God, what must he have been thinking as he endured the torture? John's gospel says Jesus was with God in the very beginning of creation. So what was Jesus thinking about the very people he created and how they were treating him? What a contrast between the various people who rejected, mocked and crucified him; compared to how Jesus responded with a refusal to hate or retaliate against them.

**John's gospel tells us Jesus came as the "true light which enlightens everyone..." John 1:9**

**John even said referring to Jesus that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness could not overcome the light.**

**John 1:5**

**The purpose for Jesus enduring the cruelty was to reveal the nature of God that overcomes the darkness of our evil.** God is capable of reaching out to us even when we are at our worst. God invites us to come to him so we can get our life together; instead of waiting for that day when we get out act together.

The truth of this scene reminds us God meets us at our worst so there is no need to postpone in seeking his loving goodness.

**The necessity of a surrendered heart to God: Matthew 16:25-26**

If the reason why Jesus was treated horribly was because he was a threat to control and power, then the answer to avoid or at least minimize becoming the worst we can be is to seek to live a life that surrenders our hearts and minds to God's leading.

Jesus once said to his disciples, **“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life will find it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life.”** Matthew 16:25-26

- The words of Jesus are describing what surrender to God means and looks like.
- He doesn't talk about just believing; he speaks about following.
- He doesn't talk about avoiding getting hurt or used as we follow him; because said you have to carry your cross like he did his.
- You have to deny yourselves sometimes security and control in circumstances.

- You have to be willing to loose in order to really to win.

The way to avoid being the cruelest that we can be is through the pursuit of a surrendered life to God. Christianity is about turning to God, so that when we are tempted to dish out our own style and flavors of cruelty; we refuse because we follow him or repent when we commit wrong or evil.

When our hearts and minds really want to first please God then our willingness to do anything to have things our way loses its grip on us.

### **Conclusion**

The little girl who stained her mother's chair apologized for doing wrong. Then she asked her mother if her mother still loved her. Her mother said assured to look at that red stain and remember even though she had done wrong, the stain was a reminder her mother would always love her.

The blood of Jesus is God's message his love and power is always here for us to overcome the wrongful ways in our hearts and lives as we surrender to him.