

## THE KING ON HIS THRONE

Mark 15: 22—41

**Focus Statement of Sermon:** Jesus on the cross is a confirmation of his status as Son of God, not a contradiction of it.

**Function Statement of Sermon:** To call disciples to be faithful to the one who was confirmed as King on the cross.

### SCRIPT

#### Introduction

Have you ever been mocked? How did it feel like? The experience of being mocked is painful for many reasons. As I was thinking about this sermon, I talked about it with Njabu. In truth, I was trying to get ideas about the introduction. She told me that one of the ways she sometimes receives mockery is when someone says, “How come you are this successful yet you are an orphan.” Behind this simple statement is the belief that orphans must not be successful. There is an expectation that those without parents must live a life of struggle and pain. So, people who make such statements are surprised when they see an orphan breaking those stereotypes and become different from what’s expected of them. To a certain extent, there is truth behind the statement. It is true that life without parents is hard and many orphans are struggling. In many ways, the person who utters this statement know half the truth and is surprised when they meet a different truth. This brings me to my first important point today... that...

#### Move 1

*Behind every joke and mockery, there is a grain of truth.*

- We mock what we suspect to be true but cannot fully understand how it can be.
  - We understand things according to what we know and the perspective we look through.
  - What we know and understand becomes our truth... and sometimes it becomes the only truth.
  - When something that seems closer to truth as we know it but different, we sometimes struggle to make sense of it.
    - Especially when this new thing threatens to turn our world upside down.
  - We sometimes attack it in every way possible and when we realise that it is not going away, we make our last attempt of burying it—mockery.
  - Mockery only works in the context of truth—and that is why it cuts deep and hurts.
    - If you have ever been mocked for what you believe and stand for, you know how painful it is.
    - You can see how close the mockers are to the truth, but also realise how far they are.
  - Mockers play with the truth... a truth they don’t yet know.
    - However, ignorance of the truth does not make it a lie.
    - Mocking the truth does not make it untrue.
- Jesus’ accusers were mocking him about what was actually true—they just did not know it.
  - He said he will destroy the temple and build it in three days.
    - They accused him of saying he will build another temple not made with human hands (14:58).

- It was true that Jesus may have said this... but they used it to mock him because of how ridiculous it sounded.
- He saved others but cannot save himself.
  - They knew that Jesus had saved others but expected him to do so for himself.
  - They did not know why he would not save himself.
  - They did not know that he was choosing not to save himself so that he may save everyone.
- They told him to come down from the cross so that they may believe.
  - They wanted to believe he was the Messiah, but their expectations were blinding them.
  - They did not know that he was not just going to come *down* from the cross but come *up* from the grave.
- They called him “King of Israel” but couldn’t bring themselves to see and understand the type of king he was.
- The truth was right in front of them... but they couldn’t wrap their minds around it.

*Behind every joke or mockery, there is a grain of truth because mockers play with the truth, even though they don’t know it.*

## **Move 2**

*Because mockery plays with the truth, mockers promote the truth through their ignorance.*

- The biggest truth they used to mock Jesus with was that he was “Messiah, King of Israel” (v.32).
  - These people, like most Jews, expected God to send the Messiah to bring and establish God’s rule and reign on the land as in heaven.
  - Here was a person proclaimed as the long-awaited promise standing in front of them...
  - It seems like this “would-be” Messiah did not fit their versions of the truth about the Messiah.
    - Some expected a military warrior to lead Israel in battle and conquer their enemies.
    - Some expected a King like David.
    - Some expected a prophet like Moses according to Deuteronomy 18.
    - Some expected an angelic being like the Son of Man figure of Daniel 7.
    - Some expected a priest-king who will restore proper worship.
  - No one expected the Messiah, the King, to suffer defencelessly at the hands of their enemies.
  - I suspect that behind their mocking was pain, hurt, and disappointment that showed itself in mockery.
    - We usually don’t mock things we don’t care about.
    - We usually mock it because it is closer to what we care about.
    - We usually mock it because it had raised our hopes... and raised them for nothing.
- As they mocked and insulted Jesus as King, they were bringing him closer to his confirmation as King.
  - The passion narrative (narrative of Jesus’ suffering) is filled with the language of Kingship.
    - The High Priest asked him if he was the Messiah (14:61).
    - Pilate’s first question was, “Are you the king of the Jews” (15:2)?
    - Later he asked the crowd if he should release the “king of the Jews” (15:9).
    - When they reject his proposal, he asks them what he should do with “the king of the Jews” (15:12).

- Pilate is joining in the fun of mocking Jesus. (In Eswatini, we have a saying that is translated as, “Even the bee without a sting is taking its turn.”)
    - He repeatedly uses the phrase “king of the Jews” to make fun of them and trigger their emotions.
    - He is pushing them to the extreme by using the very thing that makes them angry. Eventually, they shout, “crucify him,” which is what he wanted all along.
  - The following scenes are filled with Jesus being mocked using kingly elements and words.
    - A purple robe.
    - A crown of thorns.
    - The mockers shout, “Hail, king of the Jews.”
    - They bow down on their knees, as a sign of allegiance.
    - The charge against him was “THE KING OF THE JEWS.”
- It is clear to see that what is at stake here is whether Jesus is King.
  - The crowds and the religious leaders are doing everything they can to show that he is not.
  - The irony is that as they prove that he is not, they are actually showing that he is.
  - They show that he is the King, even though a different kind of King.
  - A King they expected... but also did not expect.

### **Move 3**

*The death of Jesus on the cross is a confirmation of his status as Son of God.*

- One of the questions we saw throughout the story is, “Who is this?”
  - This question is always found on the lips of those following Jesus.
  - It shows the surprise, confusion, and disappointment of Jesus’ followers.
  - Mark begins and ends the book by showing that Jesus is indeed God’s Son (God appointed King).
  - The title Son of God is another title that means “Messiah,” and “King of Israel.”
    - We usually think Son of God means that Jesus is God and from God.
    - There are those elements but here we must understand Son of God in line with the question of Jesus as King.
    - 2 Samuel 7 covenant with David.
    - Psalm 2.
  - Jesus is the Son of God, the King from the family of David, the rightful King of Israel.
  - He is God’s appointed King... the long-awaited Servant of God to bring and establish God’s rule and reign in the land as in heaven.
- The centurion’s proclamation is the last proclamation of Jesus as Son of God in the book.
  - At his baptism, heavens opened and a voice came and said, “You are my Son.”
  - At the transfiguration, a voice came from the cloud and said, “This is my Son.”
  - Now, at the cross, the curtain of the temple was torn and a voice says, “Surely this man was God’s Son.”
    - The surprising thing about the final voice is that it comes from someone you would not expect.
    - It comes from the enemy side.
    - Those who were following Jesus from the beginning have fled.

- Clearly, all of Jesus' followers could not understand who Jesus was.
- But, an unexpected man, stands there and is given full understanding.
- As we near the end of this book, how is your understanding of Jesus?
  - Who do you say he is?
  - Are you still blind like Bartimeus and in need of sight?
  - Are you still asking yourself, "Who is this?"
  - Are you now following from a distance like the women at the cross?
  - Or are you standing like the centurion, proclaiming that this man is God's Son, the King of the world?
- This understanding of Jesus is only possible by God's power.
  - In verse 38 we read that the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom.
  - In the temple in Jerusalem, there were two important places:
    - The Holy Place—where the priests did some of their duties.
    - The Most Holy Place—where God's presence resided. Only the High Priest went in there once a year.
    - These two places were divided by a curtain.
  - This is the curtain that was torn when Jesus died.
  - With the curtain torn, it meant that God was moving out of the box they had put him in.
    - God was finally going to his people.
    - God was coming to live with his people everywhere at all times.
    - It's not that people were now free to go into the Most Holy Place.
    - It's that God was moving the Most Holy Place to every place.
  - With God now out and with his people, the first thing we see is a non-Israelite confessing Jesus as the Messiah.
  - Only God could have done that:
    - Only God can move a person from being on the outside to being inside his people.
    - Only God can move you from being someone who is following from a distance to being at the foot of the cross.
    - Only God can move you from being "very shy" to proclaim his wonderful works to being a herald of the Good News.
    - Only God can break the boxes you have put him in, boxes that tell him what he can do and not do.
    - Only God can move you from being blind about his work to full sight.
    - Only God can move you from being "too cool for the Gospel" to being on fire for the Good News.
    - God is with his people, transforming, healing, and working his way.
  - This is the God we meet at the Table...
  - Where we remember and celebrate his presence with us.
  - As we take the elements, we proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God, the King who gave himself for his people.
  - We take up the challenge to be his people in word and deed—to proclaim to others that Jesus is the King of the world.