

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Mark 15: 24-32**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Mark chapter 15, and today we'll read from verse 24 to verse 32.

Jesus, on the morning of the Passover day, was sentenced to be crucified on the cross by Pilate. He was first whipped, enduring physical pain, then mocked and ridiculed, enduring mental anguish. Then, Jesus personally carried the heavy cross and walked the Way of Suffering. Along the way, due to physical weakness, He couldn't continue, and Simon of Cyrene was reluctantly enlisted to help Jesus carry the cross to the end of the Way. This reluctant act of carrying the cross opened the path of blessings for Simon's family. Eventually, they arrived at Golgotha, the place of crucifixion. Jesus refused to drink the wine mixed with myrrh; He didn't want to ease the suffering of the cross. He was willing to taste the bitterness and death that sin brings to every person so that He could sympathize with the pain we experience in our lives.

**Verse 24-25: "And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take. Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him."**

Jesus was crucified at the third hour. In Jewish timekeeping, the evening begins at 6 p.m. and the morning at 6 a.m. The third hour of the day is 9 a.m., when Jews began to prepare the Passover lamb. Jesus was chosen by God as the Passover lamb, not only for the Jews but for all people, to be crucified on the cross to atone for sin. Crucifixion was a cruel torture, with nails driven through the hands and feet, affixing the person to the cross; a footrest was often added to prolong suffering, preventing death by suffocation due to lung compression. This inhumane

punishment was typically reserved for the most heinous criminals as a deterrent. Jesus, an entirely innocent man, endured this severe punishment. Interestingly, all four Gospels record Jesus being crucified but choose not to detail His physical suffering. Perhaps in the Gospels, God wants us to focus on Jesus as a person, willingly bearing the sins of humanity, regardless of the physical agony endured.

However, under God's sovereignty, King David of Israel wrote about the Messiah's suffering a thousand years ago in Psalm 22. God ordained that the Messiah would arise from David's lineage to bear the sins of all humanity. The Holy Spirit inspired David to describe in advance, through Psalm 22:12-18, the various agonies that Jesus would experience when nailed to the cross. David's depiction is remarkably detailed. Let's read Psalm 22:12-18: "Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. They gape at me with their mouths, like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue clings to my jaws; You have brought me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones. They look and stare at me. They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." Jesus was hung on the wood, with only a few points supporting His entire body, causing His bones to feel disjointed, as if they could be counted one by one. Verse 24 records the casting of lots for His clothing, fulfilling Psalm 22. Indeed, even the details of Jesus' suffering on the cross were predetermined by God long ago. From 9 a.m. to noon, Jesus hung on the cross, enduring immense physical pain while also enduring mockery, ridicule, and humiliation from the chief priests, scribes, Jewish people, and Roman soldiers.

#### **Verse 26: "And the inscription of His accusation was written above:"**

On the cross, Jesus' accusation was written: "The King of the Jews." To the Jewish people, this was deeply ironic. Pilate could find no fault in Jesus, so he chose to use Jesus' own admission, that He was the King of the Jews, as His charge. And

remarkably, the Jewish people handed their king over to the Roman authority they despised, and in the manner Rome dealt with serious criminals, they had Jesus nailed to the cross.

John 19:20 tells us that the phrase "The King of the Jews" was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, the common languages of the time. This was a declaration to the entire world: Jesus is the King of the Jews, this is His charge. Throughout history, there have likely been no other criminals punished with the charge of being the King of the Jews. Jesus' identity as the King of the Jews needed to be proclaimed using the languages of Rome and Greece to ensure it was understood worldwide. God foresaw that in the near future, the doors of the gospel would open to the Gentiles, and those saved by grace among the Gentiles would be called true Israelites, and Jesus would also be their king. Truly, Jesus is the King of the Jews.

**Verse 27-28: "With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. So, the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors."**

There were two thieves crucified alongside Jesus, one on His left and one on His right. In Luke 23:39-43, it is recounted that one of the thieves, like the others, mocked Jesus, while the other thief rebuked him and asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Because of this thief's repentance before death, Jesus accepted him and promised him that he would be with Him in paradise that day. Mark's Gospel emphasizes Jesus serving as a servant to humanity and does not include these details; instead, it highlights Jesus being crucified with the thieves to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah 53:12 speaks of Him being numbered with transgressors, indicating that the servant had no choice in the matter; His life and even His death were predetermined, foretold through the prophecies of the prophets, revealing God's plan to humanity in advance.

**Verse 29: “And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days,”**

The passersby from that place should have had no relation to Jesus. Even the bystanders shook their heads and insulted Jesus; before the insult, they added a particle of disgust, "Aha," indicating their disdain, disbelief, and mockery, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days," a statement Jesus made to the Jews during His early ministry, specifically when He first cleansed the temple. This event is detailed in John 2:19-21. There it says that Jesus' disciples understood that He was speaking about the temple of His body. Here we see that the Bible is truly a book of revelation. Without revelation, interpreting it literally could lead to stumbling and even using it to condemn Jesus. However, for those with revelation, it is to be treasured because Jesus clearly stated there that He would rise again on the third day after His death.

Dear brothers and sisters, many times when we read the Scriptures without revelation, we may fall into the same situation as those passersby. Let us pray for the Lord's mercy upon us. Every time we open the Bible, let us first ask God to grant us wisdom and the spirit of revelation, so that we can truly understand God's Word, even when we couldn't comprehend it. Let us also pray for a humble heart, willing to believe and receive God's Word first. Perhaps one day, as our spiritual lives mature, we will have enough revelation and understanding to truly comprehend God's Word.

**Verse 30: “save Yourself, and come down from the cross!”**

These are still the words of the passersby mocking Jesus, "He saved others. Of course, Jesus could save Himself ", but He chose not to; He preferred to obey God's will. He was not willing to come down from the cross because the cross was the portion prepared for Him by God. Jesus willingly and faithfully fulfilled God's will; He willingly remained on the cross. The cross was originally a sign of curse, but because of the voluntary suffering of Jesus Christ, it became a symbol of glory. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who

are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Then, Paul declares in verses 22 and 23 of the same chapter, "For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness." Dear brothers and sisters, let us also hope that we can truly see the value of the cross like Paul did, cherish the cross, and proclaim the cross. Though it may seem foolish, it has the power to save and give life to people.

**Verse 31: "Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.'"**

The chief priests and scribes were the masterminds behind Jesus' conspiracy. Now that their plan has succeeded and Jesus has been nailed to the cross, their status in Jewish society will no longer be threatened. Therefore, they joined in the mockery of Jesus, saying, "He saved others but cannot save Himself." If we look at the English version, "He saved others" - here "saved" is in the past tense, meaning they all acknowledge that Jesus, over the past three and a half years, during His ministry on earth, saved many people. He healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead. The chief priests and scribes also saw that He indeed saved many people, and their acknowledgment is undoubtedly a public testimony. Their plot against Jesus stemmed from jealousy, as Pontius Pilate mentioned in John 15:10 when he said that they handed Jesus over out of envy. As for the latter part, "He cannot save Himself," in English, it is "but He cannot save Himself," using the present tense, indicating that He cannot save Himself now. Can He really not save Himself? We need to look at this "cannot" from two perspectives: First, from the perspective of ability, does He really lack the ability to save Himself? In fact, He does not. He once told His disciples that He could ask the Father to send twelve legions of angels to protect Him, so who could crucify Him? Even without asking the Father, He Himself is the second person of the Holy Trinity, and His actions are full of power. Who could crucify Him? Furthermore, even if He didn't use His supernatural power, during the Jewish religious trial and the Roman court trial, no evidence of any wrongdoing on His part could be found. The process of convicting Him was full of

loopholes. If Jesus had chosen to defend Himself, He would never have been convicted. So, from the perspective of ability, Jesus has the ability to save Himself.

Now let's look at the second aspect: His inability is because He was not willing. Because it was the Father's will for Him to become the Passover Lamb to bear the sins of the world and complete redemption. After praying three times in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's will to fulfill the redemption plan of the Father. This made it impossible for Him to come down from the cross; He could not make God's redemption plan a failure.

"He saved others but cannot save himself," this statement can still be applied today, but the tense needs to change because His inability to save Himself happened two thousand years ago, so the past tense should be used. He could not save Himself in the past, followed by the present tense. Today, He is able to save thousands upon thousands of people who believe in Jesus and receive salvation, including you and me. We can all testify because Jesus could not save Himself in the past, so today we can be saved.

In the past, the chief priests and scribes, out of jealousy, conspired against Jesus and colluded with Roman politics to unjustly and unlawfully nail Jesus to the cross. Yet, their mockery of Jesus' words, "He saved others but cannot save Himself," ironically served as a testimony to Jesus' mission. Jesus' inability to save Himself for the sake of saving others was probably something the chief priests and scribes never imagined. This shows us that our God, the one who governs all things, even uses the evil deeds of evildoers to fulfill His will. "Saving others but cannot save Himself" is not only fulfilled in Jesus but also in every saved saint. Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:24, "A disciple is not above His teacher, nor a servant above His master." So just as the teacher walks, the disciple should also walk; as the master does, so should the servant. Since Jesus sacrificed Himself to save others, we also need to follow His example. We should be willing to sacrifice our time and energy to help others understand the gospel, know Christ, and sometimes, God may require us to make even greater sacrifices, to the point of being willing to set aside ourselves to save souls. Dear brothers and sisters, are you willing?

**Verse 32: "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him."**

"The King of the Jews, Christ," these words were the accusation against Jesus, yet they also affirmed His identity. At that time, the chief priests and scribes thought it was a mockery, but two thousand years later, we understand that it was God declaring to the world through Pilate's hands: "Jesus is the King of the Jews." The old Israelites, because of their disbelief, challenged Jesus by nailing Him to the cross, saying, "If you come down from the cross, then we will believe." These old Israelites included the chief priests, scribes, the people, and even one of the thieves crucified with Him. Thank the Lord, Jesus did not heed their challenge but remained on the cross to complete redemption; He did not save Himself in order to save all mankind. Over the past two thousand years, countless Gentiles have been saved by believing in Jesus, and after their salvation, they have all become true Israelites. For these saved saints, Jesus is truly the King of the Jews, the Christ.

Let's pray together: Dear Lord Jesus Christ, two thousand years ago, You saved so many people, yet on the cross, You were unwilling to save Yourself; this is how You completed God's redemption plan. And the chief priests and scribes who nailed You to the cross, their mocking words actually testified to Your mission; precisely because You were unwilling to save Yourself, thousands upon thousands of people could be saved by believing in You. We have all received this great salvation; we ask You to help us also learn from Your example, willing to sacrifice ourselves to help others understand the gospel, to know You. Bless the church I am in, especially the seekers in the church who do not yet know You; through our willingness to offer and sacrifice, may You extend grace to every seeker in the church, so that they may truly understand the salvation You accomplished on the cross and be willing to believe in You as their Savior for life. Bless the church I am in, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ! Amen!