

“And they crucified him...” Mark 15:24

As we have been entering into this Easter Season, I have been taking time to read through the four Gospel narratives pertaining to the last week of Jesus’ life. In doing so, I was struck by Mark’s statement here in Mark 15:24 ***“And they crucified him...”***

I was sharing with another pastor friend of mine the other day about how this terse, almost “matter-of-fact” sort of statement had been implanted upon my mind. For some reason I couldn’t get that phrase out my head and the statement, although brief, seemed weighty to me.

Although of Persian origin, the practice of crucifixion was adopted by the Romans as a cruel and shameful form of capital punishment. It was normally reserved for the worst kind of criminals and slaves. The apostle Paul identified Jesus’ death as one who was ***“hanged on a tree.”*** This identification goes back to the law of Moses as a sign of death under the curse of God (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23). But was Jesus guilty of such a heinous crime as to deserve such a cruel death? The answer, of course is no...but we are! In fact, one theologian referred to mankind’s sin and rebellion against God as “cosmic treason.” On the cross, Jesus has taken our sin upon himself and by doing so, he was guilty in a *certain sense* – he was guilty by *imputation*. But the good news is that Christ’s righteousness has also been imputed to us. This is what is sometimes referred to as “double imputation” in theology. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:21 ***“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*** So, when we think of Jesus’ crucifixion, it is not merely that he has atoned for our sin, although that is true. He has also bore our shame and punishment that was rightly ours. He has bore the curse of God on our behalf and given us his righteousness.

Yes, those words, ***“And they crucified him”*** are weighty indeed. But because of Jesus’ willingness to be obedient to death, ***“even death on a cross”*** (Phil. 2:8), the weight and heaviness of our sin, shame, curse, and punishment have been placed upon our gracious Savior. Dear friends, are you burdened by your sin? Are you weighed down by the heaviness of shame and guilt? If so, trust in the fact that Christ has already bore this on your behalf and has given you a righteousness that is not of your own but is from him, and may the words ***“And they crucified him”*** become a blessing.