

Eternity's Greatest Hero (Mark 15-16)

Southern Hills Baptist Church

Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017

Introduction: Our culture is fascinated with heroes. Just look at the entertainment industry. Box office records are being shattered by the latest superhero flick. Netflix and many other content creators are churning out TV shows about super heroes. Why is that? What drives our culture's fascination? Super heroes serve as a wish-fulfillment. We all want someone in our lives that will be there in the nick of time to make sure we are safe and to overcome odds we can't. We love to marvel over the strength and power of these fictional characters. Truth be told, we love super heroes b/c we need one, we need one far bigger and greater than Hollywood could ever dream up.

Why We Need a Better Hero: Sin

Sin threatens us far more dangerous than heart disease, cancer, ISIS, terrorism, or any natural disaster. Why?

1. Sin is Sneaky (James 1:14-15)

Sin grows from within, it hunts stealthily. Like high-blood pressure it slowly squeezes out life and could drop you dead without you ever having known it was on the attack.

2. Sin brings Separation (Isaiah 59:1-3)

God never lacks the ability to save us, yet our sin builds a wall between us and God. God is holy.

3. Sin brings Judgement (Romans 2:2)

Paul says judgment will fall on those who practice sin, such as lying, pride, gossip, and so on. Notice, Paul didn't call out murder, rape, or the like. God's judgment isn't reserved only for those who have "big sins" in their lives (Romans 6:23).

4. Sin, We All Have It (James 2:10-11)

James teaches that one sin, makes us accountable for all of the law. Some may claim this is unfair, but the issue, as James explains it, isn't the quantity of our sin, but who we have sinned against, God, the Law-Giver.

The Story of Eternity's Greatest Hero

Our Sin on His Behalf (Mark 15:16-40)

- **Plotting to Kill God:** The religious leaders in Jerusalem saw the influence and following Jesus had. This threatened what they loved most, their power/authority/way of life and thus arrested Jesus in the quiet of the night, plotting to kill Him.

- **The Beating of God:** Before leading Jesus to the place where He would be crucified, a battalion of soldiers (20-40) placed a crown of thorns on His head and began to beat Him with staffs, driving the thorns in deeply. This of course took place after Jesus had already been scourged with a whip. Isaiah (52:14) prophecies that when this took place Jesus was beaten so badly He was beyond recognition.
 - **Reflect:** How does this make you feel? Angry? You should be, but you should also feel sorrow. While you were not there throwing the blows, it was your sin that kept Jesus there.
- **What Jesus Accomplished on the Cross:** The ugliness and horror of the cross coalesces with hope and joy as we begin to understand that Jesus was accomplishing something of eternal significance. He bore our sins and our punishment on His behalf. He purchased our salvation (Isa 53:5-6; 2 Peter 2:24).

His Victory, Our Joy (Mark 16:1-8)

- **Rollercoaster of Emotions:** Just a few days earlier Jesus and the Disciples walked into Jerusalem with people crying out, "Hossana," in praise of Jesus, now after being tortured, He lay dead in a tomb. Can you imagine the rollercoaster of emotions in that one week?
- **Dawning of Hope:** As Mary and Mary walked up the hill to the tomb they see the stone rolled away and hope begins to flicker within them. That spark of hope bursts into a raging fire as they enter the tomb and are told that Jesus no longer lay dead, but lives!
 - **Implications of the Resurrection:** The Gospel is true and our faith in Jesus is not in vain (1 Cor 15:14). Jesus' saving work has been accomplished (1 Cor 15:17). Jesus work was validated by God (Rom 1:4).

Living In Light of Easter Truth

- **Have you put your faith in Jesus?** Jesus is the hero you desperately need. His salvation is freely offered by grace to any and all who would put their faith in Him. Trust Him today!
- **Are you in awe of Jesus?** Marvel at Jesus, who is God and became man, Who is the Life-Giver and allowed His life to be taken, Who laid dead in a tomb, but took up His life once again as promised.
- **Are you ready to take up your cross and follow Jesus?** Jesus died for your sin. Will you continue to live in it or will you follow Him in obedience? What is said of your love for Jesus when you are willing to continue in the same sin Jesus had to suffer and die for?