

03.28.10 / Mark 15:1-39

Passage Insight

Whether it's the Pharisees, Pilate, the Jewish masses, the Roman guards, or us, people are always seeking to gain control. We seek to control situations, people, outcomes, and more, for our own gain. Exercising control feeds our selfishness and convinces us that we are in charge, and we will protect this control at all costs, leading to disastrous results. Consider this excerpt from a recent personal journal entry of mine (Taylor Roberts):

"If I idolize control, then when I lose control of a situation with my kids, I'll likely get angry because what I love (my idol) has been taken from me, and I'll likely direct that anger and frustration at my kids, when all the while it's my fault for loving something more than God..."

At the heart of this control is something very simple, very primal... selfish fear that we will not have what we need. This fear will lead us to mistrust those around us, even those who want the best for us and need the best from us. This mistrust often drives a wedge between us and those we are called to love and who are called to love us.

As this fear, control, and mistrust play themselves out, we find that we are seeking some sort of self-serving individualism where the ultimate reward is not freedom, but rather chains. True freedom comes when we live as we were truly designed to live. Anything other than this means living in a prison of our design. The only way out is to live in the freedom of submission to Jesus, because submission to Him actually lifts the burden of sin and brings us true freedom.

Notice that Jesus does not defend Himself. If He had done so it would have meant death for the rest of us, so instead He chose to let it happen. He made a decision to die and be resurrected instead so that YOU could live. To respond with ruthless individualism is to reject Him.

Application Questions (feel free to use the ones that best meet the needs of your group)

Control, Fear, and Mistrust

- 1) What are you most afraid of losing control of?
- 2) Who do you mistrust as a result of this fear?
- 3) How does this drive a wedge between you and others?
- 4) What truth about Jesus reminds you that your fear is unfounded and NOT from God?
- 5) What would be the impact in your life you weren't afraid of this anymore?
- 6) Which relationships in your life would be affected as a result?
- 7) Right now you don't believe the truth you just mentioned from question #4. What are you believing instead?

Independence / Living as you were designed to live

- 1) Where you see evidence of sin in your life, it's reflecting an area of your life that is not in submission to Jesus. Though may feel like freedom, it's actually a prison because it's keeping you from living the life you were designed to live. What is an ongoing sin in your life (please be sensitive to gender-related concerns)?
- 2) Since you're not submitting to Jesus in this, what are you choosing to submit to?

- 3) Play it out into the future. Where will this take you?
- 4) What are you trying to provide for yourself when you commit this sin?
- 5) How does Jesus promise to meet your true needs at a deeper level?
- 6) If this sin were absent from your life, what would you be freed from?
- 7) What does repentance from this sin look like for you?
- 8) What does active submission to Jesus look like in this case?
- 9) Who in the group can hold you accountable as you decide to submit to Jesus and not to your own desire?

Sources

- ESV Study Bible
 - Tyler Jones
 - Docent
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