

Discussion Guide

Week of September 1, 2013

Mark 15:1-20

Passage Overview: The Sanhedrin, which tried Jesus earlier, did not have the right to execute a person convicted of a capital crime. That right was reserved for Roman authorities, especially when dealing with popular figures. Here they bring Jesus before Pilate, the Roman governor. Notice how Jesus is charged now. As we read this account, remember that Mark always has two reasons for including small details in his narrative. First, anything he writes is included because it happened. Mark is not making this up. Second, however, anything he writes is included in order to teach us about Jesus. Mark is not 'preachy' — he does not do much direct explanation or exposition or moralizing. Rather, he selects facts and events in such a way as to drive home the meaning of the work of Christ.

Understanding God's Word—Read Mark 15:1-20.

- Read Isaiah 53:7. How do we see this fulfilled here?
- Look at the mocking of Christ. Read verses 17-20, 29-32, and also 14:65.
 - For what particular things is Jesus mocked?
 - What do you think Mark is showing us in the account of the mocking?
- Who can be "blamed" for Jesus' death, if anyone? Think of the entire account of all the events leading up to his execution.

Living and Applying God's Word

- Earlier, in Mark 14, the Sanhedrin accuses Jesus of blasphemy, but in front of Pilate (15:2) they charge him with claiming to be a king. Why do you think they change the charge? Who is Jesus challenging in both cases (blasphemy and treason)? What does this say about the nature of Christ and his work?
- Read 15:15. Why did Mark include the interesting note that Barabbas was released instead of Jesus? *i.e.* What does the release of Barabbas teach us about Jesus' work on the cross?
- In Mark 15:14, Pilate tries to avoid responsibility for Jesus' death by transferring judgment to the Jewish authorities, asking, "What evil has he done?" How is Pilate's question prophetic? Read Ps 38:20-21; Isa 53:9; Acts 2:13. Could these same verses apply to you? Why is that important?

Turning to God in Faith and Repentance

- Pilate has Jesus crucified without really getting to the bottom of this question, and so Christ's blood is to a large extent on his hands. How do we act like Pilate, avoiding a true understanding of who Christ is and what he has done?
- In 15:10-11, Pilate assumes the chief priests are envious of Jesus. What causes you to be hard-hearted toward Christ and the gospel? When do you find your joy and desire for Christ waning? How can you strengthen yourself to fight bitterness, envy and hard-heartedness? How would you have encouraged the chief priests to turn from their anger and jealousy?

Prayer: Praise God that Christ left glory for the humiliation and pain of a fallen world and sinful men. Thank him for the gospel and his substitution for sinners. Pray for hearts that would cling more closely to him, in love and reverence. Pray also for the Johnstons as they serve in Bulgaria.

Announcements

- Picnic at Flat Rock (Sept. 2, 4-8 p.m.; sigourney@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Serve with Greeters (Mary Mullins: mhm@psstf.com)
- Men's Lunch (Sept. 3, noon; springer@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Member Meeting (Sept. 8, 6-7:30 p.m.)
- Starting Pointe membership class (Sept. 13-15; robert@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Kids' Church & Youth Parent "Orientation" (Sept. 15, 9 a.m.; robert@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Women's Study: *Knowing God* (starts Sept. 17, 9-10:30 a.m.; Melany Raborn: mraborn@knology.net, 706-718-5102)