

Discussion Guide

Week of September 8, 2013

Mark 15:21-47

Passage Overview: Mark has portrayed Jesus as God's promised King and the Judge promised in Malachi 3. But, in chapter 15, we see Jesus the Judge condemned—even though he has committed no crime (v14). And we see Jesus hailed as king, but it is a cruel joke (vv16-20). The religious leaders say they will believe Jesus is the Christ if he comes down from the cross and saves himself. However, for Jesus to be the Christ means he stays on the cross to save his people. Jesus is forsaken by God (v34) and God judges him. As Jesus dies, the curtain of the temple is torn from top to bottom (v38). The curtain kept people from the Most Holy Place—the symbol of God's presence in the temple. But now the way to God is open. God judges Jesus instead of judging us so that we can be united with God. Jesus unites us to God by being forsaken by God.

Understanding God's Word—Read Mark 15:21-47.

- Look at v31. The religious leaders say that Jesus saved others, but he cannot save himself. What is the ironic truth in this statement?
- Look at v32. How will Jesus prove he is the promised Christ?
- What is the meaning of the tearing of the curtain (v38)?

Living and Applying God's Word

- Read v21. What does this interesting little note about “Alexander and Rufus” tell us about (a) Mark's readers, and (b) the trustworthiness of the account?
- What is Mark trying to get across about human nature in these descriptions of the mocking, spitting, beating?
- Some have called verse 34 “the most terrible question ever asked.”
 - What does the question tell us about what Jesus is doing?
 - What does it tell us about what the Father is doing?
 - What is the answer to Jesus' question?
- Read v39. In many ways, the confession of the centurion is the climax of the crucifixion and even of the gospel of Mark. Contrast him to everyone else around the cross. What is the connection between vv38 and 39? What do you think Mark is trying to get his readers (including us) to do here? How can we do it?

Turning to God in Faith and Repentance

- Read **Romans 8:7**.
 - Do you think that Paul exaggerates here when he says we are all naturally hostile to God?
 - How have you seen this natural human enmity to God in normal human behavior? In yourself?
- How does Jesus' cry of dereliction in v34 help you when you feel alone and forsaken (even by God)?
- What's your view of the cross of Jesus Christ? Is it just an event of history, or relevant to everything in your life—the way you understand God, yourself, your sin, your future, your status and security, your purpose in times of trouble?

Prayer: Praise God that he forsook his Son so that we could be united to him. Ask God to help you put the cross of Christ at the center of your life. Pray for Jack and Dawn Foran as they serve as missionaries in the Middle East.

Announcements

- Starting Pointe membership class (Sept. 13–15; robert@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Baptism Sunday (Sept. 29; wayne@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Women's Study: *Knowing God* (starts Sept. 17, 9–10:30 a.m.; Melany Raborn: mraborn@knology.net, 706-718-5102)