

## Discussion Notes

Mark 15.21-41

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Mark 10.42-45

- Jesus came to serve, to give his life, to afford us life by his death. His prediction of these things earlier in Mark will now be literally “fleshed out” on the cross in the following passage at the end of Mark’s story.

Mark 15.21

- Only here in Mark do we read about Simon from Cyrene. It is likely that his sons became Followers and were well known in the church by the time Mark was being circulated. They may be mentioned by Paul in Romans 16.3.
- Jesus carries his cross, a 30-40 pound beam. Considering the brutal beatings and lashings he had already endured (known to kill victims all by themselves), Jesus needed aid on his way to Golgotha.

15.22-25

- Golgotha means “the place of the skull”. Many were crucified here. This was an ordinary, though excruciating and humiliating death.
- Jesus refuses wine by those wishing to dull his pain. He has promised his disciples earlier will not drink wine again until he drinks it in the new Kingdom (Mark 14.25).
- Jesus was likely naked or at the very least left with a loincloth because of Jewish sensitivities. He clothes were gambled for.
- Jesus is crucified at 9AM after a long night of trial and abuse.
- Psalm 22.7,14,16-18 anticipate what Jesus will endure, hundreds of years before he was born.

15.26-27

- It was customary for the crime of the victim to be printed over their heads on the cross as crucifixion was designed to be a horrific deterrent of unrest and crime. “King of the Jews” was meant to be a mockery, but it was accurate.
- Even at the edge of Jesus’ death, some see the truth and some do not. It is possible to stare into the face of God and not recognize him

15.29-32

- It is important to remember that Jesus chooses to stay on the cross. He is at no point striped of power. He is laying his life down. Every excruciating moment was chosen by him for our benefit.
- It was Jesus’ refusal to save himself that saved others.

15.33-37

- A literal darkness fell on the land – a three hour supernatural darkness.

- This marked God's displeasure and judgment on the world. This judgment, however fell on Jesus, not on us.
- Jesus' shouts in Aramaic (which Mark records) and expresses the sorrow of the cross.
- Some scoff at his cries believing he is calling out to Elijah. Jesus is simply quoting from Psalm 22 again – a salvation song.
- The Temple curtain is torn from top to bottom. Complete access through Jesus is available now for all people.
- By accepting Jesus we accept God and God accepts us. Remember, as John tells us, when we look at Jesus we see God! Accepting Jesus is accepting God.

#### 15.39-41

- A high point of Mark's gospel is the identification of Jesus by the Roman executioner. It is Jesus' killer and a gentile who sees the gravity of Jesus' death and believes Jesus to be something special – "the son of God".
- Notice it was women who cared for Jesus and the twelve during his ministry. Again, the women are at the cross, the disciples not to be found. We will see this again in the coming resurrection story.
- The new Exodus has begun, from slavery to freedom.

#### **Discussion Questions**

- Upon the reading of this passage, what strikes you?
- What does the "ordinary" death of crucifixion say about what Jesus came to do and who he was trying to show us?
- What might be important about the statement of the Roman guard in 15.39? How does this correspond with the rest of Mark's narrative?
- Acceptance, rejection, belief and unbelief are strong themes in Mark – especially here around the cross. What does it say that Israel's leadership didn't see Jesus for who he was? How should that inform our view of him?