

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 23

Jesus endures the cross

Mark 15:16–47



DAY 1

Jesus was mocked before His crucifixion • Mark 15:16–21

READ

Mark 15:16–21

EXPLAIN

The truth of Mark 15:16–21

To fulfill His mission, Jesus needed to humbly endure humiliation (Isa 53:3). The soldiers *mocked* Jesus as they *joked* about Jesus and *pretended to honor Him*. They gave Jesus a royal-looking robe, a crown of thorns, and a reed for a scepter. They mockingly bowed and said, “Hail, King!” the way they would say, “Hail, Caesar!” To them, Jesus’ royalty and suffering were just a big joke. They had fun beating Him, and with their spit they dishonored Him. Ironically, what they meant as a joke was actually true: Jesus was the King. All the while, Jesus obeyed Scripture: “I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting” (50:6). Jesus was too battered to carry the beam of His cross, so the soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene to do it. Cyrene was a busy port city in North Africa where many Jews lived, but Simon was in Jerusalem, probably for Passover. This experience had a profound effect on Simon, for it appears his whole family was saved after he carried the Savior’s cross (Rom 16:13). Thus, by enduring mockery without disobeying, Jesus brings salvation to those who humbly believe.

ASK

1. What did the soldiers put on Jesus?
They dressed Him like a fake king, with a purple robe, a crown of thorns, and a reed scepter.
2. Why could Jesus not carry the beam of His cross?
He was tired and weakened by the flogging.
3. Who carried the beam of Jesus’ cross?
Simon of Cyrene.
4. How did this experience affect Simon?
It appears that his whole family was saved after his experience carrying Jesus’ cross.

DISCUSS

1. How does Jesus’ inability to carry the beam of His cross show that He is fully human?
2. What does Jesus’ humble submission to God show about the way to success (Jas 4:10)?

DAY 2

Jesus was mocked during His crucifixion • Mark 15:22–32

READ

Mark 15:22–32

EXPLAIN

The truth of Mark 15:22–32

Crucifixion was gruesome, but Mark focuses on the mockery instead of the agony. Crucifixion was itself mockery. The Romans used it to execute slaves and rebels. The Jews considered a crucified person to be accursed (Deut 21:23). In addition, the soldiers dishonored Jesus by caring more about His clothes than about His life. Also, the inscription on the cross mocked Jesus. Finally, Jesus was mocked by being crucified alongside violent revolutionaries. Yet the mockery—the cross (Num 21:9), the divided clothes (Ps 22:18), and the company of wicked men (Isa 53:12)—actually confirmed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The Jews also mocked Him. Crucifixions took place by the busy road heading from Jerusalem toward the Roman capital of Caesarea. The many people traveling by shook their heads with scorn, and in “deriding” Him they were literally “blaspheming.” The chief priests joined in, joking that they would believe if Jesus could get down off the cross. Even the criminals mocked Him. But again, the sneering proved that Jesus was exactly who He said He was (Ps 22:7), our Savior and our King.

ASK

1. What kind of people were crucified?
Slaves, rebels, and cursed people.
2. Who was Jesus crucified with?
Two criminals.
3. What did the chief priests say to make fun of Jesus?
“He saved others. Let Him save Himself.”
4. What did all the mockery prove about Jesus?
It fulfilled Isaiah 53:3, so it proved Jesus was exactly who they were jokingly saying He was.

DISCUSS

1. Why did Jesus not save Himself (Mark 10:45)?
2. Take time to praise and thank Jesus for obeying even when He was humiliated. If He has done that for you, how can you live for Him?

DAY 3

Jesus was mocked in His abandonment • Mark 15:33–36

READ

Mark 15:33–36

EXPLAIN

The truth of Mark 15:33–36

From noon until 3 PM, the sun was dark. The darkness was supernatural, showing God’s presence (Ps 18:11), especially His holy presence to judge (Isa 5:30; 13:10–11; Joel 2:1–2; Amos 5:20). Jesus was bearing God’s wrath against sin, dying as a sinner in the place of sinners (1 Pet 2:24; 2 Cor 5:21). Jesus cried out, and for the first time in His life, He did not call God “Father” (Ps 22:1). Although the Trinity could not be ripped apart,

the closeness and joy of their relationship was lost as God judged Jesus for the sins of many (Isa 53:5). He was forsaken so that sinners could be forgiven. Yet even in this He was mocked. Possibly the bystanders only heard His first words, and in Aramaic “My God” and “Elijah” sound similar. But they may also have purposefully twisted His words for fun. Either way, someone offered Him wine with vinegar, a drink popular with soldiers and laborers because it was invigorating. They wanted to keep Jesus conscious as they joked about Elijah coming. Jesus was dying to offer them salvation, but they just laughed at Him.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What happened to the sun when Jesus was on the cross?
It became dark.
2. What did the darkness show?
God's presence, especially His holy presence to judge.
3. What did Jesus say while He was on the cross?
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?"
4. What was significant about Jesus' cry?
For the first time in His life, He did not call God "Father."

DISCUSS 

1. How do you respond to Jesus' death for sins? Would your friends say that His death is an important part of your life, or is it something you treat lightly?
2. How do Jesus' "wounds" heal us (1 Pet 2:24)?

DAY 4*Jesus was honored in His death • Mark 15:37–47***READ** 

Mark 15:37–47

EXPLAIN **The truth of Mark 15:37–47**

As people joked, Jesus' death proved He finished His mission. First, the thick curtain in the temple tore in a way that showed it was not done by human hands. This shows that Jesus' death opens up access to God for all who believe in Him (Lev 16:2; Heb 10:19–22). Second, the centurion, a soldier experienced in death and crucifixion, noticed that Jesus' cry was unusual. Normally, crucifixion victims died gradually and were too weak to shout in the end. Realizing that Jesus was not an ordinary man, the centurion became the first human in Mark's gospel to call Jesus the Son of God, confirming the main point of Mark's gospel (1:1). As the Gentile honored Jesus with his words, several women honored Him with their presence (John 19:25–27). They were also faithful followers, and they kept following even to the place where Jesus was buried. After the Gentile and the women, a high-ranking member of the Sanhedrin honored Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus, rolling a stone in front of the tomb to keep thieves out. Thus, despite the people's mockery, Jesus was honored in His death.

ASK 

1. What happened in the temple when Jesus died?
The curtain blocking off the Holy of Holies was ripped in two from top to bottom.
2. What did the centurion notice that was strange about Jesus' death?
Jesus cried out loudly right before dying.
3. What did the centurion call Jesus?
The Son of God.
4. Who stayed with Jesus as He died and was buried?
Faithful women.

DISCUSS 

1. Jesus died on the cross, but His enemies did not defeat Him. How is the cross actually a symbol of victory (1 Cor 15:55–57)?
2. How does the cross provide access to God? Do you value this access? Do you often come to God in prayer on the basis of Jesus' death?

DAY 5

Jesus was with a rich man in His death • Isaiah 53:9

READ

Isaiah 52:13–53:12

EXPLAIN

The truth of Isaiah 53:9

Jesus was humiliated in His death. He was treated like a slave and executed between two violent criminals. The soldiers gambled for His clothes (Mark 15:24), the people mocked Him, and the religious leaders challenged Him to prove that He was God (15:29–32). But there were still those that honored Jesus. One man, Joseph of Arimathea, did so at great personal risk. Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, but he risked both his reputation and his life by asking Pilate for Jesus' body (15:43; Luke 23:51). He was also rich (Matt 27:57), and his burial of Jesus honored Him as the prophesied Messiah. Though Jesus' enemies intended to assign Jesus a grave among "the wicked," Joseph of Arimathea ensured that Jesus was "with a rich man in his death" by donating his own tomb (Matt 27:59–60). Joseph was willing to defile himself twice for Jesus' sake, once by going right into a Gentile dwelling, and again by handling Jesus' dead body. He was willing to be unclean for Jesus, which is fitting, since Jesus was willing to be counted as a sinner for the sake of sinners like Joseph.

ASK

1. How did Joseph of Arimathea honor Jesus?
He buried Jesus at great personal risk. He was also willing to be unclean for Jesus' sake.
2. Where did Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus?
In his own tomb.
3. Where did Jesus' enemies plan to bury Jesus?
Alongside wicked men.
4. How did Joseph's actions fulfill Scripture?
Isaiah prophesied that the Servant would be "with a rich man in his death."

DISCUSS

1. Joseph of Arimathea declared his allegiance to Jesus by asking Pilate for His body. How can you show your allegiance to Jesus today?
2. Read Matthew 10:32–33. What promise does Jesus give to those who acknowledge Him before others? What about those who deny Him? How can you honor Him?

NEXT WEEK

Jesus rises from the dead

Mark 16:1–8

