

Week 8: Mark 15:16-39

CONTEXT

The Big Picture: Spend a few minutes reviewing the big picture of this gospel book from Week One. Who wrote this book? When might it have been written? Who was it written to? Where are the main events located? Where are we in the large story of Scripture?

A quick look back: Spend a few minutes reviewing what you have read so far in this study. What have been some of the main points/stories/ themes/or learnings from the past week or weeks.

Today's passage: As a leader, take a look at where today's passage is located in the book of Mark. Is there anything happening before this passage that is important? Anything that comes right after? Share with your group any observations that might be helpful for them to understand what is happening in this passage.

CONTENT

First, read the passage out loud, or listen to it from an app (e.g. Dwell, Audio Bible).

Next, choose your own adventure **by picking ONE of the following ways to help your group engage with this passage.**

Option A. Guided Bible Study Questions¹: Take one question at a time; answer it and move on; be sure everyone gets a chance to speak/no one dominates)

- 1) How many times does the phrase "King of the Jews" appear in chapter 15 (1-39)? What is Mark trying to say about the events at the cross?
- 2) Read Psalm 22. How does this help you understand Jesus' words from the cross in verse 34?
- 3) How does Psalm 22 end? What is Jesus ultimately claiming for himself?
- 4) Why do you think the events on the cross were necessary?
- 5) What final description of Jesus' identity does Mark provide and where have we seen this title before?
- 6) What do the events at the cross teach us about what it means to follow Jesus?

Option B. Notice/Wonder: Ask everyone to read the passage again quietly on their own. As they read, ask them to make a list like the one below. Remember that what people notice or wonder can just be small, simple things.

What do I NOTICE about this text?

What do I WONDER about?

Once everyone has had the chance to make their list, come together as a group and share your observations, writing them on a board or a place where everyone can see the list as it develops.

Option C. Lectio Divina ("Holy Reading"): Scripture is read four times pausing after each reading:

- 1st to hear the passage.
- 2nd to meditate on the passage in the silence that follows.
- 3rd to respond by speaking aloud a word or phrase from the reading.
- 4th to rest in the presence of God. You may also use this time to pray.

¹ Taken from *One to One Bible Reading* by David Helm, ©2010, Matthias Media

Option D. Creative Engagement: Have participants creatively engage the text through one of the ways below. You may need paper, pens, crayons, and colored pencils.

- Give everyone paper and drawing/coloring supplies. Have everyone to read the passage again on their own. Invite everyone to spend some time illustrating the passage in whatever way they want—concrete, abstract, colors, images, words. When everyone has completed their art, come together and spend time sharing with each other what you drew and why.
- Write a haiku about the passage (a three-line poem w/ 17 syllables divided up into 5/7/5 per line). Example:

*Unconditional,
God's love endures though mine fails,
Everlasting love.
By Roger W. Hancock*

APPLICATION

No matter what method you used for observation, spend some time talking about what this passage might mean now, to us, in the very lives we find ourselves living. Here are some questions to help guide this discussion. Feel free to use several or to just focus on one or two.

- How might you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words? Or, if you had to choose 3 words to help you remember this passage, what would they be?
- Does this passage touch on or speak to anything that you see going on in our larger culture? On this campus? In this dorm? In your own life?
- What does this passage teach you about being a follower of Jesus? What might that mean for you right now in your life?
- What does this passage reveal about who Jesus is and what He came to do in this world and in our lives? How does that intersect with your life right now?
- What does this passage reveal about the heart and character of God? If you were to name an attribute of God based on this passage, what word would you choose?
- If someone asked you later tonight about this passage, what is one truth or question or new learning that you might share?

PRAYER

Close your time together in prayer. Some ideas are:

- Use words/images/themes from the passage to guide your prayer.
- Raise up your “wonderings” from the notice/wonder section to God in prayer
- Address God in prayer using the attributes people shared in the application section.
- Take prayer requests and pray over each other as a group or in small groups
- Say the Lord’s prayer together:
“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”