

Mark 15:21-32 – Jesus Crucified

Imagine the stories which are told of famous peoples' lives. Often we find a lot about their childhood, and how they grew up. We read about their education and young life – what made them the person they became? But the gospels are about Jesus are different. Around half of the teaching is about his final weeks, and especially his death. The death of Jesus is the heart of the good news for sinners. We remember it each week in the Lord's Supper, it is so glorious!

1. Jesus died in great shame

Every human being is made by God, and should be given dignity. Even if they are bad, we should respect them at the time of their death. Jesus was perfect and innocent; but in his death, he was humiliated as much as possible. He was given his cross to carry, but it seems the beating had made him too weak and others carried it. He was taken outside of the holy city (Hebrews 13:12-13). He was given sour wine and bitter gall to drink. His clothes were taken and he was crucified naked. They divided his clothes up themselves. They mocked (made fun of) him with the accusation over the cross (v26), and mocked God. They put him in the middle of thieves, as if he was the worst of them. He was mocked by strangers (v29-30) and mocked the truth he had lovingly taught them. Even the leaders had little dignity, and they came out to mock him; even the criminals dying with him mocked him (v31-32). Jesus was brought lower than any man ever was. We should remember these cruel wounds!

2. Jesus died in the place of others

Why did Jesus suffer all this? There is great confusion about this, but the answer is simple. He died in the place of his people, for their sins, taking the punishment they deserved. We see him hearing dying in guilty Barabbas' place, as the chief of criminals. When the leaders of Israel mocked (v31), they actually spoke a great truth without realising it. Truly, to save us, Jesus could not also save himself. He had to choose: would he face the wrath of his Holy Father, or would he leave us to face it? He did not come down from the cross, because he loved us. Because Adam sinned and ruined this world, and because we have followed Adam's ways, the king could not reign in glory. He had to go to the cross to redeem us. We should have had this shame and suffering, but he did, for our sakes. Hallelujah!

3. Jesus died to fulfil God's plans

Everything that happened was awful, but it was also planned. In particular if we read Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, we will see many prophecies that were fulfilled at Calvary – his clothes, the sour wine (Psalm 69:21), the mocking, the suffering. But both passages also tell us about Jesus' triumph (Isaiah 53:10-, Psalm 22:21-). His sufferings purchased our salvation and the success of his kingdom. If we follow him, we must follow him in sufferings, but must also arrive in glory. His kingdom will overcome; our service to him will be fruitful!