

Mark 15:33-41 – The death of Jesus

Everywhere Christianity has gone in the world, you find a cross. That is strange – the cross was a way for the worst criminals to die! But what Jesus achieved is so great and important; there is no other way to God. And the cross must be our way of life: we must die each day to ourselves to walk with him.

1. God the Father (v33, 38)

There were 3 hours of darkness at mid-day (v33). Light symbolises God's favour to us. It gives order to the world – days, months, years, etc. But now God hid his face and removed his favour. It was a sign of judgment. It is used this way in the prophets, e.g. Joel 2:30-31. The 9th plague in Egypt, before God killed all the first-born and delivered his people (the Passover), was thick darkness. So, God had now come to bring ultimate judgment. The amazing truth was, that judgment was being brought upon Jesus. The good news is that because Jesus suffered God's judgment, we can now go free. He is the innocent and pure Passover lamb who has died to redeem us fully.

In verse 38, God tore down the veil in the temple. This curtain was guarding the most holy place (“the holy of holies”). God had his dwelling there, but was too holy for any to enter. The barrier was needed because of our sins. Now Jesus had died for sins, and it was torn down. God now welcomes repenting sinners to come and fellowship with him. Are you enjoying that fellowship?

2. Jesus himself (v34-37)

Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This is the first verse of Psalm 22. With a loud voice, Jesus called attention to that Psalm, which describes his sufferings. Psalm 22:3 tells us why God turned his back on Jesus – because of his holiness. Now that he came to punish sin, there could be no favour. To be abandoned by God is the worst possible thing. Jesus suffered hell on the cross. In verse 36, still people spoke of Jesus leaving the cross; but he carried on to the end, and finished the work. What good news – Jesus finished it all, and set us free from our sins if we believe in him!

3. The people standing nearby (v35-36)

Possibly their words were confused, or perhaps they were mocking Jesus. It is time that we stopped being ignorant and followed Jesus with understanding!

4. The Roman centurion (soldier, v39)

He saw many executions, but this time he spoke to confirm that Jesus truly was innocent and sent by God. Who do you say Jesus is? That is Mark's challenge.

5. The women who came down from Galilee (v40-41)

These supported Jesus from Galilee. They were faithful to the very end – will you be? They are now remembered through the whole world. It does not matter who you are, God will remember your faithfulness to Jesus.