DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE



TEXT SUMMARY

Our text, Mark 15:16-32, overlaps with last week's. We see again this week the Roman soldiers mocking Jesus before they took him out for crucifixion. In his crucifixion, Jesus' suffering comes to a climax, in a grotesque crescendo of dehumanizing cruelty that was, sadly, all too common in the Roman world.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

The agony of crucifixion wasn't just physical; it was also a public ritual of humiliation. In this text (v. 16-32), Mark shows us several persons and groups mocking Jesus.

- 1. How many times does Mark mention this aspect of Jesus' suffering?
- 2. When Mark quotes the mockers, what is the substance of their ridicule?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

Crucifixion was invented by the Persians but perfected by the Romans, who used it as a tool of political terrorism. Crucifixions were done in public, near a busy street or in some other public place; Rome used the public agony of the victim to warn that this is how trouble-makers end up when they get on the wrong side of Roman justice.

Everyone there that day saw the same thing: a Jewish man crucified by the Romans. But there were many different interpretations of what happened that day.

- 1. How did the mocking passers-by interpret what they saw?
- 2. How would the Roman soldiers have understood what they did to Jesus that day?
- 3. How did the Jewish leaders understand what happened to Iesus?
- 4. How was the crucifixion of Jesus unlike anything that had ever happened before?

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SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

We have not finished reflecting on Scripture until we begin to employ first-person pronouns. Here we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word.

One of Rembrandt's self-portraits displays not only his consummate skill but also his theological understanding.

The great master understood that he himself played a part in inflicting such great suffering on Jesus. (Click <u>here</u> to see the entire image. Detail shown below):



The sermon quotes the old spiritual: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" and points out that each of us must answer, "Yes, I was there." And when we celebrate the Lord's Supper (Communion), we are reenacting our part in Jesus' suffering: we are crushing the wafer – symbol of his body – between our molars.

How can my awareness of my role in Jesus' suffering inform the way I approach...

- ...the way I deal with my own sin?
- ...the way I deal with the offenses of others against me?
- ...the way I deal with my own suffering?