

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#33: Mark 15:33-47: Death and Burial of Jesus

Intro: The Stone Table

I. An Amazing Death (v.33-39)

A. Cosmic Signs

- Darkness was over the land from 6th-9th hour (noon-3PM)
- Other Gospels tell of earthquakes as well
- All of creation groaned at the death of Jesus!

B. Final Words

- Jesus quotes from Psalm 22 which includes many details of Jesus' death
 - "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?" (v.1)
 - "All who see me mock me; 'He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him.'" (v.7-8)
 - "my strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth" (v.15)
 - "A company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet" (v.16)
 - "I can count all my bones" (v.17)
 - "they divide my garments among them, for my clothing they cast lots" (v.18)
- Why does Jesus cry that he has been "forsaken"?

C. Tearing of the Temple Veil

- The Temple of Israel had a huge curtain/veil blocking people from the Holy of Holies
- Tearing of the veil was a theological picture that access to God had now been achieved through the death of Christ

****Key point:** Jesus' death was unlike any other; it was the most important death in the history of the world

II. A Variety of Reactions (v.35-41)

A. The Bystanders: *Curiosity*

- Those standing there wondered if Jesus was calling "Elijah"
- There was a Jewish tradition that Elijah would help the innocent in times of need

B. The Centurion: *Belief*

- A centurion was a Roman soldier who typically hated Jews and was loyal to Rome
- But this Roman soldier appears to convert: "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (v.39)
- ****The irony:** Jesus' own people rejected him, but a pagan gentile accepts him!

C. The Women: *Sorrow*

- Mark reminds us that Jesus had a tremendous following from women
- These women are present at the crucifixion (unlike the disciples), and will prove to be Jesus's loyalist followers. While the disciples flee, the women stay!
- Other Gospels tell us that the women were mourning and weeping for Jesus

****Key Point:** You can't predict who will believe. Some seem like they should believe but don't; and some seem like they will never believe but do. What's your response to the death of Jesus?

III. An Ordinary Burial (v.16-32)

A. Joseph of Arimathea

- Joseph was a quiet but loyal follower of Jesus
- He is wealthy and owns his own tomb which had not yet been used

B. The Tomb

- Jesus was buried in a very ordinary, normal manner
- Bodies would be laid in a rock tomb until it decayed and then the bones would be put in a stone box (ossuary)
- The stone in front of the tomb kept out robbers and wild animals

C. Linen Shroud

- It was also ordinary for bodies to be wrapped in linen for burial
- What do we make of the Shroud of Turin?

D. Women Knew Where He was Buried

- It's clear the location of the tomb was public knowledge (women knew it, Jews knew it, Roman guards knew it)
- Why does this matter? If someone tried to fake the resurrection, all these groups had to do was show them the body still lying in the tomb!

****Key Applications:**

- We have more evidence about the details of Jesus death and burial than nearly any other ancient figure
- Jesus was *really* dead; and just like everyone else he was laid in a real tomb

Discussion Groups

1. What surprises you about the many connections between Psalm 22 and the death of Jesus? Does any particular feature stand out? How does this encourage your faith?
2. The women play a big part in the ministry of Jesus, and an extra big part in his final days. How does that encourage and inspire you as a woman?
3. What if the story of Jesus had ended with his death and there was no chapter 16 of Mark? Reflect together on the implications of a Jesus that stayed in the grave.