

## Discussion Notes

Mark 15.1-20

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Preamble from earlier in Mark

- A dubious arrest in the night. The politics have gotten in the way. They know they have to arrest Jesus to make sure there is no trouble.
- The trial was not a genuine trial. This was a grand jury – they are just looking for evidence.
- Israel's leadership does not accept false testimony. They ask Jesus straight out, are you the Messiah. Jesus responds truthfully. It is all the evidence they need.
- For the first time Jesus publically declares he is the Messiah. This is an act of insurrection. Jesus doesn't stop there – he makes Godly claims.
- The Daniel and Psalm references from Jesus place him on God's side and the Council as God's enemies.
- They thought they were looking for evidence against Jesus, in God's eyes this trial is the final evidence against them.

Mark 15.1-4

- Not only are they armed with Jesus' admission about being a Messianic king, he's also committed blasphemy. Rome and Jerusalem have aligned interests at this point and so Jesus is now bound, a formal statement that he is a formal enemy of Israel and Rome.
- Pilate can't ignore what is happening. He is asking questions about Israel's Kingship. Affirms that he is, but not what Pilate might think of Kingship.
- The most astonishing moment is that Jesus says nothing. Jesus doesn't answer the false accusations.
- Pilate is amazed. So should we be. This is no stoic resignation, this is Jesus' choosing God's way. Jesus is no victim here. This is a demonstration of justice and love.

Mark 15.5-15

- Why so much space put in this episode? It puts in contrast Israel's choice. Choose Jesus, or themselves. They can have a murderous way or Jesus' way.
- Pilate knows Jesus is no threat but he gets caught up in the situation.
- Why do the crowds change their minds and so quickly from welcoming Jesus into the city and now wanting him crucified? It was Jesus' words about what it means to follow him (cross-bearing) and the people will choose Israel's leadership over him, even though they take advantage of the people daily.
- In rejecting Jesus way of being King, the people choose a suffering (just a few decades later) the likes of which Jerusalem had never seen.

Mark 15.16-20

- The giver of life and healer of all diseases becomes the plaything of evil.
- The guards who torture Jesus are likely auxiliary troops, not Roman but drawn from other nations around Israel. They likely take particular delight in mocking and harming this “Jewish king”.

### **Two Points to take away**

- No one comes out looking good in the story other than Jesus. However, we can't caricature these people. Some people will abandon Jesus, even if we don't know their reasons. Maybe we don't like Jesus vision of the kingdom, or his stance on certain issues. Whatever it is, when it happens, don't be surprised. Peter is the best of us and look how he does.
- **But look at Jesus – he does not betray himself (God) or God's character. He will do for us what we could not do for ourselves. This is how much he loves us.**

### **Discussion Questions**

- What strikes you about this passage and the teaching this week?
- Why is it so easy to reject Jesus and his way, rather than to accept and follow him?
- What are you learning as we come to the close of Mark? What grander story are you grasping as we come to the end? What major lessons, encouragements or challenges?