

Chapter 36

Mark 15:33-39

The Story so Far

The reason the Kingdom had arrived was because the King was now here. Jesus demonstrated His authority as God's King through His miracles. He showed God's rule over Satan, sickness, sin and creation. Jesus taught in parables. These are challenging stories that communicate an important truth about the Kingdom of God. Jesus tells various parables explaining that His Kingdom is here and people should respond positively to it. Those who do not respond positively to God's King remain under His judgement. Jesus was taken by His own people and put on trial for claiming to be God. The religious leaders wanted Him put to death, but Pilate the Roman Governor found Him innocent. However, in the end he handed Jesus over to be crucified. Jesus the innocent King died in the place of guilty rebellious people.

Objectives

- To understand the significance of Jesus' death – He receives our punishment and provides a new relationship with God
- To introduce the idea of conversion with the Roman soldier

Connections

- Jesus is the perfect sacrifice that provides a new and lasting relationship with God. This was promised in the new covenant.

Summary

Jesus is the innocent substitute who is punished by His Father instead of guilty rebellious people. Through His death Jesus provides a new relationship with God, which is available to everyone.

The Death of God's King



What proof is there that the death of Jesus is not just like any other death? Mark shows us the significance of Jesus' death by mentioning some important events at the time of His death.

Jesus receives our punishment (Mark 15:33-34)

Mark shows us this in two ways:

1. Darkness

Jesus is crucified at 9:00a.m, the time of the morning sacrifice. At 12:00noon there is complete darkness for three hours, until 3:00p.m, the time of the evening sacrifice.

Before God punished the Egyptians with the 10th plague of death, He sent darkness. Darkness symbolises God's punishment and judgement. During the three hours of darkness, God the Father punishes His Son Jesus, instead of guilty rebellious people. The timing of Jesus' death shows us that He is like the Passover Lamb receiving God's judgement in the place of His people.

2. Forsaken

After the three hours of darkness Jesus cries out, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*". There is a loss of relationship

between Jesus and His Father. God the Father broke His relationship with His Son during those three hours of darkness.

A broken relationship is the consequence of disobeying God. Jesus never disobeyed God and yet when He is dying He experiences a broken relationship with God. Jesus is taking the consequence for sin instead of guilty rebellious people like you and I. Jesus receives the punishment of a broken relationship with God so that we can have the broken relationship with God restored.

Jesus provides a new relationship with God (Mark 15:38)

One of the great themes of the Bible is God living with His people. The Bible begins with God living with His people in a perfect relationship in a garden. But Adam rebelled in the Garden of Eden and human beings have not lived in a perfect relationship with God since. However, God did not stop trying to live with human beings. In the tabernacle and temple we saw how He came to live in relationship with His people through priests and sacrifices. But it was not perfect; God lived with His people, but He was still separate from them. In the temple a curtain separated God and the people.

But when Jesus dies the curtain is torn in two from top to bottom, which means that only God could have torn it. Jesus removes the barrier between God and us. This is the good news – we can have a relationship with God because of Jesus' death. God is angry with us for disobeying His rules, and because He is a good God He must punish us. But Jesus dies to take the punishment for us, so that we can be accepted by this holy God. And this is God's love for us – God provides a sacrifice to turn aside His own anger; and it's not an animal He provides - it's the sacrifice of His own Son. Jesus is re-establishing God's Kingdom by providing a way for people to live in God's presence, under His rule and blessing.

The perfect sacrifice

Therefore the Old Testament way of approaching God is finished. Jesus has now provided a new way to approach God. No longer through animal sacrifices and no longer through a human priest who is not perfect. Jesus has put an end to the Old Testament way of receiving God's forgiveness. There is now a new way – forgiveness now comes through the death of Jesus. God will never

remember sin again. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice promised in the new covenant.

A Roman soldier becomes a Christian (Mark 15:37, 39)

For a Roman soldier to declare a crucified Jew to be the “Son of God” is quite amazing. For a Roman soldier, crucifixion was not even to be mentioned from his lips. The Romans ruled over the Jewish people and confessed Caesar to be god, no one else. This man has watched Jesus on trial. He has watched Him receive a beating from other soldiers and he has watched Him be crucified. And he knows there is something different about Jesus. For example, to shout with a loud cry after hours of being on a cross is impossible – yet Jesus does. People who were crucified eventually died of suffocation. Jesus does not – He gives up His breath. This Roman soldier risks his own life by denying Caesar and declaring Jesus to be the Son of God.

Jesus is the innocent substitute who is punished by His Father instead of guilty rebellious people. Through His death Jesus provides a new relationship with God, which is available to everyone.



Think it through & discuss

1. What does the darkness symbolise?
2. How do we know Jesus is punished instead of us?
3. What is the significance of the torn temple curtain?
4. What is the connection with the temple curtain and God's Kingdom?
5. How do we know the Roman soldier became a Christian?