

THE SURPRISING JESUS

Studies in the Book of Mark

~Week Eighteen~

“Despised and Rejected”

Mark 14:53-15:15



Life Groups

A reminder... This weekly Bible study is connected to the Sunday sermons at UPC. It includes a “Look Back” section to help you reflect on Sunday’s sermon, and a “Look Up” section to take you through the NEXT passage in the book of Mark. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at www.upc-orlando.com.

LOOK BACK – Mark 14:32-52

When we recite the Apostles’ Creed, we affirm among other things our belief that Jesus Christ “descended into hell.” This does not mean we believe that he literally went to hell following his death. What we believe is that he suffered the wrath of God and the punishment due our sins. This suffering began in earnest in the Garden of Gethsemane, and was the subject of Sunday’s sermon.

a) What details of Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane stand out to you the most (vss. 32-42)?

b) Why did Jesus take Peter, James, and John with him into the garden (vss. 33-34)?

c) What did Jesus mean when he prayed, “Take this cup from me” (vs. 36)? (Hint: See Isaiah 51:17-22, Jeremiah 25:15, Mark 10:38)

d) What were the sources of Jesus’ deep sorrow in Gethsemane (vss. 33-34)?

e) What do you think you would have done if you had been with Jesus when he was arrested (vss. 43-52)?

LOOK UP – Mark 14:53-15:15

You can probably think of modern-day examples of miscarriages of justice. But none is as awful as the “trial” of Jesus of Nazareth. There were really two trials: one before the Jewish religious authorities (partially recounted here in Mark 14:53-65 and 15:1) and the other before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate (Mark 15:2-15). Neither trial followed the rules of justice in place at the time.

Mark 14:53-65 – The Sanhedrin Tries Jesus

a) Why do you suppose Peter followed Jesus “at a distance” following his arrest (14:54)?

b) As you read through this section (14:53-65), what strikes you about Jesus’ behavior before the religious authorities?

c) What misunderstandings and distortions of Jesus’ teachings do you notice on the part of the Sanhedrin (14:57-64)?

d) What explains the gross mistreatment of Jesus in 14:65?

Mark 14:66-72 – Peter Denies Jesus

a) Why did Peter betray his friendship with Jesus, not once but three times (14:66-71)?

b) What striking detail does Luke give us that adds to the pathos of Peter’s denials (Luke 22:61)?

c) Get inside Peter for a moment. What was he feeling during and after his denials of Jesus (14:68-72)?

Mark 15:1-15 – Pilate Tries Jesus

a) What was the official charge against Jesus brought to Pilate by the Jewish religious authorities (15:1-2)?

b) What did Pontius Pilate find amazing about Jesus during his “trial” (15:5)?

c) Why was this Roman trial a miscarriage of justice (15:14; see also John 18:38)?

LOOK IN – Reflect

a) Do you resemble Peter in some ways (14:66-72)? Do you sometimes follow Jesus “at a distance” (14:54)? Reflect for a few moments on times or situations in which you have not wanted to be identified with Jesus Christ.

d) How does the release of Barabbas illustrate the gospel for you (15:6-15)?

LOOK OUT – Apply

According to Christian theology, Jesus serves as our perfect Substitute before the Father in two ways. First, because of his “active obedience” toward the law of God throughout his lifetime, Jesus’ righteousness takes the place of our lawbreaking and disobedience. Second, because of his “passive obedience” during his times of suffering and death, Jesus experienced God’s wrath and paid the penalty we should have paid. Both Jesus’ active and passive obedience become ours by faith. Have you transferred your trust from yourself to Jesus? Do you believe that he lived, suffered, and died *for you*? If you’ve never done it before, ask God right now to forgive your sins and receive you as his child. “He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9). That’s a promise!