

THE SURPRISING JESUS

Studies in the Book of Mark

~Week Nineteen~

“Post Mortem”

Mark 15:40-47



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 15:16-39

In the space of just two dozen verses, Mark records *the* pivotal event of human history: the death of Jesus on the cross. Theologian Robert Reymond writes, “Christ’s cross work is sacred ground. It is the church’s ‘holy of holies.’”¹ As we gaze at the cross, says John Murray, “we are spectators of a wonder the praise and glory of which eternity will not exhaust.”²

a) What strikes you most about Jesus’ behavior as described in this section (vss. 16-39)?

b) One of the most precious teachings of Christianity is that Jesus Christ served as our Substitute. In what specific ways do you see him taking our place in these verses (vss. 16-39)?

c) Simon of Cyrene (vs. 21) is an interesting figure. Why do you think three of the four gospel writers – Matthew, Mark, and Luke – tell about this man who was forced to carry Jesus’ cross for him?

d) Mark tells us only about one person who seemed to rightly understand, at least partially, the meaning of the cross. Who was that person?

¹ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 623.

² John Murray, *Redemption – Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 77.

e) What do Jesus' words in vs. 34 ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") mean to you?

f) What does the tearing of the temple curtain (vs. 38) mean to you?

LOOK UP – Mark 15:40-47

While the previous section of Mark's gospel showed that Jesus was despised and rejected by almost everyone during his death, this section touchingly reveals that there were a handful of the faithful who loved Jesus deeply and wanted to care for his body following his death.

a) Mark tells us about some of the many women who followed Jesus and, after his death, cared for his body (vss. 40-41, 47). What strikes you about the favorable position Mark gives women in his book?

b) All four gospel writers feature Joseph of Arimathea in their records. After you read what Mark says about Joseph (vss. 43-46), check out Matthew 27:57-60, Luke 23:50-53, and John 19:38-42. What facts do you find most interesting about this man?

c) Who accompanied Joseph on his mission to wrap Jesus' body in linen and place it in the tomb? (Hint: See John 19:39-40) In light of what we know of this person from John 3:1-15, does it surprise you that he would assist in caring for Jesus' dead body?

d) Death by crucifixion was ordinarily long and excruciating. Mark indicates (vs. 44) that Jesus died more quickly than other victims of this torture normally did. Do you see any significance to this? (Hint: See John 10:17-18)

e) Mark does not tell us this, but Matthew does . . . into whose tomb was Jesus' body placed (Matthew 27:60)?

- f) Mark seems diligent to give many details about the place Jesus was buried, the eyewitnesses who saw his dead body placed in the tomb, etc. (vss. 46-47) Why do you suppose this is so?

LOOK IN – Reflect

- a) What risks did Joseph of Arimathea take in order to care for Jesus' dead body (vss. 43-46)? What risks have you taken in order to be a follower of Jesus?

- b) Do you think anyone in this section of Mark's gospel really expected Jesus would rise again from the grave? Why or why not?

LOOK OUT – Apply

It is obvious that Joseph of Arimathea and the women named in this section loved Jesus very much. Perhaps they could have done more to show him their love during his lifetime, but at least they went to great lengths to show love and appreciation for him after he died.

Perhaps now is the time to ask yourself, "Do I love Jesus?" To answer that question, consider what the apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:3 – "This is love for God: to obey his commands." While feelings are important, love for Jesus does not consist merely in feelings of affection for him. It is demonstrated by taking seriously his commands and seeking to obey them. How earnestly are you striving to conform your life to the teachings and commands of Scripture? What areas of disobedience need a fresh application of the gospel?