**BCM Bible Study – Nov. 17/18, 2021**

**Mark 14:53-15:32**

The reality which Jesus has predicted of his suffering and the unfairness which he would endure are now coming to be realized in this passage. This passage isn’t necessarily hopeful and can be emotionally challenging to read, but is also essential to our faith!

**Read Mark 14:53-65**

“A hearing in the middle of the night suggests the kangaroo justice of a lynch mob dressed in hooded sheets, but it also shows that these leaders are under time constraints.” (Garland)

* The common understanding for many years was that Jewish law was violated by this trial and its circumstances, yet an increasing number of scholars have come to offer up some explanation for this. (See notes for more explanation)
* Mark clearly wrote verse 55 with a pointed implication. What might Mark be suggesting here?

**Read Deuteronomy 19:15-21**

* How does the court procedure described here compare to what occurs to Jesus?

Notably, Jesus remains silent throughout this process (v.61). Yet, he was perfectly innocent. Why would Jesus choose to remain quiet in this moment as all of these false accusations are made?

* **Read Isaiah 53:7-12**
* As we think about the way that we often might try to defend ourselves when we sin with excuses, even though we are guilty, what can we learn from Jesus’ response in this situation?
	+ Does Jesus’ humility and silent acceptance serve to convict you? How so?

Even though he does it mockingly, the high priest here acknowledges the truth which Mark has been building up to and waiting for - Jesus is both the Messiah AND the Son of God!

* None of the disciples, nor anyone who knew Jesus or loved him had acknowledged both of these points yet. How might this serve as a warning for us as Christians now?
* 1) Jesus’ suffering fulfills prophecy and shows he is who he says he is. 2) Jesus’ suffering shows us the full extent of his love and grace. 3) Jesus’ suffering encourages us when we go through trials. Which of these three is most meaningful to you and why?
	+ How revolutionary is the suffering of our Lord here as compared to other religions?

**Read Mark 14:66-72**

These verses should be understood as happening concurrently with Jesus’ trial. While his self-proclaimed Lord is on trial, Peter stands below warming himself and trying to become cozy.

* The man who hours earlier said “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you,” (Mark 14:31) has his first chance to identify with Jesus, but immediately denies him.
	+ Why do you think Peter denied knowing Jesus here? What was his fear or motivation for doing this?
* Peter then receives not one, but two chances to correct his mistake. How does Peter pale in comparison to Jesus as he fails under these minor pressures?
	+ *Peter’s third response is one that curses and claims no connection or knowledge of Jesus. Oh, how far he has fallen! Jesus responded honestly and correctly, yet Peter seems concerned only about his own wellbeing.*
* **Read Luke 22:61** This verse further establishes the moment Peter breaks as Jesus is being escorted away after his trial with the Sanhedrin, already bloody and bruised. Based upon the journey and prominence that we see Peter in later, this characterizes a moment of true repentance at his rock bottom.
	+ How can we ensure that our repentance is true, not just fueled by emotions or the moment?
	+ Peter crumbled under his persecution after some big talk. What can we do to make sure that we don’t deny our Lord just as he did?

**Read Mark 15:1-20**

The suffering which Jesus foretold to his disciples has begun to be realized here, as he is sentenced to crucifixion and beaten mercilessly. Some mockingly acknowledge Jesus’ high place, yet this is not the treatment that he is deserving of.

* Once again, Jesus chooses to remain silent as opposed to trying to rightfully defend himself. How is Jesus’ behavior as true King contrasted with the brutality and power that most expected from rulers and kings at this point?
	+ Where do you find yourself slipping into using similar brutality and power? Where are you more likely to stand up aggressively than to sit and accept?
	+ How can the Church and Christians seek to cultivate a more peaceful posture as opposed to one marked by this cultural aggressiveness?
* Pilate was a man concerned primarily with his social standing and position in life, as his morality here would show. Where have you noticed social standing and others’ views affecting how you live your life?
	+ This is a challenge for all of us. What steps can you take to help lead an authentically Christian life, not swayed by the views of others?
* The religious leaders were so decidedly against Jesus that they played part in releasing Barabbas, a proven murderer over the innocent one. What does this reveal about their interest and involvement in all these trials?

**Read Mark 15:21-32**

Mark’s description of the events here is brief and to the point, as the initial audience would have great awareness of crucifixion and its woes, so his focus was instead on the circumstances surrounding Jesus’ crucifixion.

* Which aspect of this account stands out the most to you and why?

It was normal for those being crucified to carry their own crosses to their destination, yet Jesus needed help from a man named Simon perhaps due to the extreme pain/weakened state that he was in.

* **Read Romans 16:13** Many scholars believe that this is the same Rufus as Simon’s son.
* Why do you think that after helping to carry Jesus’ cross Simon’s family came to faith? What might have been observed in that shameful walk?
* “The cross reveals the love of God as nothing else in the universe could! … We must never fall into the delusion of thinking that the suffering was not as great for him because of the ontological fact that he was God. He did it as a man, among men, in total (and exemplary) dependence upon the Father.” (Hughes)
* Have you ever thought about the extraordinary pain that Jesus, being fully man, must have endured throughout this process?
	+ How does thinking about that now impact the way that you view Jesus?

As Jesus is there, nailed to the cross, many walk past taunting and mocking him suggesting that he has been proven to have no supernatural ability or power.

* These points of contention ultimately acknowledge the truth of who Jesus is and what he does. What might this suggest about the way that people view Jesus (now or then)?
* Jesus’ characterization as the “humble, suffering servant” is nearly complete now with this. How does this contrast with the view of the Messiah that the Jews had? How does this continue to contrast with how we view strong leadership today?

**Extra Notes**

* One of the primary motivators for the Jewish leaders here is speed, as Akin notes: “These violations are not without their explanations. Pastor Sam Storms has noted that “contrary to the opinion of some, rabbinic law actually insists that the execution of a rebellious teacher take place on one of the three primary feast days to serve as a more visible example and deterrent to the people” … If Jesus was arrested on Thursday night, things had to move swiftly if He was to be killed and buried by dusk on Friday, before the start of the Sabbath.”
	+ Many would still disagree with this or offer up some counter arguments to it. Perhaps the Jewish trial had some merits to it, yet the leaders were clear in their motivations.
* In our culture, the disgrace of being spit upon is understood, yet Deuteronomy 25:9 and Numbers 12:14 explain this even more within this cultural context.