**BCM Bible Study – Dec. 1/2, 2021**

**Mark 15:33-16:8**

**15:33-15:41**

* Why might Mark have put such a large emphasis on the three hours of darkness that occurred prior to Jesus’ death?
* Jesus cries out to God in this moment of extraordinary distress with Scripture. **Read Psalm 22:1-5, 27-31**
	+ Jesus has been notably silent throughout the entire process leading up to and during his crucifixion. What is noteworthy about the way that Jesus cries out with Scripture?
	+ What does this reveal about the way that Jesus had trained himself as a human being to love Scripture?
	+ When we hear this passage referenced we often think of the first half and its pain. Yet, how do v.27-31 impact your understanding of Jesus pointing to this Psalm?
* How does the way that Jesus exceeds human capability here and chooses this as the end of his life impact your understanding of the crucifixion? How does it impact your view of Jesus?
* Once again, we witness another enemy of the cross acknowledge the glory of Jesus as truly being the son of God. What might this soldier have observed that would so quickly change his tone from mocking to awe?

**15:42-47**

* **Read John 19:31-34** for some more context upon this situation.
* Both the reactions of the soldiers and Pilate indicated that death after six hours on a cross was impressively short. How does the duality of pain and rejoicing in Jesus’ life prepare us for the life of a long-term Christian?
* Something which could be lost on us today is the value of all that is done to honor Jesus in his death and bring glory to him at this moment. What can we do to not just glaze over all that Jesus’ followers did to glorify him in those moments?

**16:1-8**

* They were so concerned with serving their Lord, that they thought about the moving of the massive stone only while already on the way there. Have you ever experienced a moment of such energized devotion to God?
* An angel greets them and gives glory to Jesus in the tomb as well as telling them where to find Jesus. **Read Mark 14:28** for a reminder of the connection here.
	+ What significance is there in Jesus meeting them in Galilee as opposed to somewhere else?
	+ These women would not have been accepted for reliable testimony within Jewish culture. How does this continue to show the revolutionary (and reliable) nature of Christianity?
* In some way, this book ends in a very abrupt fashion that leaves us wanting more. Why do you think that Mark might have ended this book with the women there, fearful and quiet?
* **Read Mark 1:1** How does Mark’s introduction help you to understand his conclusion?

Let us remember that the original audience of this book was a struggling, persecuted church. How would this telling of the Gospel be an encouragement to a discouraged group of believers?

* The women were initially fearful yet ultimately did go on to tell the other disciples as asked. How does this serve to encourage you in those moments where you are intimidated or apprehensive?
* Has this study of Mark encouraged your faith? If so, how?

Share any other reflections upon the semester and how God has worked through Mark to grow and impact your faith. Are there any ways that you need to respond to those truths now? What about ways to continue to respond over the winter break?

**Extra Notes**

* There has been much debate over Mark 16:9-20 and whether or not it should be included in someone’s study of the book. One of the biggest groups in favor of its inclusion are those who feel that there is not enough conclusion with verses 1-8. However, the earliest Greek manuscripts do not include it, nor do the early church leaders seem to acknowledge it.
	+ This should not lead anyone to discomfort with their Bibles however. The other Gospels (as well as our faith today) should make it readily apparent that the women eventually spoke and that Jesus did in fact ascend.
	+ Instead, this is about textual accuracy and approaching our Biblical interpretations with care.
* Perhaps they are doing it out of mocking, perhaps out of mishearing, but those present for his death heard him crying for Elijah.
	+ Elijah was considered the patron saint for those suffering, so perhaps this helped that.
	+ Ultimately, we know that Elijah’s coming before Jesus again has been fulfilled through John the Baptist.
* One thing we need to make sure to acknowledge is the significance of the temple veil’s tearing .This was originally meant to only allow for the High Priest to enter into proximity with God, yet Jesus as our Great High Priest allows this to occur for all of us!
	+ In this way, Jesus does tear down the temple and rebuild it!
	+ The telling of Jesus’ death in Matthew 27 also mentions several resurrections occurring at the same time as Jesus’ death further showing his power!
* “Mark’s ending, therefore, reveals that the “successful conclusion of the story cannot be “dependent upon human performance.”” (Garland)