Mark 15:1-15  What Kind of King?
The Sanhedrin have no authority to legally execute Jesus without the cooperation of Rome, and so early in the morning after the trial at the Priest’s house, the bind Jesus and take Him to the governor Pilate. The Jewish leaders try to persuade Pilate that Jesus must die for His claim to be the king of the Jews and therefore a threat to the empire (Luke 23:2). But Pilate comes to a different conclusion (v10) this trial is all about envy! And so he tries to release Jesus using a festival tradition whereby the people can choose a criminal to set free. But the crowd (under the influence of their leaders) choose Barabbas instead. Pilate fails to do the right thing because he is more worried about pleasing the crowd than upholding justice (v15).

Summary: Jesus is a king like no other – His kingdom is not of this world, but of the next (John 18:36) and therefore the choice about what to do with Him is the choice between this world and the world to come.

Q The Sanhedrin bring Jesus to Pilate. Who was he? Read Luke 23:2 and John 19:12. How do they try to persuade Pilate to pass the death sentence on Jesus?

Q Why do you think Jesus says nothing in v3-5? (Consider Isaiah 53:6-7).


Q Why does Pilate eventually give in to their demands? (see v15) Have you ever fallen victim to peer pressure like this?

Q There are many things that can influence our choice about what we do with Jesus. What influences the various groups and individuals to reject Him in this passage?

Mark 15:16-32  Mocked
This passage of Mark’s gospel charts His the path from Jesus’s trial to the cross. Jesus was arrested sometime after midnight in the garden, tried by the Sanhedrin and then marched to Pilate first thing in the morning. By 9am He has been nailed to the cross!

As Jesus leaves Pilate He is first of all mocked and teased by the whole cohort of Soldiers at the Praetorium who dress him up as a pantomime king. Pilate uses the opportunity to display to the Jews what Rome thinks of Jewish kings! And the crowds gathered around the cross still carry on the tirade of abuse whilst he hangs there. Even the criminals crucified with Him join in! Here hangs the creator of the Universe, despised and rejected by all around Him.

Summary: Jesus knows what is it to be rejected and mocked. But he silently endures it all with no resistance, for the joy set before Him! This is what it cost the Son of God to save sinner like us.
Q When we think about the crucifixion, we naturally think about the physical suffering, but what is the repeated emphasis in Mark’s gospel?

Q Why did Jesus endure all of this when He could have so easily avoided it? (see Matthew 26:53)

Q Read Isaiah 53:10-12. Why did God the Father not step in? And how is this linked with the above?

Q Read 1 Peter 2:19-24. How is what Jesus endured a comfort and an encouragement to us?

Mark 15:33-41 Finished!
This is Mark’s account of Jesus’ death, and he records for us a number of deeply symbolic features: Darkness falls over the land for 3 hours in the middle of the day – a symbol of the Judgement of God falling on sin.
Jesus cries out, quoting the opening line of Psalm 22 which speaks of feeling completely abandoned by God.
The curtain in the temple, symbolic of the necessary separation of sinful people from the presence of their Holy God, is torn in two from top to bottom.
And the a Roman Centurion, standing by the cross utters the words, “Surely this was the Son of God”
By highlighting these features of Jesus death, Mark is showing us what the death of Christ has achieved for His people.

Summary: On the cross, Jesus bore the judgment that we deserve and opened the way for us to come to God by ransoming us from sin.

Q Read v33. The first thing that Mark draws our attention to is the 3 hours of darkness. Has this ever happened in the Bible before? Take a look at Amos 8:4-9 – What is the meaning of the darkness?

Q Read v34. The next thing Mark mentions is Jesus crying out the first line from Psalm 22. Why does Jesus do this? How is it connected to the darkness?

Q The third thing Mark mentions is the curtain at the temple in v38. What happens and why is this so significant?

Q Read v39. The centurion standing by the foot of the cross gives his assessment of Jesus. What is it and why is this so surprising?
1 Peter 2:4-10 God’s people are a temple!

Peter continues his letter addressing Christians as foreigners living in a world that isn’t their true home. This time he tells us those who trust in Jesus are God’s new temple, with a new identity and a message to proclaim. There are plenty of connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and we’ll end up discussing why they matter for Christians today as we talk about the questions below.

Note. My preference is that groups spend the bulk of their time on the last question.

Q What was the OT Temple for? Think of the different types of sacrifices and their functions in Leviticus, for example.

Q Where is God’s temple now? Read 1 Corinthians 3:16, Romans 8:9, and return to read 1 Peter 2:4-5

Q How can God possibly build his church when life is difficult for His people?

Q Chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation? Doesn’t that mean I’m amazing?

Q What would others see in your life that proclaim Jesus and make him famous? Think about practical examples of what your spouse, close friends, children, neighbours, fellow Christians can see in your life that glorifies God.