



Easter

SAVES

Jesus' death bridges the gap between God and humanity caused by our sin.

MARK 15:27-39

God called Abraham to go to Mount Moriah to offer up his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God. Abraham obeyed. He and Isaac traveled to that mountain. They climbed to the top. Abraham built an altar of stone. He put wood on the altar for the burnt offering. Then Abraham tied up his son and laid him on top of the wood. Obeying God and full of faith, he raised his arm to kill his only son as a sacrifice to God. But God stopped the arm of Abraham. God provided a different sacrifice.

Centuries later another sacrifice was offered nearby at a place called Golgotha. God kept His promise to provide the sacrifice. It was Jesus, God's only Son. This time God did not stop the arms that killed Jesus. God's only Son became the sacrifice to bridge the gap between God and people, the gap caused by our sin. It is only in the blood of Jesus that people can find forgiveness for their sins. It is only through the willing sacrifice of God's only Son on the cross a person can have eternal life.

MARK 15:27-39

27 They also put two robbers on crosses beside Jesus, one on the right, and the other on the left. **[28** And the Scripture came true that says, “**They put him with criminals.**”] **29** People walked by and insulted Jesus and shook their heads, saying, “**You said you could destroy** **30** the Temple and build it again in three days. **30** So save yourself! Come down from that cross!” **31** The leading priests and the teachers of the law were also making fun of Jesus. They said to each other, “He saved other people, but he can’t save himself. **32** If he is really the Christ, the king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross. When we see this, we will believe in him.” The robbers who were being crucified beside Jesus also **insulted him.** **33** At noon the whole country became dark, and the darkness lasted for **three hours.** **34** At three o’clock Jesus cried in a loud voice “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani.” This means, “My God, my God, **why have you rejected me?**” **35** When some of the people standing there heard this, they said, “Listen! He is calling Elijah.” **36** Someone there ran and got a sponge, filled it with vinegar, tied it to a stick, and gave it to Jesus to drink. He said, “We want to see if Elijah will come to take him down from the cross.” **37** Then Jesus cried in a **loud voice and died.** **38** The curtain in the Temple was torn into two pieces, **from the top to the bottom.** **39** When the army officer who was standing in front of the cross saw what happened when Jesus died, he said, “This man really was **the Son of God!**” **1**

- a. The Old Testament quote is from Isaiah 53:12.
- b. What Jesus said is in John 2:19. The people misquoted what Jesus said in Mark 14:58.
- c. 1 Peter 2:23-24; He was insulted.
- d. John 3:19-20; people’s dark sins separates them from the light.
- e. 2 Corinthians 5:21, sin is the only reason God turned His head. It was not Jesus’ sin but our sin Jesus took on. Jesus was quoting Psalm 22:1.
- f. John 19:30; a shout of victory. Jesus’ mission was finished.
- g. The curtain in the temple separated the Holy place from the Most Holy Place. The tearing of the curtain showed there is now no more separation from the presence of God.
- h. The army officer came to believe what the religious leaders would not believe.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What is so important about the death of Jesus for Christians?
2. Who was crucified with Jesus? What is important about this?
3. What did the people say as they stood looking at Jesus on the cross?
4. What was the challenge the teachers of the law gave to Jesus as He hung on the cross? Why did Jesus ignore their challenge?
5. Why did God abandon Jesus while He was on the cross?
6. What would your life be like if Jesus did not die on the cross?
7. How long did the darkness cover the land? What did it mean that everything was dark?
8. How could this terrible event become “good news”?
9. What did the army officer say?
10. What did Jesus do for everyone with His death on the cross?

BIBLE SKILL: *Read Psalm 22. Look in Psalm 22 for prophecies that came true in the death of Jesus. See if you can find at least ten prophecies about Jesus’ crucifixion.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

IN MY CONTEXT

Jesus was willing to die in our place.

While Jesus was on the cross, people mocked Him and challenged Him to prove Himself. Jesus ignored them so He could give us salvation.

When Jesus went to the cross, He faced God's anger against sin because He took our sin on Himself.

Because Jesus died for our sin, all who believe in Him can have a relationship with the Father.

Discuss as a group why it was necessary for Jesus to die in our place. Take time to thank Him for dying in our place.

Why do people need proof that Jesus is who He said He is? What can you do to convince your friends that Jesus is the Savior of the world?

List the names of friends who need to know that Jesus died for them. How can you share with one of your friends about Jesus?

MEMORY VERSE

When the army officer who was standing in front of the cross saw what happened when Jesus died, he said, "This man really was the Son of God!" - Mark 15:39

DAY ONE

Read Mark 15:27, looking for details about the two crucified with Jesus.

Jesus was on the cross. There was a sign that said “King of the Jews” above Him. There were two people who had broken the law on crosses beside Jesus, one to the right and the other on the left. It was an emotional picture. A few days earlier, James and John had asked Jesus if one could sit on His right hand and the other His left. They had thought about a kingdom not a cross. Now neither were around. The judgement of the two men on the crosses was different from the judgement given to Jesus, but the punishment was the same. The two men deserved their punishment, but their attitudes were different. Mark does not tell us, but in Luke 23 you can see one was angry but the other turned to Jesus. Jesus did not deserve His punishment. Jesus willingly faced death for all people. During His life, people accused Jesus of being a friend with sinners and outcasts. They were right. He was. He came into the world to die for sinners so they could be with God. There is no limit to God’s love.

**Why do you think Jesus was willing to die on the cross?
Why have Christian people always remembered that two law breakers were crucified with Jesus?**

KEY DOCTRINE: *Substitutionary Atonement*

A substitute is a person who takes the place of someone else like a substitute teacher takes the place of the regular teacher. Substitutionary atonement explains how Jesus was our substitute. The Bible says every person is a sinner. The punishment for sin is death. In His death, Jesus took our sin and its punishment. His death satisfied the justice of God and made salvation available for all people who trust in Christ.

DAY TWO

Read Mark 15:28-30, finding the reason Jesus died.

The place where Jesus was crucified was outside of town on the main road. Anyone coming into or leaving Jerusalem could see Jesus and the two other men on the crosses. People hanging on crosses outside large cities was a common sight in the Roman world. It was a warning to people to obey the Roman law.

The people mocked Jesus. They had heard Jesus say if the temple was destroyed He would rebuild it in three days. They thought He was talking about the temple building. However, He was talking about Himself—that He would be killed and would be raised back to life in three days. They misunderstood Jesus. Still, their mocking was cruel. Imagine for a moment if Jesus had done what they said. What if He had saved Himself and come down from the cross? He had the power to do so, but He had the determination to ignore the mocking and die. That was God's plan. That was God's way to give salvation to sinners.

Why did Jesus ignore the mocking of the people and stay on the cross? What does Jesus staying on the cross teach us about why Jesus came to earth?

DAY THREE

Read Mark 15:31-32, learning why Jesus stayed on the cross.

The priests mocked Jesus. They took the words they heard Jesus say in His teachings and used those words against Him. Their hearts were hard. They did not understand nor did they want to understand how Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies. They saw Jesus' power over sickness, demons, and nature, yet they still did not believe. Jesus showed kindness and love for everyone He met. But these leaders showed no kindness nor love to Jesus. The religious leaders challenged Jesus. They said they would believe Him if He would come down off the cross. I don't think even then they would have believed. After all, what would they have then believed? The message of Jesus was to believe He was the Messiah, the Savior of

the world. If Jesus had come down from the cross, He would not have fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah. And, He would not have been able to save the world. Coming down from the cross would have left nothing to believe in. So Jesus stayed right where He was.

How did Jesus staying on the cross serve as evidence of Jesus' power and identity?

DAY FOUR

Read Mark 15:33-36, looking for why the sky was dark.

The Bible says God is light. This means He is truth, goodness, wisdom, life, and right. Light represents God's presence. Darkness represents man's rebellion or rejection of God. Darkness represents when God is not present. Scripture says that the whole country became dark for three hours. It is as if what was happening on the cross was so evil that the whole world had to turn away in darkness. Not even God would look upon this dark moment.

At this terrible time Jesus felt like God had left Him. He cried out to God asking why God had left Him. But even this cry of pain from Jesus was a quote from Psalm 22:1. Jesus must have felt the full weight of the sin of all people. Bearing our sin, something terrible happened—the holy God turned from unholy sin. Jesus felt the full horror of sin. Under that weight of sin and God's anger against sin, Jesus felt abandoned. But keep in mind, Jesus knew that Psalm 22 ended in God's victory.

What in these verses points to the seriousness of sin?

DAY FIVE

Read Mark 15:37-39, finding what happened to the temple.

With a final shout, Jesus died. Bible teachers agree this shout was not a cry of pain but a shout of victory. John 19:30 tells us Jesus cried, “It is finished.” Jesus had done what God had wanted. The moment Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces from the top to the bottom. The curtain was about 30-50 feet tall and at least 4 inches thick. The curtain separated the holy place from the holy of holies. A priest could enter the holy place daily, but the holy of holies was the place of God’s presence. Now, however, believers do not need a priest to go to God for them. The torn curtain is a symbol that Jesus gave us direct access to God’s salvation, tearing down the barrier between Himself and people.

Immediately, Mark wrote about a centurion. This centurion’s job was to kill by crucifixion. Mark described how the religious leaders, Jewish people, and prisoners mocked and screamed at Jesus on the cross. At the same time, a Roman centurion—a Gentile—recognized Jesus as the Son of God. The barrier to God was removed.

How would you describe what Jesus did on the cross? What image would you use to illustrate what Jesus accomplished?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you learned from Mark 15:27-39. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What does it mean to you that Jesus was willing to face death on the cross for you?

How can we explain the way the death of Jesus on the cross made salvation possible for all people?

Who do you know that needs to know the good news of Jesus’ death? When can you share the good news with them?

SAVES

Mark 15:27-39

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will understand how important it is that Jesus died in our place.

Enlist four volunteers to be prepared to sign one of the four sections of Scripture for the session.

Find an illustration of the temple from the time of Jesus. You will show where the curtain was that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

Be prepared to answer questions members may have from the readings for last week.

This session may result in someone making a decision to follow Christ.

Be ready to explain the plan of salvation to the group.

FOCUS ATTENTION

DIRECT the group to share parts of the story of Jesus' arrest and trial that they can remember. **CALL** attention to question 1 from Explore the Text (p. 69). **EMPHASIZE** that today's lesson will help the group answer this question.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Crucified (15:27)

ASK the first volunteer to sign Mark 15:27-28. **DISCUSS** questions from Explore the Text (p. 69)

2. Mocked (15:28-32)

INVITE the second volunteer to sign Mark 15:29-32. **DISCUSS** questions 3 and 4 from Explore the Text (p. 69). **EXPLAIN:** *If Jesus did not die on the cross, there would be no hope for us. No one is good enough to get to heaven. All people have sinned. But Jesus was willing to die in our place to give*

us a way to the Father. Again we see how Jesus stayed focused to do the Father's will. He did not let the people influence Him to do what they wanted. What can we learn from this for our lives?

3. Forsaken (15:33-36)

INVITE the third volunteer to sign Mark 15:33-36. **FOCUS** on questions 5-7 from Explore the Text (p. 69). **EXPLAIN:** *Remember God is a holy God. He will not accept sin. When Jesus took on all our sin, God the Father could not look at Him.*

4. Victorious (15:37-39)

INVITE the fourth volunteer to sign Mark 15:37-39. **LEAD** the group to discuss questions 8-10 from Explore the Text (p. 69).

SHOW the group a drawing of the temple, showing where the curtain was. **EXPLAIN:** *The curtain separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the temple. The Most Holy Place was where the high priest would go to make sacrifices for the people to forgive their sins. When the curtain tore, it showed that Jesus made the final sacrifice for us. We now have a way to the Father.*

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points of the session from In My Context (p. 70).

LEAD the group to discuss the questions. **ENCOURAGE** members to do the daily readings for the week and to meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** in prayer, asking God to give us boldness to tell others about Jesus' crucifixion this week.