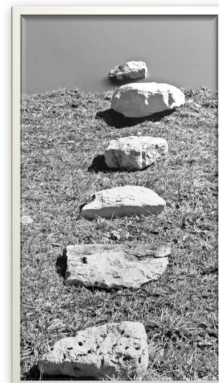


Take The Next Step

Mark 15-16

*"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."
Mark 16:15 NIV*

*"Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of
God's good news to one and all." Mark 16:15 The Message*



Truth to Stand On

The greatest news we have to share is this: Jesus was condemned that we might be set free; Jesus died that we might live.

Opening Prayer

Dear God, Our world is desperate for good news. Give us the words and the courage to share the greatest news ever, the life you offer in your Son Jesus. In His Name we pray, Amen.

Getting in Step With Your Group

Introduce yourselves if there are any new group members. Ask for volunteers to share a new insight they have gained in this study and how they have applied it in their life.

Step by Step Through Mark 15-16

In Mark 15-16, Jesus completes His earthly mission. Read through the chapters together, noting these steps along the way:

- Step 1: The crowd pressures Pilate to release the sinner and condemn the Savior – Mark 15:1-15
- Step 2: Jesus is mocked, crucified, and forsaken by God – Mark 15:16-36
- Step 3: God makes a statement in Jesus' dramatic death – Mark 15:37-41
- Step 4: Jesus is buried – Mark 15:42-47
- Step 5: Jesus has risen! – Mark 16:1-8
- Step 6: Even eyewitness accounts do not convince the disciples that Jesus lives – Mark 16:9-14
- Step 7: Before He departs, Jesus sends them out to preach the good news – Mark 16:15-20

How did Jesus respond to the many accusations made against Him? (15:5) What was Pilate's reaction to this response?

What was Pilate's opinion of this case? What was his final decision? What led him to this decision?

List all the ways the soldiers mocked Jesus before they led Him to be crucified. (15:16-20) List the insults hurled at Jesus on the cross. (15:29-32) What is particularly painful about these lists?

Satan had tempted Jesus at the beginning of His public ministry. How do you think Satan continued to tempt Jesus throughout His earthly life and even as He died on the cross?

If hell is separation from God, how did Jesus experience hell in our place on the cross?

Read Matthew 27:50-54 along with Mark 15:37-39. What dramatic things happened at the time of Jesus' death? What effect do you think these events had on the witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion?

What was the purpose of the curtain in the temple? (see Exodus 26:33) Before Jesus' death, only the high priest could go behind the curtain. This happened once a year on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest sprinkled blood of the cover of the Ark of the Covenant to atone for the people's sins. Read Hebrews 9:7, 11-14 and 10:19-22. What is the significance of the temple curtain tearing from top to bottom at the time of Jesus' death?

Who requested Jesus body for burial? (15:43) What do we know about this man from the text? Why was this action considered bold on his part?

What did the women expect when they got to the tomb on Sunday morning? What did they see instead? Why do you think the angel mentioned Peter by name when he directed them to share the good news?

Why do you think the disciples did not believe even eyewitness accounts of the risen Jesus?

Last words are significant. What were Jesus' last words to us in 16:15-16?

Stepping into Our World

Apply the life changing words of these chapters to today's world by answering the questions below in your group as time permits:

- How are we like Barabbas?
- How often do you make decisions based on the opinions of the crowd? Has the crowd ever pushed you to go against your conscience? How can you filter out the voices of the crowd?
- What are some ways the world today mocks Jesus? Do we ever mock Jesus by what we say or how we live?
- Have you ever felt forsaken by God? What does it mean to you to know that Jesus experienced hell so that you wouldn't have to?
- When God tore the temple curtain, He made a statement that changed everything. Are you living in grace, or are you still trying to live under the law?
- The angel at the grave singled out Peter to hear the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Who in your life most needs to hear this good news?
- How does the news of the resurrection change your life?
- When have you not believed? Who do you know that is stubborn to believe the good news?
- Where is Jesus sending you to share the good news?

Taking the Next Step

Take today's study of Mark 15-16 into the week ahead by choosing one of the following challenges:

- Think about an area of your life where the "crowd" is influencing you in the wrong direction. Pray that God's voice would be louder in your life than the voices of the crowd.
- Using the gospel accounts of Jesus' trial and death, meditate on what Jesus suffered in your place. Praise Him that He was condemned so that you could be free!
- Single out someone who most needs to hear the good news and ask God to give you the words.
- As this study concludes, make a plan to continue reading God's Word regularly.

Closing Prayer

Give group members an opportunity to share prayer requests for the coming week.