

# Mark 14 : 43-52

*Betrayal at the hands of a friend*

## BIBLE STUDY



## INTRODUCTION

### Starter:

Betrayal (or being badly let down), particularly by a friend, is deeply painful. What situations might be seen as betrayal in our modern society? (think about friendship, family, work).

### Pray to start:

Ask God to speak to us through Biblical words which may be familiar. Thank him that we know he can identify with us as we go through times when friends and colleagues or family betray us and let us down.

# Mark 14 : 43-52

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## BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Mark 14 : 43-52

#### Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Look at verses 41 – 42 to remind yourself of the setting of this infamous passage. Imagine you are one of the three disciples who have just been caught sleeping by Jesus. What might be going through your head as the crowd approaches where you are in the garden?
2. What might have been particularly astonishing for the disciples as they noticed the appearance of Judas with the crowd? (Consider how he had spent the last three years).
3. Look at Matthew 26 v 50 to see Jesus' reaction to Judas' kiss. Jesus could have walked away – as his disciples did! Why didn't he do so? (v. 49b)
4. It is widely thought to be Peter who cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest (although it is only John who actually names him as Peter). What typical character traits (both positive and negative) does Peter show here? What had he misunderstood about Jesus?
5. What was the price paid to Judas for Jesus (Matt 26 v 15)? This same amount is the price due to the owner of a slave that was gored to death by a farm animal (Exodus 21 v 32). How might this fact, together with other parts of today's passage, show how misrepresented the Son of God was as he turned willingly towards the cross?

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## GOING DEEPER

Whilst pages of commentary have been given to the betrayal by Judas in this story, it is Jesus' reaction to events that we are going to be looking at here.

Talk about how each of these characteristics are displayed by Jesus in this passage:

- **Humility.** How does Jesus' humility show in this passage? How does it contrast with the other players in the scene?
- **Meekness.** This sometimes misunderstood word is one that Jesus fully represents in this passage in his submission to God's will. Talk about what you think Jesus shows by meekness in contrast to the Cambridge dictionary definition: 'the quality of being quiet, gentle, and unwilling to argue or express your opinions'.
- **Obedience.** If Jesus had cried out to God, God would have helped him. Look at Matthew 26 v 53 to see the power of obedience in action.
- **Forgiveness.** What do you believe Jesus' death on the cross signifies about the value of your life?

Some questions inspired by: William Taylor – 'A purposeful death' (St Helen's Bishopsgate)

# Mark 14 : 43-52

*Betrayal at the hands of a friend*

## PRAY & REFLECT

Reflect on the price paid by Jesus in this passage as he set his face towards the cross. Thank him as he shows beauty, humility, meekness and obedience in the face of betrayal.

There are times as believers when we walk away from what Jesus asks of us. Why? Maybe, like Judas, we 'sell our faith cheaply' because we have 'bought it' too cheaply – we have not understood everything that is being asked of us. Ask God to help you fully understand what Jesus asks of us – and also what he gives us.



# Mark 14 : 66 – 72

*Peter disowns Jesus*

## BIBLE STUDY



## INTRODUCTION

### Starter:

Think of a time when you got caught doing something you said you wouldn't do, or let someone down badly. How did you feel?

### Pray to start:

The story of Peter's failure and subsequent forgiveness is a beautiful example of God's grace. Ask him to remind us today that his grace is an endless supply to help restore and encourage us in our walk with him.

**This passage takes place just after Judas comes with a crowd of people to arrest Jesus. Only a few hours earlier, Peter had sworn his loyalty to Jesus and had vowed never to leave him. Now he is about to face a crisis situation.**



# Mark 14 : 66 – 72

*Peter disowns Jesus*

## BIBLE STUDY



Let's unpack the passage.....

### Read: Mark 14: 27-31

1. What predictions does Jesus make in this passage about the future? (vv 27, 28, 30). How does Peter disagree with Jesus? And which prediction does he focus on? (vv 29, 31)

### Now read: Mark 14: 66-72

2. Despite the threatening crowd and the scene in the garden, Peter follows Jesus to the courtyard at a distance (Luke 22 v 54). What does this say about his character?
3. Imagine you were sitting by the fire in the courtyard watching this scene. What do you think the atmosphere felt like in the courtyard?
4. What prompted Peter's denials? What did he fear?
5. Peter had cut off the servant's ear just hours before this. What has changed since then?
6. What did Peter deny (v. 68; v.70; v.71)? What did he have to lose if he was identified with Jesus?
7. Once Peter recognises what he has done, what is significant about his response – what does it tell us? (v. 72)

# Mark 14 : 66 – 72

*Peter disowns Jesus*

## GOING DEEPER

How and when are you tempted to avoid being identified with Jesus?  
What is it you fear? What do you have to lose?

Peter was one of the leaders of the group of apostles, yet he failed Jesus. What role is there for accountability in our ability to remain loyal to Jesus? Can you think of other lessons that we can learn from the story of Peter?

What do we learn about Jesus' suffering from today's story as one of his close friends turns away?





# Mark 14 : 66 – 72

*Peter disowns Jesus*

## PRAY

As we look at Peter and his denial of Jesus, we often see ourselves reflected. We have all let Jesus down – we have all vowed to stay strong and then weakened under pressure.

Pause in quietness and imagine yourself sitting with Jesus.

As your eyes meet his, thank him that you do not see judgment there, but that you see love and acceptance, as he reaches out his hand to you.



Some questions inspired by:

<https://intervarsity.org/bible-studies/luke-22>



# Mark 15 :1 -15

*People pleasing*

## BIBLE STUDY



## INTRODUCTION

### Starter:

Are you a 'people pleaser'? Do you find it hard to go against the popular flow, or do you enjoy being different?

### Pray to start:

As we see Jesus in an increasingly isolated position, thank him once again for what he was willing to go through for us. Ask that God highlights parts of this story that are particularly pertinent for where we are today.

**Note for leaders:** Israel was under Roman domination. They were allowed a great measure of freedom to try cases and pronounce sentences, but they were not allowed to hand down a sentence of death. This right belonged to the Roman governor alone. The Jews had condemned Jesus to death, but they lacked the authority to carry out the sentence, so they took Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

**So far we have seen Jesus abandoned by his friends. Now we see him abandoned by his enemies. In today's passage, Jesus is rejected by three sets of people: the priests, Pilate, and the people.**

# Mark 15 :1 -15

*People pleasing*

## BIBLE STUDY



Let's unpack the passage.....

### Read : Mark 14: 1-15

1. What was the crime that the Jewish council said that Jesus had committed (Mark 14: 61-64)?
2. What did the chief priests believe they would achieve by getting rid of Jesus? *(By killing Jesus they believed they would preserve their religion; but his death effectively brings that religion to its intended end: here in the death of Jesus the purpose of the priestly role and responsibilities is fulfilled).*
  - What ironies do you detect in this passage? Consider what Pilate asks Jesus (v.2), who it is who accuses Jesus (v.3), and who Pilate releases (v.15).
3. Now facing Pilate, why doesn't Jesus answer the false charges against him? Why do you think Pilate is amazed (vv.2-5)?
4. What indications are there that Pilate is sympathetic to Jesus (vv.6-11)?
5. When you combine the Gospel records of Jesus' meeting with Pilate, you discover that Pilate repeatedly stated that he found no fault in Jesus. What then drove him to make the decision that he did? (see v.15a and Matt 27 v 24)
6. Why did Pilate give the people the choice about who to save? Why did the crowd choose Barabbas?



# Mark 15 :1 -15

*People pleasing*

## GOING DEEPER

We have pictures of three different groups in today's passage.

- **The chief priests** were desperate to cling on to their interpretation of their religious beliefs, and had missed the message of what Jesus was trying to teach.
- **Pilate** felt convinced that Jesus was innocent, yet ultimately sent him to his death, bowing to pressure.
- **The people**, fascinated by Jesus up until now, allowed themselves to be influenced by the priests to vote in favour of one who was more in line with their idea of a Messiah.

**Which character/s do you most identify with? Are there times / have there been times in your life when you could identify with each of the groups? What caused you to feel this way?**



# Mark 15 :1 -15

*People pleasing*

**PRAY**

Jesus, thank you that you do not abandon us, no matter how we may treat you at times. Help us to learn fresh lessons as we study this passage - that we may have the courage to 'stand away from the crowd' when we need to stand up for our beliefs in you - that we may not get so caught up in familiar religion that we miss the sometimes startling surprise of being your apprentice.

Help us not to be led astray by popular opinion but to use the plumb line of your word and your teaching to keep us pointing north.

**Amen**





# Mark 15 : 16-32

*Mocking Majesty*

## BIBLE STUDY



## INTRODUCTION

### Starter:

As we reach the climax of Mark's gospel story, he tells us in simple and raw language about what Jesus went through in his humiliating and horrible journey to the cross. In a few words, try to express what Jesus' suffering means for us as his followers.

### Pray to start:

Thanking Jesus for his devotion to his Father that meant he was willing to go through this ordeal in order to reconcile us to God. Ask God to show you some of the depth of his love for you, as you contemplate today what Jesus' suffering comprised.

# Mark 15 : 16-32

*Mocking Majesty*

## BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Mark 15 : 16-32

#### Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Look at verses 16-20. Imagine you are a soldier being interviewed by a journalist in this scene. Considering the actions of the soldiers, how would you respond to the question 'why did you treat Jesus in the way you did?'  
(See also 1 Corinthians 2 v 8)
2. Jesus' journey to the cross fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies. Look at Psalm 22 vv 7-8 and vv 14-18.  
  
How can you see these verses coming true in today's passage? How can this Psalm give us insight into some of the horrors of crucifixion which Mark does not mention?
3. As you go through this passage, what ironies can you see – in which ways was Jesus mocked that actually accord with facts about him?

# Mark 15 : 16-32

*Mocking Majesty*

## GOING DEEPER

1. As Jesus went through these hours, the prophetic verses of **Isaiah 53** came true. Read this chapter and reflect on what it teaches us about Jesus as he faced death.
2. Look at **Isaiah 53 v 12**.
  - Who is victorious at the end of this chapter – the victim or his enemies?
  - What light does this verse shed on Jesus' explanation of his death in **Mark 10 v 45**?
  - How would you explain the last sentence of verse 12 to someone who was questioning why Jesus had to die (**Hebrews 7 v 25**)?



# Mark 15 : 16-32

*Mocking Majesty*

**PRAY**

We see ourselves clearly in this passage. We are those who mocked him. Everybody abandoned him. Our hearts are crushed, and our consciences are smitten.

But we see Jesus, who willingly endured the mocking and the spitting...For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame.

Because he took the shame, we don't have to be ashamed.

Help us to trust in him and in what he did.

**We pray this in Jesus' name**

**Amen**





# Mark 15 : 33-47

*Jesus dies and is buried*

## BIBLE STUDY



## INTRODUCTION

### Starter:

As believers, the hope that comes through Jesus' death and resurrection is irreplaceable. 'We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure'.  
(Hebrews 6 v 19).

Think through the impact this can have on our day-to-day life, especially when times are very difficult.

### Pray to start:

That the quiet, contemplative weeks of study leading up to the joy of Easter would be times of depth and grounding in your faith.

**Last week's study bleakly showed how Jesus was mocked and scorned on his journey towards death. This week we watch as he 'breathes his last' and is placed in the tomb**

# Mark 15 : 33-47

*Jesus dies and is buried*

## BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Mark 15 : 33-47

#### Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Mark tells us that darkness covered the land (**v.33**). What do you think this darkness symbolised and in what other ways do we see darkness in this passage (**e.g. v 35-36**)?
2. What strikes you about the declaration from the centurion in verse 39? (**Consider that he was a Gentile, and that his words would have been provocative to both Jews and Romans at the scene**).
3. Look at **verses 40-41**. Why were the women present? Can you think of other ways in which women showed faithfulness and courage to Jesus through the Easter story?
4. What do we know about Joseph of Arimathea (**see also John 19 vv 38-42**)? How does he show faithfulness to Jesus in this story?
5. What details are given in **verses 42-47** to show that Jesus did indeed die? Why might Mark have wanted to make this clear?

# Mark 15 : 33-47

*Jesus dies and is buried*

## GOING DEEPER

1. How would you answer the claim that Jesus was murdered (see **John 10 vv 11, 15, 17-18**)? What do these verses tell us about how Jesus went to his death?
2. Mark tells us in **v. 38** that the temple veil was dramatically torn from top to bottom. Reflect on how amazing this must have been, and even more so, what it symbolised. (See **Hebrews 10 vv 19-22; Ephesians 2 vv 13, 18**).





# Mark 15 : 33-47

*Jesus dies and is buried*

## PRAY

**'Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings' (Hebrews 10 v 22).**

Thank you Father God that we can have 'full assurance' because of what Jesus did for us through his death.

Thank you that we can draw close to you, sprinkled clean by Jesus' sacrifice. Help us to live with a sense of hope and wonder as we remember again this Easter the wonder of being brought close to you.





# Mark 16 :1-16

*'He is not here!'*

## BIBLE STUDY



## INTRODUCTION

### Starter:

How would you respond to a Muslim friend who explained to you that Jesus did not in fact die, but was taken away in a swoon after his crucifixion to recover in a different place? What difference would it make to our faith as believers if this was true?

Our journey through the Passion of Jesus reaches its climax this week.

### Pray to start:

That you would be filled with the joy of the Spirit as you read familiar, life-changing words in our passage for today!

# Mark 16 : 1-16

*'He is not here!'*

## BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Mark 16 : 1-16

#### Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Looking back over chapter 15, list the people who were quite sure Jesus had died. Did any of them have reason to be fooled?
2. Look at verses 1-3. Imagine you are one of the group of women, who gets up early whilst it is still dark, and sets out with your precious spices to anoint the body of your dead Lord. What are you feeling? What are your assumptions about Jesus?
3. What three amazing surprises greeted the women in verses 4, 5, and 6?
3. Why do you think those who were mourning and weeping didn't believe Mary Magdalene (verse 9-11)? Why did Jesus rebuke them (verse 14)?
4. In verse 15 we see part of the Great Commission (given in Matthew 28 vv 19-20). What *message* and what *ministry* did Jesus give us as believers?

*Note for leaders: verse 16 - Baptism itself doesn't trigger salvation, but rather is the outward sign to show that someone has believed – a sign to witness to an inner reality.*

# Mark 16 : 1-16

*'He is not here!'*

## GOING DEEPER

1. 'He has risen,' said the angel, 'he is not here' (**verse 6**). Three times throughout Mark, Jesus had said he would suffer and rise on the third day (**8 v 31, 9 v 31, 10 v 34**). What implications did Jesus' resurrection have for himself, for history, and for believers?
2. Jesus told his followers in **verse 15** to share their faith. Is this something you find easy to do? Why don't you take the Archbishop of Canterbury's challenge and tell other people in the home group why you are a follower of Jesus – try to do so in two minutes, and not to use any 'Christianese'.





# Mark 16 : 1-16

*'He is not here!'*

**PRAY**

Join together in songs of praise to Jesus for what we have learned from our studies in Mark over recent weeks.

Thank him for all that he went through for us as he suffered and died, and ask that the truth of the resurrection would once again impact our lives and show our faith clearly to those with whom we are in contact.

