

Teachers: This lesson plan was prepared by Gene Thompson. It was adapted from Pastor Shawn Thomas' lesson plan and is different from the LifeWay lesson plan.

SACRIFICED

MARK 15:24-39

1. Does anyone have a favorite song about the cross, of Jesus dying on the cross? ("At Calvary." "Mercy there was great, and grace was free, pardon there was multiplied to me. There my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary.")

Today we are going to look at the events surrounding the death of Jesus on the cross, from Mark 15. Last week we saw how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, wrestling with the weight of the sin He would bear—but committed Himself to do God's will. Then Judas arrives with the crowd of Jewish religious leaders and Roman soldiers to arrest Him. He was put on trial before the Jews and admitted being The Son of Man that Daniel prophesied centuries earlier.

Chapter 15 opens with them bringing Jesus to the Roman governor to be crucified. Pilate tried to get them to release Jesus, but the crowd chose Barabbas. Verse 15 says Pilate had Jesus flogged then handed Him over to be crucified. Verses 16-19 describe how they dress Him up like a king, put a crown of thorns on Him, and mocked Him, and they beat Him—and led Him away to be crucified.

SCRIPTURES FULFILLED! Read Mark 15:24-39 Note Scripture fulfilled as we read. (Assign a class member a "Fulfillment" and another class member the "Prophecy" for each Scripture.)

1. **Fulfillment #1:** V24 "divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take."
Prophecy #1: Psalm 22:18 "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."
2. **Fulfillment #2:** V28 And the scripture was fulfilled which says, 'and He was numbered among the transgressors.'
Prophecy #2: Isaiah 53:12 "Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors."
3. **Fulfillment #3:** V 34 "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
Prophecy #3: Psalm 22:1 "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
4. **Fulfillment #4:** V36 "Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink ..."
Prophecy #4: Psalm 69:21b "And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."
5. Why do you think it is important that these scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus' crucifixion? Why even mention these things?

(It validates what the Bible says. When it says something is going to happen and it does, it shows that this is REAL! This isn't just some "religious book" that some people threw together; this is truth. It really did predict, hundreds of years in advance, what Jesus would do, and they came to pass. He did them! It shows us how real and powerful the Bible is. This is not just somebody's "opinion;" this book is TRUTH!)

ALSO: It shows that JESUS is the true Messiah. People are always saying things like, “Well, how do we know which is the one true religion?”, as if there’s just no way to tell. But these fulfilled prophecies are a powerful testimony that Jesus is the True Way. All these prophecies were made, hundreds of years in advance regarding what the Messiah would be like, and what He would do. And Jesus DID them! And no one else did!

- Of all the religious leaders in the world and those claiming to be Christ and Messiahs, who else was from Nazareth, born in Bethlehem, and went down to Egypt?
- Who else had His hands and feet pierced and cried out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me” as predicted in Psalm 22.
- Who else predicted that He would be crucified and rise again on the 3rd day and DID IT! No one else has come close to fulfilling all those prophecies!

All of these prophecies demonstrate that Jesus really IS the Messiah, the Son of God, our Savior, the Way, the Truth, and the life, whom we should follow.

The Characters’ Responses: the different people in the text and their responses to Jesus’ crucifixion:

Scan the passage and call out all the different characters they see here. (As they are called out write them on the board and talk about the different responses each of them had to Jesus:

- V24 The Roman soldiers: took His clothes, splitting them up among themselves—selfish.
- V29-30 “Those passing by” mocked Him: “...save Yourself, come down from the cross.”
- V31 the religious leaders: “He saved others; He cannot save Himself...come down from the cross that we may see and believe.” (We don’t see and believe; we believe then see!)
- V35 “bystanders” said “He is calling for Elijah.” V36 and gave Him a drink and see if Elijah comes. They misunderstood what Jesus said.)
- V39 The Centurion: “Truly this man was the Son of God.”

1. What does all of this tell us about how people will respond to Jesus today? (There will be all these same kinds of responses:
 - Some will be selfish: what do I get out of this; if it helps ME, I’ll follow Him; if not, I won’t. It’s all a selfish response.
 - Some will mock: We see this all the time. People mock Who Jesus is. Many still mock Jesus and those who follow Him today. Just look at any Twitter feed or public comment board. Say anything about God/Jesus, they will mock you.
 - And just like in Mark 15, even other religious leaders/members will mock and oppose also.
 - Some will misunderstand what it is all about, just like those misunderstood and thought Jesus was calling for Elijah.
 - Some will truly see and respond with their heart, like the Centurion did.
2. How does the Parable of the Sower in **Mark 4:3-9** compared to these responses? Review the Parable with the class.

--Some seed fell on the road and birds ate it.
--Some fell on rocky soil and died for lack of soil.
--Some fell in the thorns and were choked out
--Some fell on good soil and yielded a good crop!

There will always be mixed responses to the Gospel. Some will not respond; some will seem to respond but will not last; and some will respond and bear fruit.

ACCESS GAINED: the veil in the Temple torn.

Read Mark 15:37-38

Mark doesn't say here what the "loud cry" was that Jesus made; perhaps it was John 19:30, "It is finished." If it was, it would make sense. He had finished His work. He had borne our sins in His body and was about to die. It was done and He breathed His last.

1. Why do you think it makes the point to say, "from top to bottom?" (God tore down the partition of separation. A Jewish convert to Christianity, Alfred Edersheim, states that "this curtain was about 60 feet long, 20 feet wide, and as thick as the palm of the hand. It needed 300 priests to manipulate the veil." No human power could accomplish the tearing of the veil.)
2. Just as important, what was the MEANING of this act? (There are generally two views, both of which can be true:
 - First: It marks the end of the sacrificial system and the need for the Temple. Jesus had taught through the Gospels that it was not all about the Temple and the old system anymore, and the tearing of the veil is the culmination of that.
 - Second: Many others believe it symbolizes that through the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins, the "veil," the separation between God and man has now come down, and now ALL believers have access to God through faith in Christ. He is our High Priest! Read Eph. 3:12 and Heb. 10:19-22

The MAIN point here, of course, not only of the tearing of the Temple veil but also of this whole lesson, is that Jesus gained for us access back to God, through His death on the cross.

- God created us to know Him and live with Him in glory forever.
- But we separated ourselves from God by our sins.
- This is why Jesus came: to die on the cross and pay for our sins, so that the separation (symbolized by the veil) would be done away with, and we could come back to know Him, and have access to His presence forever in glory.

But the heart of the Gospel is always the CROSS! We cannot emphasize the cross too much, and we must never neglect it. Genuine Christianity is always about the cross. Paul said in 1 Cor. 2:2 "I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." He said, his whole message was the cross! The world will mock it, as we have seen, and heretics and false teachers will get away from the cross and focus on all kinds of other things, but the cross is the ONE thing we must never neglect. Faith in what Jesus did on the cross is what gives us our salvation.

Read Hebrews 9:22: "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

1 Cor. 1:18: "The message of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

The world will mock it and misunderstand it, but we need to hold to Jesus' death on the cross, as the one and only way to salvation and eternal life.

If you don't know Jesus you can do just as the centurion as he saw all this, and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

We must each make our own decision, land our own personal commitment to Jesus, to be our own Lord and Savior. The Scripture says, "Today is the day of salvation." Make your commitment to Christ NOW!

Prayer.