

Celebrating the God of Life

We believe in the God of life
who did not create death.
We are followers of a God
who loves and defends life;
who gives over his life to all
to show us love;
a God who endured suffering and death,
a God who is risen,
the Way, the Truth and the Life;
a God who still invites us
to overcome all that is evil,
all that brings pain, suffering and injustice,
and to celebrate the life
that God desires, in abundance,
for us all.

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Unfolding the Word



Notes: Mark 15: 20-41

Jesus speaks 7 times from the cross in the course of the 4 Gospels. In Mark's Gospel he only speaks once. Mark's crucifixion seems to show us a Jesus who feels abandoned by God and utterly alone. The only time Jesus speaks on the cross is to say the words 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Did he feel forsaken by God? Some scholars agree with that. However this sentence is also the first line of psalm 22 which ends in hope in God. I feel that Mark wants to stress the human as well as the divine elements of Jesus' nature and because of this he wants to show the very human sense of abandonment that Jesus feels at the crucifixion. Mark's use of the psalm, however, is to remind the reader that this is not the end and, like the psalm says, we look forward with hope.

The only person to recognise and say that Jesus is the 'Son of God' is the Roman centurion. Mark is telling us that Jesus has come not just to the Jews but to the Gentiles as well. Up to this the only other creatures who recognised him as 'Son of God' were the demons he exorcised.

The passers-by shout at Jesus that he said that if they destroyed the temple he would rebuild it in 3 days. We now realise that Jesus is speaking about the temple of his body and that even though he dies he will rise in three days. So Mark is saying that Jesus has now replaced the temple as the place of worship. Another sign that the temple is no longer the centre of worship is

when Jesus dies the veil of the temple is torn in two. This was the veil that separated the holiest part of the temple from the rest of it and the only person who could go in there was the high priest and he could only go in there once a year. So the place of worship is now open to everyone. People no longer need to go to the temple to offer sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins because Jesus is now the new temple where sins can be forgiven.

The only people who remain by the cross when Jesus dies are the women and even they are at a distance. They are also the first people to go to the tomb and hear about the resurrection from the young man who tells them to tell Peter and the disciples to go to Galilee to meet Jesus.

There are 3 different endings to Mark's gospel. In the first, the women are frightened and run away. In the second, the women go and tell Peter and in the third Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and then to the other disciples after that. Some people say that the first ending is left open with no resurrection appearances because it is telling us, the disciples and followers of Jesus, that we must now go to Galilee and to the ends of the earth to spread the message of Jesus. In other words we must go out to meet the risen Jesus and live transformed lives as a result of the resurrection.