

Coming Into Focus: Only From this Vantage Point

Small Group Discussion Guide—4/14/2019

What's the most beautiful view you've ever seen? Describe it to your group in 3 sentences or less. Do you think your description does it justice?

Read Mark 15:21-32

- Mark describes some intense mockery that happened towards Jesus on the cross. What do you think the disciples were doing or saying during this?
- Many people taunted that Jesus should come down from the cross to save himself. That must have sounded tempting. How does this offer compare or contrast with Satan's temptations towards Jesus in the wilderness (see Matthew 4:1-10)? What would Jesus have accomplished by coming down from the cross? What did he accomplish by staying on the cross?

Read Mark 15:33-39

- What is the significance in Mark 15:38 of the curtain tearing in two? What does this mean for us today?
- Who is the first person to truly understand that Jesus's death pointed to the fact that He truly was the Son of God?
 - Have you ever seen an "unlikely" person surprise you with a statement or action of belief?
 - Are there people you know that you might unintentionally think are too far gone for God? How does the centurion's faith impact the way you see them? Is there a way you can reach out to them this week, perhaps with an invitation to Alpha?
- **Let's think about our need for Jesus to go to the cross.**
 - Pastor Josh talked about several allusions in this passage to the Old Testament.
 - Look through Psalm 22 to find the reference to this passage in Mark. Also note other ways that Jesus fulfilled the expectations in this passage.
 - Look through Psalm 69 and see if you can find verses that connect with today's passage in Mark.
 - Other than just being interesting, why are these significant?
 - Now read Isaiah 53; keep in mind this was written at least 700 years before Jesus's time. What does this tell you about God's plan? Was there ever really a chance Jesus would have come down from or not gone to, the cross?
 - What other passages can you think of that reveal how much we needed Jesus to go to the cross?
- **Let's think about what to do when God doesn't remove our crosses.**
 - Sometimes we can struggle to believe when God doesn't take away our hardships. How does Jesus's refusal to get down from the cross help us get through the hard times?
 - Can you think of Bible characters who asked God to remove their crosses and He didn't? Looking at their stories in hindsight, can you see why?
 - Remember: **Only at the cross does Jesus really come in to focus.**

Pray as a group and for one another. May God help us all to see Jesus from the vantage point of the cross, and may we have hearts of gratitude for what Jesus did for us!

