

Reflection Questions for Week 15
Chapter 15

Read Chapter 15 in Mark's Gospel and pages 305-326 in the Mary Healy Commentary. As you read, pause and reflect on the following questions. You will share as many of these as time permits on May 7th in your small group.

Ch. 15:1-3 Having Pilate crucify Jesus would solve a lot of problems for Jewish religious leaders as they feared His popular support. Pilate's questions were answered by Jesus' silence. Jesus made no defense which astonishes and perplexes Pilate. *How do I understand Jesus' silence in face of the charges against him?*

Ch. 15:6-15 Pilate changes his focus to Barabbas. Pilate takes the easiest course of action to satisfy the crowd and releases Barabbas. Jesus said he would give his life as ransom (10:45). Barabbas, ironically, is the first to be set free because of Jesus. *How am I able to see myself as Barabbas in relation to Jesus?*

Ch. 15:21 Simon of Cyrene comes along at just the right time. Although he did not volunteer for the honor, he was the first to follow behind Jesus bearing a cross. Some of us may see a bit of Simon in ourselves thinking about our own discipleship. We usually think of our cross as suffering we can't escape, like a lingering illness. Simon shows us the cross we carry can take another form—shouldering the crosses of others, relieving another's burden. *What does the example of Simon mean for me?*

Ch. 15: 22-27 Following all the mockery, cruelty, and humiliation, Jesus is crucified. He hangs with two revolutionaries. Previously, James and John asked for places of status and power on the right and left of Jesus (10:37);

those who now die on His right and left show what is involved in occupying those places. Being close to Jesus means suffering as He did—taking up one's cross (8:34) *How do I accept that being a disciple of Jesus means following Him to Golgotha?*

Ch. 15:33-34 Jesus crying out here emotes many thoughts and emotions. Some in Mark's time might have also cried out, asking why God had abandoned Christians into the hands of torturers. Some cry out today trying to find a reason for suffering. Some may experience God's presence as absence, darkness, and silence. Mark's words hold Jesus so near to God—His beloved son, yet also feeling abandoned by God. *Have you ever felt abandoned by God? What meaning does Jesus' experience at the cross have for me?*

Ch. 15:39 The centurion sees through the desolation of Jesus' death. It is significant that the first person to truly state Jesus' identity is a Gentile. ("Truly this man was the Son of God!") Mark's Gospel is good news for both Gentiles and Jews. *What insight do you receive from this scene?*

Ch. 15:45-47 Jewish burials took place as soon as possible after death. The usual washing and anointing was not possible as the Sabbath was about to begin. Mary Magdalene and Mary watched as Jesus body was moved to a tomb. Joseph of Arimathea most likely was not a disciple or the women would have assisted him. Jesus' remains seem to be as abandoned in death as in His dying. Jesus was crucified like a common criminal and buried by a pious stranger. *What is your reaction to this scene?*

*In the Gospel Reading this week, what touched you most deeply?
How do you plan to continue your Lenten discipleship focus during the 50 days of Easter?*