

Witnesses: Roman Soldiers
Mark 15:15-39
March 22, 2020

Something to Think About: The Roman soldiers were just doing their jobs. Every Roman crucifixions called for a deployment of three or four Roman soldiers whose job it was to nail the victim to the cross, lift and drop the 200 pound cross (with its victim) into a pre-prepared hole, and then to do whatever else was necessary to strip the victim of any/all remaining dignity. This was their job; they did it well. It was no different with Jesus who was thought by most to be a common criminal—guilty of blasphemy and getting what he deserved. The soldiers were just doing their jobs...

Read the text. Read it again more slowly this time. Write nothing. Simply pause and reflect emotionally and intellectually on what you've just read.

.....

Study Guide:

In verse 15, Mark tells us that Jesus was flogged. Yet, he provides no details. Details were unnecessary because everyone in the ancient world (Mark's readers) knew precisely what a flogging was all about. Take the time to research "ancient Roman flogging" (Google is a good place to start) so you, too, can grasp the intensity of this punishment. Write your reflections below:

Mark gives us lots of details regarding the soldiers' mock coronation of Jesus (verses 16-20). Why do you think Mark emphasizes this scene, and what does it say about us as human beings?

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "*Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.*" How do you interpret Dr. King's remarks...and where do you see a connection with Mark's telling of Jesus' crucifixion?

Matthew (27:35), Mark (15:24) and Luke (23:34) all agree that the soldiers gambled for Jesus' clothing. As they gambled, the Son of God was only a few feet away, laying down his life in the single greatest act in human history. What are the distractions in your life that keep you from seeing God at work in your midst? What can you do to eliminate those distractions and see God more clearly?
