

A Reflection for Day 6 – Good Friday.

Mark 15: 33-41

Jesus is crucified

Jesus was forced to carry his own cross through the hot, dusty winding streets of Jerusalem. He had been beaten savagely and he'd been tortured by the Roman soldiers. A crown of thorns had been pressed down on his head and he was covered in wounds. The Roman soldiers taunted him because they'd heard that Jesus was a king. They didn't understand who he really was, and they didn't really care.

When Jesus got to the place of execution, called the Place of the Skull, he was nailed to a cross. This was the kind of death reserved for criminals. In fact, two criminals were crucified at the same time, one on each side of him. One was angry and shouted at Jesus. He didn't understand him at all. But the other criminal asked Jesus to allow him to enter heaven with him. He seemed to comprehend who Jesus was. And Jesus told him he would be in heaven with him.

Jesus suffered on the cross for 3 hours. He could have been angry, he could have been full of self-pity. He could have asked God to take him down from the cross to show people his power, but he stayed there. He even asked God to forgive those who were shouting insults at him. Let's hear from Mark what happened as Jesus died.

³³ At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴ And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?').^[a]

³⁵ When some of those standing near heard this, they said, 'Listen, he's calling Elijah.'

³⁶ Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down,' he said.

³⁷ With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

³⁸ The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died,^[b] he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'

⁴⁰ Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph,^[c] and Salome. ⁴¹ In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

The curtain in the temple was torn in two to show that a way had been opened between God and people. Jesus had broken through the barrier and taken our sins with him. This is really good news. And this is why we call this sad day Good Friday.

Even a hardened centurion recognized that Jesus was the Son of God. Are we able to join with the centurion in saying that Jesus is the Son of God?