

## **Crucified King** **Mark 15:6-15, 21-39**

We tend not to boast in failure or in something shameful. So why does Christianity make the crucifixion of Christ it's main thing?

### **Your Substitute**

On the first Good Friday, Christ took the place of Barabbas, a murderer and a rebel. But it wasn't only Barabbas' place that Jesus took – but ours also. A substitute takes the place of another. Jesus did that for us, just as the Passover Lamb took the place of the firstborn. This is what Isaiah the prophet said would happen: that the Lord's servant would be pierced and crushed for our sin. Why did Jesus need to die for us?

### **Cursed for you**

Jesus cried from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" What happened to make him cry out like that? He took the curse of the law – exile and banishment from God's presence – that we all deserve for breaking God's law. He experienced God-forsakenness for us.

The Old Testament ritual of the Day of Atonement set the scene for this: a goat was lead into the wilderness, carrying all the people's sins. The goat was banished instead of the people, and the people could be forgiven. That is what Jesus did for us at the cross.

### **Died for You.**

Jesus died the death of a criminal on the cross. Why? Because death is the punishment for sin and he was dying that death for us. He stepped into our place to take the punishment for us. As King, he was enthroned on the cross, and in the places of honour that his disciples had fought over, on his right and his left, were two robbers, two sinners – the kind of people he had come to save.

### **To Save You**

We may not like talking about *sin* and *sinners*, but we understand debt, and relationship breakdown and what it means to break the law, and these are the images the Bible uses to explain our situation. We are in debt to God; our relationship with him is broken down; and we have broken his laws and we have a 'criminal' record. It is at the cross that Jesus saves us from all these. That is why he cried out, "It is finished!"

The curtain of the temple was torn in two: a powerful picture that the way to God had been opened.

The cross tells us how much we need saving. It also tells us how much God wants to save us. It tells us how bad we are, but it also tells us how loved we are.