

# Man in the Middle

When we think about the gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – Mark isn't usually the first place we go. Yet Mark, listening to the eyewitness accounts of Peter, wrote a fast-paced gospel sharing the miraculous things Jesus did, including His death and Resurrection, to convince his Roman readers that Jesus is the Son of God. Let's not overlook what we can learn about our Savior in the overlooked gospel.

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## INTRODUCTION

As we delve further into Mark 14 and 15, we learn about Jesus's great commitment to give Himself for every person on earth, including the criminals who hung on either side of His cross. Jesus accomplished many life-altering and miraculous tasks as He stepped into the middle of our chaos and saved the world from its darkness.

## STARTER QUESTION

Many of us are familiar with the story of Jesus going to the cross to take our sins and to give us eternal life. But what can we learn specifically from the events that led up to Jesus going to the cross, from His time on the cross, and from the results of His death and resurrection? What has He provided for us through this precious sacrifice?

## INTO THE WORD

Read John 10:14-18. Jesus wants to step into the middle of our lives and create a new reality for us. Have you invited Jesus into your life? Have you experienced hearing God's voice? How has He been a good Shepherd to you? How does His grace impact you?

Explain what Jesus means when He says, "No one takes my life away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life, and I have the right to get it back again. This is what the Father told me." (John 10:18). Read Psalm 126, which was referenced during the service. How did the former captives describe God's freeing power? How have you experienced God's freeing power in your life?

During life's uncertainties, we have assurance from God that He will be there for us. Read Psalm 23, which Doug broke down for us in this week's lesson. Why is Psalm 23 an important Psalm to remember? Which verse from Psalm 23 especially speaks to your heart and why?

## APPLICATION

Doug helped us understand the difference between Jesus's religious trial and His civil trial. During Jesus's civil trial, when asked by the high priest if He was Who He claimed to be – the Son of the living God – Jesus answered, "I am." Jesus knew full well what fallout could occur from making this claim. Read Exodus 3:11-15. God told Moses to use the name "I AM." What is the significance of the name "I AM?" What parallels do you see between these two accounts? Considering your current reality, how can Jesus be your great "I AM" right now?

During the crucifixion, Jesus cried out, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) Even while being treated awfully, He still expressed love for us and was interceding on our behalf. Why are we not as forgiving with ourselves and one another when we fall short of perfection? How can we apply Jesus's desperate response to our lives in a new way? Read Ephesians 4:32 and Luke 23:34. What is the hardest part of forgiving someone?

The title of today's sermon is "Man in the Middle." How is Jesus the man in the middle in our lives? Read I Timothy 2:4-6. Jesus is referred to as a mediator between God and us. Think about and/or discuss a time when you turned to Jesus for help. How has Jesus intervened in your life? How do you desire for Him to intervene in a situation you are currently facing?

## **PRAYER**

Father God, thank you for being our Shepherd. Thank you for allowing your son, Jesus Christ, to bear the weight of our sins so that we can have eternal life with you. Forgive us for our sins and help us be forgiving towards one another. Please relieve us of any anxieties or fears that we may have because of things that are going on in this world. Father, we know that you tell us in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Amen.