**“Words of Abandonment”**

Mark 15:34

Discussion Questions

1) It is generally agreed that in making this great cry of forsakenness, Jesus is quoting Psalm 22. What significance do you see in Jesus quoting the Old Testament? NB: You may want to check out a few other instances where Jesus quotes the OT (eg. Mark 14:27 and Zech. 13:7; Luke 22:37 and Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:46 and Psalm 31:5).

2) Read Psalm 22 in its entirety. Why does Jesus choose to quote this Psalm in this moment? What emotions or thoughts might Jesus have been experiencing as He considered the words of this Psalm?

3) What do you think the hours of darkness signify? What aside from physical torment would have amplified Jesus’ suffering (consider John 16:32, 2 Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:13, Isaiah 53:1-9)?

4) Is it truly possible for Jesus to be forsaken by his Father? How is this even possible given our understanding of the character of God and the Trinity?

5) What would have caused the onlookers to suspect Jesus was calling out for Elijah (vs. 34)?

6) Was it truly necessary for Jesus to suffer the way He did on the cross? How does His suffering instruct (or impact) our faith? How would our faith be different if He had not suffered in this way? Take a look at Hebrews 5:7-10,12:1-3;1 Peter 2:18-25.

7) Do you struggle with loneliness or feelings of abandonment?  Do you find yourself vulnerable to other challenges in those moments?  What do you find helpful when you are feeling lonely?  Is this account of Jesus expressing abandonment on the cross helpful to you?  Why or why not?

8) What has God taught you through this text? What will you do differently because of it?