

RESPONDING TO JESUS

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Four responses to Jesus...

Mark 15:16-21 (NIV84) The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" 19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. 21 A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

I. The soldiers were _____.

A. They abused Jesus because they were _____.

Luke 23:34 (NIV84) Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

B. Q: Are you _____ toward Jesus?

Mark 15:22-32 (NIV84) They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). 23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. 25 It was the third hour when they crucified him. 26 The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. 29 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!" 31 In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32 Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

II. The religious leaders were _____.

A. They were self-righteous and "_____."

Matthew 23:23-24 (NIV84) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ... 24 You blind guides ..."

B. Q: Have you "_____ " Jesus?

III. Simon of Cyrene was _____.

Mark 15:21 (NIV84) A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

A. He found Jesus by _____.

B. He followed Jesus by _____.

Romans 16:13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

C. Q: Have you made a personal _____ to follow Jesus?

IV. One thief was _____.

Mark 15:27 (NIV84) They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Luke 23:39 (NIV84) One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. " 43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

A. We are justified by _____ not works.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV84) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.

Romans 3:22 (NIV84) This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

B. Q: How will you _____ to Jesus today?

Romans 3:23 (NIV84) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23 (NIV84) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Discussion/Thought Questions:

1. How do you think YOU would have responded to Jesus in this story? Why?
2. Describe your religious upbringing and how you made a personal choice to follow Jesus – if you have. If not, what are some of your hesitations?
3. Discuss the two thieves on the cross. Do you believe that the contrite criminal is in heaven with Jesus? Why or why not?
4. Have someone in your group tell their story of choosing a personal faith in Jesus.