

The Gospel of Mark  
Substitutionary Atonement  
Mark 15:33-41

A substitute is a person or thing acting or serving in place of another. We generally think of substitute in terms of classroom teachers and cooking recipes. In our limited and often ill-informed understanding of justice, we seldom consider the concept of substitute. We want the person who did the crime to pay the time.

1. Jesus was judged, so we don't have to be.
2. Jesus was lonely, so we don't have to be.
3. Jesus was helpless, so we don't have to be.

The cross is where God forgave His children without lowering His standards. The cross is where God put our sin on His Son and punished it there, once and for all. Envision the moment. God is on His throne. We are here on earth. And between us, suspended between us and heaven is Christ on His cross. Our sins have been placed on Jesus and buried with Him. God unleashes his wrath on our sin, but as Jesus is between us, He absorbs it all. Our sin is punished but we are safe—safe in the shadow of the cross.

For further consideration:

Take a few minutes (or hours) to think about the significance of what Jesus said from the cross. Why is the concept of the substitute so important? If you memorize Scripture, take some time to memorize 2 Corinthians 5:21. Develop in your own words an explanation of the veil being torn in two. How do you think the Jewish people of that day responded to the tearing of the veil? What is the significance for those of us who are not Jewish? Take some time to thank God for providing a substitute. Thank Him for all that He has done for us and on our behalf.