

The Cross and Grace

Optional points are marked with "◇". Supplemental Scriptures are in parentheses ().

Introduction 1 Corinthians 1:18

Why do you want to be a disciple? The message of the Cross gives us the power and lasting love to live like Christ. Understanding God's love should change our hearts

Passion Account..... Matthew 26:17 -27:54

Suggested Reading Intervals. Incorporate the medical account of Jesus' physical death. Highlight how Jesus suffered physically, emotionally and spiritually

Jesus lovingly sets up a holiday feast & washes his disciples' feet (Jn 13:1-6).... 26:17-19

Jesus shows this love, while knowing the disciples will betray & desert him..... 26:20-35

Jesus is vulnerable with his disciples, but they fall asleep on him..... 26:36-46

Jesus is in such anguish his blood mixes with sweat (Lk 22:44), 26:47-56

a medical condition known as hematidrosis. Jesus is betrayed & deserted by his best friends & the crowd he seeks to help

God's religious people Jesus hopes to save, lie about, 26:57-68 abuse, & humiliate him

Peter realizes he has betrayed Jesus & is heart-broken, 26:69-75 which leads to repentance forgiveness in three days. Let's choose Peter's response over Judas:

Judas sees he has betrayed Jesus & commits suicide, because he cannot 27:1-10 face the depth of his sin. But he is only days away from being forgiven

God's religious people choose the murderer Barabbas over Jesus 27:11-26 How does that make Jesus feel? How does Jesus feel when we choose sin over him?

Jesus is flogged, a bloody process by which lead balls and barbs are..... 27:27-31 attached to leather straps. The bruising from the lead balls and cuts from the barbs leave Jesus' back shredded and bloody. He is not only whipped, but he is flayed alive. Some have theorized that Pilate is being "humane", hoping flogging will kill Jesus, sparing him the worse fate of crucifixion

Further humiliation and blood as Jesus is stripped by soldiers. Thorns are hammered into his head. Blood congeals on the robe & as it is ripped off, his wounds are painfully torn open

Crucifixion is public, slow death by exhaustion & asphyxiation, reserved for 27:32-35 the worst criminals. Nails are driven through wrists and feet, so you hang, painfully supported by the nails in your wrists. The position of your arms and chest make it hard to breathe. You must push yourself up, putting pressure on your nailed feet to catch some air. Eventually you tire and suffocate

The religious crowd he came to save betrays him. The government ignores..... 27:36-44 him. His friends desert him. Even his fellow criminals insult him. How would you have felt in that position? But at least he has God...

Why did Jesus think God had forsaken him?..... 27:45-46

Learn Personal Responsibility and Godly Sorrow

- Sin is serious, because sin separates us from God..... Isaiah 59:1-2
- When we sin, death is what we deserve..... Hebrews 9:22 (Romans 6:23)
 - For our sins to be forgiven, we require a sacrifice to take the punishment in our place. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice necessary for our forgiveness
- Jesus, who had no sin, took on our sins..... 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - ***He experienced separation from God for the first time in his life when he took on our sins***
- All of us have sinned, and all of us require God's grace..... (Romans 3:23-24)
- Jesus died on the cross for you personally..... Romans 5:6-8
 - Remember there were many others who died by crucifixion in the first century. It was not that Jesus was painfully crucified that makes him unique. It was that he was crucified for you, in your place.
 - Even if you were the only person in the world, Jesus would still need to sacrifice himself the same way so that your sins could be forgiven
- Jesus took our sin so seriously that he was willing to die in our place to save us. How seriously do you see your sin? How serious are you about dying to your sin?

The Love of God

- At just the right time Christ would die for us, despite how we sinned against him
- God's love is rare. There is nothing like the love of Christ
 - No other religion tells of a God who loves us sacrificially and graciously
- We can know and rely upon God's love, because Christ died for us.. 1 John 4:7-21
 - God's love is proven by Jesus dying for our sins. Jesus' sacrifice always reminds us of God's unfailing love, even though circumstances change, we make mistakes, or people disappoint us.

Live Like Jesus

The Roman centurions, who are of a different religion, are moved..... Matthew 27:47-54

- Witnessing Jesus' death transforms people. ***How will it transform you?***
- Christ's love compels us to be transformed..... 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - Because of God's love, we are motivated to love others and obey God
- Why be a disciple? ***Because God gave his very best through Jesus, we should give our best in return***

For Deeper Understanding

- Growing spiritually means understanding God's grace more and more
- Substitute your name..... (Isaiah 53:4-6)
- Take Sunday Communion: (Matthew 26:26-29)
 - Jesus commanded us to remember the sacrifice of his body and blood
 - The bread represents his body which was given for us
 - The cup represents his blood that was poured out for the forgiveness of our sins