



session 8 group study guide

the crucifixion of Jesus Christ

message

Crucifixion was the Roman method of execution for slaves and foreigners. Generally, it took a long time for a person to die on a cross, which made it excruciatingly painful. Death by crucifixion was unspeakably shameful and degrading. Yet Jesus Christ willingly suffered through the physical pain and humiliation of the cross in order to set humankind free from sin.

Matthew 27:27-44 can be a difficult passage to read, but it is an essential part of the story of our forgiveness and redemption. As you read this passage, keep the following questions in mind: (1) What might have been going through Jesus' mind as He endured these events? (2) Why didn't Jesus save Himself?

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, King of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him (Matthew 27:27-44).

dig

1. Read through the following different accounts of the Crucifixion in the three other Gospels. What new details or insights do you gain from reading these accounts?

Mark 15:16-32

Luke 23:26-43

John 19:16-27

2. In Luke's account of the crucifixion (Luke 23:39-43), he includes a conversation between Jesus and the two criminals crucified with Him. What two opinions do the criminals represent?

3. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (v. 43)?

4. Compare Matthew 27:35 and Psalm 22:16-18. Psalm 22 was written hundreds of years before the crucifixion of Jesus, yet it contains an amazingly detailed prophecy of what happened at the cross. What similarities do you find between Psalm 22 and the crucifixion of Jesus?

5. What is the significance that hundreds of years before Jesus' death, the events of His crucifixion were foretold?

apply

1. Matthew 27:27-31 describes how Jesus was physically beaten and mocked before He was crucified. What do you imagine He was feeling—physically, emotionally and psychologically—during this ordeal of abuse?

2. What thoughts were perhaps going through the minds of Jesus' disciples?

3. What thoughts were perhaps going through the minds of those who had heard of Jesus but were not yet believers?

4. How would you feel if you were a disciple of Jesus and you had watched Him die on the cross?

reflect

1. Beyond Jesus' physical suffering, what else did He bear in His death?

2. Read 1 Peter 2:21-25. What lessons can we take from Jesus' crucifixion about how to handle adversity and struggles in our lives?

3. Why did Jesus stay on the cross?

4. How would this story be different if Jesus did something that He could have done—take Himself off the cross? What would have been the impact on those at the crucifixion? What would have been the impact on us and our salvation?

5. What benefits have we received because of Jesus' death?

6. How does the knowledge of Christ's suffering on the cross help you to understand the depth of His love for you?

meditation



For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—
because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

ROMANS 6:6-7