

# Getting Serious

## The Disciples Question Everything



## The Last Week of Christ's Journey

As the cross nears, Jesus' disciples respond differently to the crisis' that are taking place...How would we respond?

What does it take to be a disciple of Jesus? There is no real answer to the question. Each of us goes through different ups-and-downs, trials and victories. How we respond in times of joy and times of great difficulty help us to understand our own faith. Let's take a look at Jesus' earliest disciples.

1

### PETER

Jesus' lead disciple who often made mistakes and got it wrong.

2

### JOHN

The Beloved Disciple who stuck around in the tough times but often in the fringes.

3

### THE WOMEN

Mary and others who were with him in the toughest time and support him all along.



### In The Garden

Jesus' disciples fall asleep when he needs them most. Are we awake?



### Sticking to Our Guns

It's not easy to claim our faith in the midst of criticism.



### When it All Comes Apart

What would we have done when our Savior died?

## We Come to the Garden With Him

Jesus, in turmoil, goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. The disciples let him down...some more than others.

<sup>32</sup> They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “**Sit here while I pray.**” <sup>33</sup> He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated.

<sup>34</sup> And he said to them, “**I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.**”

<sup>35</sup> And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> He said, “**Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.**” <sup>37</sup> He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “**Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?**” <sup>38</sup> **Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**” <sup>39</sup> And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. <sup>40</sup> And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. <sup>41</sup> He came a third time and said to them, “**Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is**



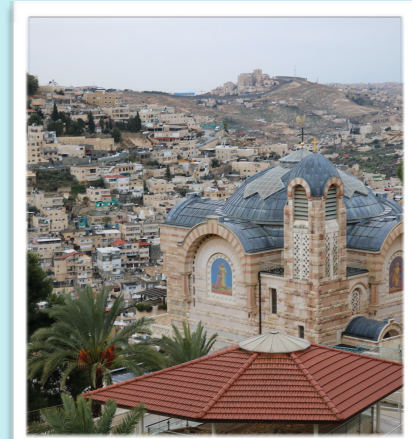
**betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”** [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version.\*](#) (1989). (Mk 14:32–42). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

## How would you feel if Jesus called you out?

It couldn't have been easy for Peter and the disciples. They too would have had a busy week and now Jesus was asking them to sit and pray late into the night...for hours. When have you had something that you felt Jesus called you to do long-term? How hard is it to 'stay awake'?

### THE HIGH PRIEST CAIAPHAS (14 BCE–46 CE)

Not much is known about Caiaphas except that which is written in the Gospels and the writings of Josephus. Caiaphas is most well-known for the trial of Jesus in front of the Sanhedrin. It was in the midst of this trial that we see two of Jesus' disciples responding to outside pressure in different ways. Granted, the pressure was different for each and it's sometimes hard to remember that John was present as well as Peter, who denies he knows Jesus when questioned. The picture to the right is the church built on the remains of Caiaphas' house where the trial took place. Somewhere on the grounds, long ago, Jesus' strongest disciple pretended he didn't even know him.





## Sharing Our Faith

Why is it so hard to tell people we are disciples of Jesus?

What usually stops you from sharing your faith?

What other areas of your life are you willing to share with others?

## Peter in the Courtyard

<sup>66</sup> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. <sup>67</sup> When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” <sup>68</sup> But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out into the forecourt.

Then the cock crowed. <sup>69</sup> And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” <sup>70</sup> But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” <sup>71</sup> But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.”

<sup>72</sup> At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

*[The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#)*. (1989). (Mk 14:66–72). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

## PERHAPS THE THREE STUMBLING BLOCKS OF FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP?

- 1) Keeping our Faith Alive: What do you do to nurture your faith, to stay awake and engaged?
- 2) Witnessing to our Faith: How do people that don't know you well learn of. Your faith?
- 3) Staying Close When Hopes Die: When our greatest hopes and expectations die on the cross, where do we find ourselves?



# At the Foot of the Cross... Or at Safe-Distance???

Where do we stand when Christ needs us most?

## In John:

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "**Woman, here is your son.**" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, "**Here is your mother.**" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

<sup>28</sup> After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "**I am thirsty.**" <sup>29</sup> A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup> When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "**It is finished.**" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

*[The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#)*. (1989). (Jn 19:25–30). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

## In Luke:

<sup>44</sup> It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, <sup>45</sup> while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup> Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**" Having said this, he breathed his last. <sup>47</sup> When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "**Certainly this man was innocent.**" <sup>48</sup> And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. <sup>49</sup> But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

*[The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#)*. (1989). (Lk 23:44–49). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.



One of the traditional sites of Christ's crucifixion. You may be able to make out the 'skull' shape that is looking to your right with a dark eye, shaded forehead, and a set jawline with angry lips. You can also make out another skull on the far right showing two eyes, a nose, and mouth barely visible over the buildings.

Wherever Jesus was crucified, it was an horrific ordeal, tortuous for both victim and witness.

How deeply have you considered what Christ endured for you and the world?



## How close to the cross?

Perhaps the most difficult dilemma for people of faith is the line between a strong faith in Christ and fanaticism. The Gospels tell different stories or viewpoints on how close to Christ some of his disciples were during the crucifixion. In John, they were close enough for a conversation, however painful. In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) they all stand a safe-distance away. We saw the same distance in the courtyard of Caiaphas with Peter outside and John within. Within the context of Jesus' day and the situation when he was crucified, being close to Jesus was a dangerous prospect. It begs the question:

When it comes to Jesus, are we all in or a safe-distance? Somewhere in between?

Describe where you feel you are in your journey with Christ:

What would it look like to take one step closer to Christ?

### ***A Closing Prayer:***

Loving and most gracious God, we know that your love for us is not dependent on our love for you; your faithfulness to us is not dependent on our faithfulness to you. Forgive us, we pray, for the times when we seek the safety of distance from you. Renew within us a passion to follow you, to engage your Son even when, especially when the journey to follow him becomes fright with trials, conflict, and even danger. Strengthen us for the journey to follow Christ and help us to learn that true humility that sees our own faults and short-comings not as objects of shame and self-loathing, but places where you are glorified in the healing and transforming of our lives. Remind us daily to stay awake in faith, to stand in witness to your grace, and to always find ourselves at the feet of your Son, who gave himself for our healing forgiveness and the transformation of your Creation. Amen.