

Chapter 15

Bible Concept: Crucifixion

In ancient days when the Roman Empire wanted people to know that it was bad to be a rebel, they would kill the rebel in a gruesome way and leave his dead body on display for all to see and to learn that it was not good to be a rebel. Jesus was seen as a rebel because he threatened the Jewish High Council with a different way of believing in God. And Jesus was seen as a rebel against the Roman Empire because he claimed he was God's Son and the only one to be worshipped was God, not the Emperor.

So they crucified Jesus with other rebels in a place where all the people coming into Jerusalem would see and learn it was not good to be a rebel. Crucifixion is a form of torture. The nails in the hands or feet usually didn't kill the rebel. The blood would clot before too much would be lost, so that didn't kill the rebel. Heat, extreme physical stress, suffocation, and perhaps even a blood clot inside the brain or lung, this combination resulted in a slow (sometimes several days) agonizing death.

It might be easy to blame the Jews for Jesus' death, as some do—even in the Bible. It might be easy to blame the Romans for his death. Some pastors even blame sinful people today for why Jesus died. The point of Jesus' death is not who is at fault. The point is God's love conquers even the barriers of sin and death. God sent Jesus knowing he would die even though during his life Jesus did many good things, such as healing the sick, preaching about God's love, feeding the hungry and more. And yet, despite a cruel death, Jesus does not remain dead. Jesus is resurrected on Easter Sunday. By dying, Jesus defeats the powers of sin and death, and by rising, Jesus gives us hope. This is the full meaning of Jesus' death: because he died and now lives forever with God, we too, shall live forever with God.

Chapter 15 Verse 34 reads:

Then at that time Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

New Living Translation (NLT)

At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Reflect on that statement for a moment.

This is the first line from Psalm 22. We are meant to hear the whole Psalm. Read Psalm 22 now and talk about what it says in its entirety.

Memory
Verse

Definition

The curtain of the temple was torn in two when Jesus died. This was not just any ordinary window curtain you might find in your house. This was a magnificent curtain which hung in the Temple in front of the Holiest place in the Temple so the evilness of this world would be separated from the pure holiness of God. This curtain was huge, and was one piece, not separate pieces sewn together. The symbolism of this curtain being torn in two is God is no longer contained in holy places, but found in all the earth.

Focus Story: The death of Jesus, 15:21-40

The death of Jesus was not neat, it was messy and it was bloody. Jesus was tortured so much Mark tells us another man was called upon to carry Jesus' cross. Who was that man?

Crucifixion is a way for empires to get rid of opponents and rebels. What was the charge on the sign over Jesus' head?

Do you think they really believed Jesus was a king?

Often when we read the Gospel the people we expect to get it - don't; and, those who we think shouldn't understand, do. Who confesses that Jesus really is the Son of God after he dies?

What prompted him to make this confession?

Not everyone on the Jewish Council agreed that Jesus needed to be put to death. Who was the council member who took Jesus' body and saw that he was properly buried?

Who saw where Jesus was laid?

Having read the complete passion story of Jesus, from his entry to Jerusalem through his burial, how do you feel about Jesus, knowing what he has done for you?

How do you feel about yourself, knowing Jesus has died for all your sins?

*praying
together*



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Praying together as a family is a special time. Light a candle to remember that God is present in your midst as you pray. Use a photo album when you pray for others, it is helpful if you cannot pray in person with someone, that you can at least be looking at a picture. Sure God knows who we pray for, but having pictures helps us remember who we are praying for.

Pray together: Guardian of our lives, you took our sins that we may receive your gifts. Help the power of your death to make a difference in the way we live our lives. Let us live only to glorify you. Amen

Talk about a person in your family or a close friend who has died. What types of feelings do you remember having when you went to the funeral/burial? What kind of feelings do you have now when you think of this person? Thank God for the gift of everlasting life.

Conclude your time by saying the Lord's Prayer.