



SERMON STUDY GUIDE

“JOHN 19:16-42”

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you from the sermon?
- What stood out to you from the text?
- The main theme of John’s Gospel is that by believing in Jesus as God’s son we find life.
 1. How did you find life when reading this passage?
 2. Did you personally find life in a specific way from the sermon this week?
- How did the sermon or passage point you to Jesus?

THE CONTEXT: STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Cultural: During Jesus’s time, the people’s value system was based on attaining honor, or a sense of respect and status within one’s community, while avoiding shame, or public rejection. Cicero, a Roman lawyer and associate of Julius Caesar, explains the cultural draw to honor. He writes, “By nature, we yearn and hunger for honor, and once we have glimpsed, as it were, some part of its radiance, there is nothing we are not prepared to bear and to suffer in order to secure it.” He means that once someone has tasted that feeling of respect and status, they will do anything to protect it. This Roman cultural narrative should be compared to Jesus’s story. Jesus, being fully God and having all honor and status, chose to embrace the ultimate means of delivering shame: crucifixion, and this brings us honor (2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-11).

Historical: The process of crucifixion is designed to heap shame upon its victim. From walking through the city with a beam on his shoulders to being stripped naked while hanging on the cross, this entire process aims to strip someone of their sense of self-worth and humiliate them. Not only does this shame an individual, but everyone associated with the individual shares in his shame. Jesus’s crucifixion process was designed to drastically demote his authority and humiliate any of his followers or family members.

How is it unique that God would endure that kind of shame from his creation for his creation?

THE CONTENT: THE WORDS OF JOHN

This passage has a few themes that show us what Jesus is doing on the cross:

1. **Reversal:** Because of Jesus, objects of shame declare God’s glory
 - Pilate’s inscription (19:19) basically declares to the whole world, “This is what happens when someone opposes Caesar. There is no king with power except Caesar,” and so he heaps shame upon Jesus. Pilate writes this in the language of the Jews (Aramaic), the Romans (Latin), and everyone else (Greek) (19:20). Together, the message reaches all people in all spheres of life, but really it becomes an international pronouncement of the gospel revealing who God is and what God does.
 - As the soldiers strip Jesus naked, they imply that he is powerless and weak. They reveal his vulnerability to the world. But John’s audience can see this as a wink to God’s power. Jesus is not a weak powerless king, but the victorious king that the entire of history points towards (19:23-24).
 - Crucifixion heaps shame on the family of the crucified, and this along with their family losing their firstborn son resultantly breaks Jesus’s family. But really by the cross, Jesus builds a new family where broken people can be adopted into God’s family (19:26-27; see also: Romans 8:15-16).
2. **Fulfillment:** Jesus’s actions on the cross satisfactory fulfill the requirements of salvation
 - The verb translated here as “it is finished” is *tetelestai* τετέλεσται (19:30). It is in the perfect tense which means this is an action that has been completed that still has continuing effects. Jesus’s death fully assures resurrection for followers of Jesus. This has been accomplished meaning we do not need to work to attain salvation, we receive it. However, this should also have continuing effects in our lives as we are transformed by the grace we have received.
3. **Sacrifice:** Jesus’s death and the burial story are about sacrifice
 - When John places Nicodemus at the scene of Jesus’s burial (19:39), his audience is reminded of a previous encounter between Nicodemus and Jesus when Jesus tells Nicodemus about what death he



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would have (John 3:13-15). Jesus tells him that his death will be one wherein he becomes the people's curse and is lifted up so that all who look to him will be saved. By reminding his audience of this, John explains what Jesus has just done. Through his sacrifice, Jesus established a way for us to be healed from our curse: Sin.

- Nicodemus and Joseph both make large financial sacrifices to care for Jesus. Both the tomb and the spices are expensive. They understand that the proper response to sacrifice is sacrifice.

THE CONTACT

What longings for status and/or security lead you away from the path and promise of Jesus?

If Cicero is right, and all people truly crave respect and status, how will we attain it? We can become slaves to competitive, cultural narratives that tell us that finding worth depends on being better than, having more than, and doing more than or we can align with the sacrifice of Jesus which contains reversal. Instead of operating with a scarcity mindset always fighting against others, we can choose the path of Jesus which is the path of sacrifice.

By choosing the path of Jesus, all people can have the dignity and honor restored that Sin strips away. We do not have to do anything to earn access to this path, but the continuing effects of God's grace mean that we should respond with sacrifice. Instead of a financial sacrifice, Romans encourages to "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1) meaning that because of God's grace, you become a different type of person. As we die to the old self and embrace the ways of God, we are "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20) and God brings reversal. Our story does not end with death, but with new life (John 3:15). Jesus's crucifixion became his exaltation (Philippians 2:9) and assurance of our resurrection (2 Corinthians 4:14).

In your pursuits of honor, which narrative will you choose to participate in (competitive, cultural narratives or the story of Jesus in John 19)?

RESPOND

- How does this passage encourage you, challenge you, or change you in your efforts to become more like Jesus?
- What is one thing you learned about yourself from God's Word? How will you respond in obedience this week?
- Who is someone you can have a conversation with about what Jesus is doing in your life or invite to join you at a CU Church gathering.

PRAY

... for each other and spend time praising God. Pray that he will show you how to better love God and love people.