



Icon - Part 1

The life and fate of Jesus was considered bizarre from day one. The powerful political and religious authorities of the time viewed the entire thing as baffling— A king on a cross? Who ultimately retains his kingship and kingdom? Crazy. And for those who came to believe in the deity of Jesus, following this kind of king was risky. After all, it required a person to pretty much give up on every value that had been prominent in the Roman world, creating previously unimagined levels of wealth and power.

Getting Started

1. When did you last experience road rage— from either side (aggressor or victim)? What was actually going on beneath the surface of this interaction, when you look back on it?

What About You?

2. What are your go-to coping mechanisms for disappointment, discontentment, never enough-ness and if only-ness?
3. Where do you strive? Where do you catch yourself competing and comparing? Internally or externally?
4. When you think about alternatives to the “kill or be killed,” “might makes right” patterns of this world, what comes to mind? Are there any other options?
5. Have you ever seen the cross of Jesus turned into an excuse to be cruel or controlling? Where do you think this kind of thinking comes from? How do we justify it to ourselves?



Look It Up

Luke 4 : 5-6,, 9 : 23, Matthew 4 : 9 - 10, Deuteronomy 6:12-13, 1 Corinthians 1:17

6. What was the tempter really asking Jesus to admit in this scene? What values would Jesus have been forsaking? What would he have been embracing?
7. What are the key differences between Jesus's kingdom, and the kind we're used to seeing in human society?
8. What patterns and ways of living were the Israelites going to be tempted to adopt once they escaped slavery? What was wrong with these paths, in your reading?
9. In light of the things we tend to value in this world, what all stands out about the way of the cross?

Putting It All Together

10. Will you commit to spending a few minutes this week meditating on this statement?
"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." –1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV
11. Where in your life are you adopting the values that have been typical of the "kingdoms" of this world? Where do you catch yourself fitting into the "might makes right" striving that has caused so much destruction throughout human history?
12. What does the "upside down" way of the cross require of you at work right now? In your personal relationships? Your politics? Your interactions with your family?
13. Do you chafe at the idea of "choosing to lose?" How do you deal with the temptation to view the way of Jesus as weak or impractical?

