

Subject: The Word of Life Mid-Passion Week Teaching

Resources: [[TEACHING LINK](#)] AND [DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES LINK]

For those surrendered or considering surrender to our Lord,

As we journey through this sacred Passion Week, I wanted to reach out with a recap of our midweek service, where we explored one of the most profound moments in human history—Christ's prayer of forgiveness from the cross.

Summary: The sermon explored Luke 23:33-34a, examining Jesus' crucifixion at Calvary and His remarkable prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." We discovered that this moment wasn't just a historical event, but a deeply personal one for each of us. Jesus brought YOUR name to that cross. While the physical suffering of crucifixion was unimaginably horrific, Christ bore an even greater burden—the Father's wrath poured out upon Him for all sin. Yet in that darkest hour, surrounded by rejection and agony, Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those at war with Him. This sermon challenged us to understand the relationships involved—between Jesus and the Father, between Christ and humanity, and ultimately, between God and each one of us personally.

Takeaways:

1. **Christ's death was personal for you.** When Jesus was crucified, He knew you would receive His offer of salvation. He didn't die for an abstract concept of humanity—He died knowing your name, your struggles, and your need for forgiveness. The living God lives in you right now, shaping you to be more like Him.
2. **Forgiveness reveals relationship, love, and hope.** Jesus could have prayed for anything in His final moments—rescue, relief, or revenge. Instead, He prayed for the forgiveness of His enemies. This prayer reveals the heart of the Gospel: relationship with the Father, Godly love that surpasses understanding, and hope for all who would receive it.
3. **"It is finished" means victory, not defeat.** What appeared to be Christ's moment of defeat was actually humanity's greatest victory. His death wasn't the end of hope—it was the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. The question now is whether we remain among the "they-unbelievers" who reject His forgiveness, or the "they-believers" who receive His gift and find their identity in Christ.

As we continue through this Passion Week toward Easter Sunday, may we live in the reality that Christ's forgiveness has been accomplished. Let us give thanks and glory to

God, and pray that those still fighting Him might receive the forgiveness He so freely offers.

In His Service,

Pastor Jim

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Words of Life

Luke 23:33-34a

Passion Week Midweek Service

I. Introduction: Words Matter

1. A Sunday School teacher had just concluded her lesson and wanted to make sure she had made her point. She said, “Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness of sin?”

There was a short pause and then, from the back of the room, a small boy spoke up. “Sin,” he said.¹

2. I picked this story for our opening because it’s cute and even a little funny in its innocence. And yet sin is no laughing matter...left unattended or with the wrong attention, its consequence is eternal separation from God, meaning death. Attended properly too results with eternal life in the presence of the Lord Himself.
3. Encompassing Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter, this week is often referred to as Passion Week because of the passion with which Christ went to the cross of Calvary. Since we have arrived at the midpoint of this week, it seems good for us to dig a bit deeper into one of the final events of His life and a few of His final words.

Turn with me to [Luke 23:33-34a](#).

II. Luke 23:33: Identified and Crucified With Sinners

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1. Just a short time before, His flesh was torn as his blood flowed from the whips loaded with sharp objects that had lashed His back. Weakened with pain growing in every step, He struggled in

¹ <https://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/before-asking-for-forgiveness>, submitted by the homiletics class of West Coast Baptist College

dragging the beam of wood that would be the instrument of His death...with some help, He arrived.

2. It was at Calvary, “the place of the skull”, that Jesus was crucified. Pilate had washed his hands. The religious leaders had, so they thought, won. But they were still trying to ensure Christ’s influence, an influence that had plagued them for years, would die on that cross. They wanted to be the authority on earth...well, at least, share the authority with the Romans. The Gentiles and Jews wanted a better life. Some even wanted God. But they had missed the time of His visitation.
3. As though the scourging wasn’t enough, nails driven through the Lord’s wrists and, His legs would have sent shockwaves of pain shuddering through His body. What’s more, it was increasingly difficult to breath and suffering severe muscle cramps along with agonizing pain would bring exhaustion as life ebbed out of His body. Insects would come and burrow in the open wounds while carrion birds would sneak in for a strip of flesh.

Crucifixion was sick! It was man’s best efforts in bringing about slow death with the maximum pain and suffering.²

4. In some sense, mankind’s depravity expressed in crucifixion mimics the ugliness of sin!!! And as horrific as crucifixion is, Jesus had an infinitely harder cup yet to bear on Calvary.
 - A. Jesus, surrounded by the world full of rejection, hung on that cross between and therein identified with sinners. It was then that the cup Jesus asked be passed in **Matthew 26:39** was poured out; this cup was of the Father’s wrath poured out upon His Son for all sin.
 - B. BUT, the thing is that when Christ was crucified, He brought your name to that cross. It is tempting to think that Christ died for all, but forget that He knew you would receive His offer of

² David Guzik, *Luke*, David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Lk 23:32–33.

salvation. Scripture is clear...if one dies in Christ, he/she lives in Christ! **Child of God, the living God lives in you!** The living God is, this very moment, shaping you to be more like Him. This moment in history is personal for you!

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III. Luke 23:34a: Grace, Mercy, & Forgiveness

1. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." **Jesus could have prayed anything...from legions of angels, His own escape, maybe having more time, or just for the suffering to be done.** But He prayed for the forgiveness of those at war with Him.....what love this is!
2. Jesus, Father, they...and forgiveness. **This verse screams of relationship, Godly love, and hope.** It is these that form the outline of our study of this verse today.

A. First up, I am going to open Pandora's box. **Jesus, often referred to as the 2nd Person of the Godhead, which also includes the Father and the Holy Spirit.** While having different primary ways they relate with mankind, the Godhead or Trinity, share the same essence and purpose – **meaning they are all fully God and all are, together, in all things as the Godhead.** For the purpose of our passage today, our focus is on the three mentioned – Jesus, Father, and "they" – **while knowing the Holy Spirit is also very much a part of what is unfolding.**

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B. Let's take a moment to consider some things of the Father. **He is holy, transcendent, sovereign, self-sufficient, life, love, just, merciful, gracious, wrathful, patient, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present, and unchanging.** We also know:

- i. The Father shared His glory with the Son (He 1:3; Jn 1:14, 17:5)
- ii. **The Father was One with the Son** (Jn 10:30, 14:9-11)
- iii. The Son was the doorway to the Father (John 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5)
- iv. **The Father loves his Son** (Jn 3:35)

- v. The Father gave the Son the cup he must bear (Mt 26:39)
- vi. [The Father is the one to whom Jesus intercedes with on our behalf...he is the one to whom Jesus testifies on our behalf](#) (Ro 8:34; He 7:25)
- vii. The Father forsook His son (Mt 27:46)
- viii. [The Father gave Jesus all authority](#) (Jn 12:49-50)

- ix. Consider also that on death's doorstep Jesus calls out to the Father.

- x. Before moving on, Scriptures such as **John 1:12-13, 17:10-11, Romans 8:14-16, and Malachi 2:10** also make clear...ARE YOU READY FOR A 'BUT GOD' MOMENT? [Scripture makes clear that He is the Father of any confessing Jesus as Lord. BOOM!](#)

3. Having considered some of the relationship between Father and Son, let's get into the "they" for a moment. ["They" are Jew and Gentile, believers \(a few\), unbelievers \(most\), and sinners \(all\).](#)
 - A. As sinners, all are desperate for what only Christ offers in love and joy – forgiveness.
 - B. The "they-unbelievers" have their identity in the things of the world – the lusts of the flesh, sensuality, pride, riches, position, power, and the like; [that is having REJECTED Christ's forgiveness, they remain destined for hell.](#) Jesus willingly took on the penalty for their sins, but they said "we got this" and will now hopelessly bear the penalty for themselves.
 - C. The "they-believers" have their identity in Christ; that is, having RECEIVED His forgiveness in the form of His taking the penalty for their sins, this group of "they's" have His gifts (including meaning, purpose, and value), promises, and the hope of eternal life.

IV. Closing: Tetelestai

1. In closing, I want to bring us to one more verse. Jesus is about to die and with Him, the fleeting hope of the apostles is gone (for the moment) and the haters celebrate what they think of as their victory.

It was in that moment, as we read in [John 19:30](#), Jesus said: “It is finished”.

What Jesus came to do has been accomplished. His death was our great victory. His death was our lifeline. His death was the expression of His pure love and costly grace. His death was from His wellspring of compassion and caring. Jesus willingly and joyfully died that we may have life.

2. It's with this in mind:
 - A. We rightfully give thanks and glory to God; and
 - B. I wonder if we might pray His forgiveness be received by the “they's” still fighting Him.

Revelation 22:6-21

Discussion Prompts

Don't be shy or embarrassed, this is a safe place to talk, learn, and grow. All of us should walk with an attitude of grace and Godly love in encouraging one another to contribute to our shared growth in the Lord.

For more discussion questions helping your faith to grow, please download the sermon documents typically posted the day after each sermon on the watch tab of our App or website.

1. How does the reality that Jesus knew your name and brought it to the cross personally impact your understanding of His sacrifice?
2. The sermon describes the Father forsaking His Son while also loving Him and giving Him all authority. How do you reconcile these seemingly contradictory aspects of the Father-Son relationship at the cross?
3. Share some ways you might explain our need for forgiveness. Consider both the giving of forgiveness AND the receiving of forgiveness.

Luke 23:33-34a

Words of Life

I. Introduction: Words Matter

- Sin is no laughing matter.

II. Luke 23:33: Identified and Crucified With Sinners

- Crucifixion was man's best effort in bringing about slow death with the maximum pain and suffering.
- Consider that when Jesus went to the cross for all, He brought your name with Him.

Additional Scripture References: Mt 26:39

III. Luke 23:34a: Grace, Mercy, & Forgiveness

- This verse brings 4 things into focus including the Father, Jesus, "they", and forgiveness.

Additional Scripture References: He 1:3; Jn 1:14, 17:5; Jn 10:30, 14:9-11; Jn 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5; Jn 3:35; Mt 26:39; Ro 8:34; He 7:25; Jn 12:49-50, 1:12-13, 17:10-11; Ro 8:14-16; Mal 2:10

IV. Closing: Tetelestai

Additional Scripture References: Jn 19:30

5-Day Devotional Luke 23:33-34a Words of Life

Day 1: The Place of the Skull

Reading: Luke 23:32-38

Devotional: Calvary—"the place of the skull"—represents humanity's darkest moment and God's brightest love. As Jesus hung between two criminals, He was literally and spiritually identified with sinners. This wasn't accidental; it was intentional. He chose to be numbered with transgressors so you could be numbered with the redeemed. The ugliness of crucifixion mirrors the ugliness of sin, yet Christ willingly embraced both.

Today, reflect on this truth: Jesus brought YOUR name to that cross. He knew you personally, individually, intimately. His suffering wasn't generic—it was specific to your need for forgiveness. How does knowing Christ died with you in mind change how you view your worth and His love? Write down one specific sin Christ bore for you, then thank Him personally for carrying that burden.

Day 2: Father, Forgive Them

Reading: Luke 23:34; Romans 5:6-11

Devotional: In His moment of greatest agony, Jesus prayed for His enemies. Not for rescue. Not for vengeance. For forgiveness. This prayer reveals the heart of God—relentlessly loving, impossibly merciful. "They do not know what they do" speaks to humanity's spiritual blindness. We were all once "they"—unaware of our warfare against God, ignorant of our desperate need. But Christ interceded. The Father and Son worked in perfect unity to extend grace to the undeserving.

Consider this: while you were still a sinner, Christ died for you. Before you knew you needed Him, He was already making a way. This is the scandalous nature of divine love—it pursues the rebellious, forgives the hostile, and transforms enemies into children. Pray for someone who has hurt you, asking God to grant them the gift of knowing Christ's forgiveness.

Day 3: The Cup of Wrath

Reading: Matthew 26:36-46; Isaiah 53:4-6

Devotional: In Gethsemane, Jesus asked if the cup could pass from Him. On Calvary, He drank it fully. This wasn't merely physical suffering—it was the cup of God's wrath against all sin poured out on His sinless Son. The Father, who loves the Son infinitely, turned His face away as Jesus became sin for us.

This separation—God from God—is the mystery at the heart of our salvation. Jesus experienced the hell we deserved so we could experience the heaven we don't. The weight of every lie, every betrayal, every act of violence and hatred throughout history

rested on His shoulders. Yet He didn't falter. He finished what He started because His love for you was stronger than the horror before Him. Spend time in silence contemplating what Jesus endured in your place. Let gratitude overwhelm you.

Day 4: Identity in Christ

Reading: John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-17

Devotional: There are two groups of "they" at the cross: those who reject and those who receive. The difference isn't moral superiority—all are sinners. The difference is response to grace. When you confessed Jesus as Lord, your identity fundamentally shifted. You moved from "they-unbeliever" to "they-believer." Your citizenship changed. Your family changed. Your destiny changed. You became a child of the Father, co-heir with Christ, indwelt by the Spirit. This isn't about what you've done; it's about what He's done and your acceptance of it.

Your identity is no longer rooted in worldly achievements, failures, or opinions. You are His. Beloved. Chosen. Forgiven. Sealed. This identity cannot be stripped away because it's secured by His finished work, not your ongoing performance. List three ways your identity in Christ differs from your old identity. Live today from that new reality.

Day 5: It Is Finished

Reading: John 19:28-30; Hebrews 10:11-18

Devotional: "It is finished." Three words that changed eternity. Not "I am finished" in defeat, but "It is finished" in victory. The debt is paid. The sacrifice is complete. The way to the Father is open. No more striving. No more earning. No more separation. What Jesus came to accomplish—reconciling rebellious humanity to a holy God—is done. This finished work is your lifeline, your hope, your peace. You cannot add to it or improve upon it. You can only receive it with gratitude and live from it with joy. The cross wasn't Plan B; it was always the plan. From eternity past, the Lamb was slain for you.

Now live as one for whom Christ died and rose. Let His finished work produce unfinished praise in your heart. Declare "It is finished" over any area where you're still trying to earn God's approval. Rest in His completed work.

Small Group Study Guide

Luke 23:33-34

Words of Life

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Jesus identified with sinners - He was crucified between criminals, bringing our names to the cross
2. Jesus prayed for forgiveness - Even in agony, His focus was on reconciliation
3. The Father-Son relationship - Understanding the Trinity deepens our appreciation of the cross
4. "It is finished" - Christ's death accomplished our salvation completely
5. Identity matters - We are either identified by worldly things or by Christ

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. What stands out most to you about Jesus' prayer "Father, forgive them" in the context of His suffering? How does this challenge or inspire you?
2. The sermon states that "when Christ was crucified, He brought your name to that cross." What does this personal aspect of Christ's sacrifice mean to you?
3. Read Matthew 26:39 together. What was "the cup" Jesus asked to be passed, and why did He still drink it?
4. The sermon describes two groups of "they"—believers and unbelievers. How does understanding your identity in Christ (rather than in worldly things) change the way you live daily?
5. Jesus could have prayed for anything—escape, relief, vengeance—but He prayed for forgiveness. What does this teach us about God's heart and priorities? How should this shape our prayers?
6. The Father "forsook His son" (Matthew 27:46) so we could be adopted as children. How does this truth impact your understanding of God's love for you?
7. "It is finished" (John 19:30) means Christ's work is complete. How does this truth combat feelings of needing to earn God's approval or work for your salvation?

8. The sermon mentions that the ugliness of crucifixion "mimics the ugliness of sin." How seriously do you take sin in your own life? Are there areas where you've become complacent?
9. Jesus interceded for those who were killing Him. Is there someone you're struggling to forgive? What would it look like to follow Jesus' example in this situation?
10. The closing challenges us to pray for "they's" still fighting Him. Who in your life needs to receive Christ's forgiveness? How can you pray for them this week?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Personal Worship: Spend 15 minutes in prayer thanking Jesus specifically for taking your sins to the cross. Name specific sins He's forgiven you for.
2. Forgiveness: Identify one person you need to forgive. Take a step toward reconciliation this week, even if it's just praying for them daily.
3. Intercession: Create a list of 3-5 unbelievers in your life. Commit to praying daily for their salvation, asking the Father to forgive them and draw them to Christ.
4. Identity Check: Journal about where you're finding your identity. Are there areas where you're seeking value in worldly things (position, appearance, success) rather than in Christ?
5. Share the Gospel: Share with one person this week what "It is finished" means to you and why Christ's death is personal.

Closing Prayer Points:

- Gratitude - Thank God for the finished work of Christ on the cross
- Forgiveness - Confess areas where you've taken sin lightly; receive His complete forgiveness
- Intercession - Pray by name for unbelievers in your lives to receive Christ's forgiveness
- Transformation - Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live out your identity in Christ
- Love - Pray for the ability to forgive others as Christ has forgiven you

Discussion Questions

Luke 23:33-34a

Words of Life

1. In what ways does the depravity expressed through crucifixion mirror the ugliness of sin in our own lives and world today?
2. Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those at war with Him rather than for His own escape or relief. What does this reveal about the nature of God's love, and how should it shape our response to those who oppose us?
3. What does it mean that believers have their identity in Christ rather than in the things of the world, and how does this identity transform daily living?
4. The sermon states that unbelievers who reject Christ's forgiveness will hopelessly bear the penalty for their sins themselves. How does this truth affect your urgency in sharing the gospel with others?
5. When Jesus said 'It is finished,' He declared that what He came to do was accomplished. What specific aspects of His mission were completed in that moment, and what does that mean for your life today?
6. How does understanding that the living God is shaping you to be more like Him in this very moment change your perspective on current struggles or circumstances?
7. The sermon mentions that Jesus intercedes and testifies on our behalf to the Father. How does knowing Christ actively advocates for you before God impact your confidence in your relationship with Him?
8. Jesus willingly and joyfully died that we may have life. What would it look like for you to live with the same willingness and joy in serving others and advancing His kingdom?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Luke 23:33-34a

Words of Life

1. “They” – Which Group Am I Living Like?

In the sermon, “they” included both believers and unbelievers. If someone watched how our family lives this week, would they say we belong more to the “we got this without God” group, or the “we need Christ’s forgiveness” group? What specific habits in our home show that we really depend on Jesus and not just on ourselves?

2. Seeing the Cross as Personal, Not Just Historical

The sermon said that when Christ was crucified, He “brought your name to that cross.” Do you tend to think of Jesus’ death as something He did for “the world” in general, or for you personally? Why? How might our week look different if each of us truly believed, “Jesus had my name in mind on the cross”?

3. Forgiveness Like Jesus: “Father, Forgive Them”

While suffering on the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them.” Is there anyone in your life right now who is hard to forgive? What would it look like to respond to that person a little more like Jesus did—praying for them instead of holding onto bitterness?

4. “It Is Finished” – Living Like the Work Is Done

Jesus said, “It is finished,” meaning the work of salvation was accomplished. Do you ever feel like you still have to “earn” God’s love or prove you’re good enough? How could remembering “It is finished” bring more peace, joy, or freedom into our family life?

5. Passion Week: Responding to Jesus’ Sacrifice

Passion Week reminds us of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. What is one part of Jesus’ suffering or love from this sermon that impacted you the most? As a family, is there one concrete way we could respond together this week—through prayer, serving someone, asking forgiveness, or sharing the gospel with one “they” in our lives?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Luke 23:33-34a

Words of Life

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Learning to Say, “I Forgive You”**: Jesus asked the Father to forgive the people hurting Him. For younger kids, this can look like choosing to say, “I forgive you,” when someone is unkind—like a sibling taking a toy or a friend leaving them out.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) When someone does something mean to you (takes your toy, calls you a name), what do you usually feel like doing?
 - (2) Jesus said, “Father, forgive them.” What is one small way you could forgive someone this week?
 - (3) How can Mommy/Daddy help you when it’s really hard to forgive?
2. **Knowing Jesus Died for You**: The sermon talked about Jesus bringing “your name” to the cross. For this age, help them see: “Jesus knows me and loves me personally.”

Discussion Questions:

- (1) When you hear that Jesus died on the cross, do you think, “He did that for me”?
 - (2) Can you say: “Jesus loves me and forgives me”? How does that make you feel inside?
 - (3) Next time you feel lonely at school or at church, how could remembering “Jesus is with me and loves me” help?
3. **Choosing Kindness in Groups (Playground / Classroom)**: The “they” in the sermon were believers and unbelievers. Help kids see that some kids at school know Jesus, and some don’t—and we can be kind to both.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) At school or church, do you see kids that no one plays with?
- (2) What is one way you can show Jesus’ love to a “left-out” kid this week (invite them to play, share a toy, say kind words)?
- (3) If Jesus were on your playground, how do you think He would treat kids that others ignore?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Forgiveness vs. “Getting Even”**: Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them” when people were cruel to Him. Kids this age feel injustice strongly and are tempted to get revenge or gossip.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Think of a time a friend hurt you (talked behind your back, didn’t invite you, was rude online). What did you want to do in response?

- (2) How is Jesus' response ("Father, forgive them") different from how most kids at school react?
- (3) Is there someone right now you could begin to forgive—even if it's just praying for them once a day?

2. **Who Are "They" in Your World?**: The sermon described "they" as believers and unbelievers—some rejecting Jesus, some receiving Him. Kids encounter both in school, clubs, and online games.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) In your class or on your team, who would you say might not know Jesus yet? How can you tell?
- (2) How could you show Jesus' love to them without being pushy or fake (encouraging words, helping with homework, being honest in games)?
- (3) If someone made fun of you for believing in Jesus, what are some loving ways you could respond?

3. **Online & Gaming: Acting Like You Belong to Jesus**: "It is finished" means Jesus already did the work to save us; now we live as His people. That includes how kids treat others in group chats, text threads, and online games.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) When you're playing games or chatting online, what are some ways kids are unkind (cheating, name-calling, excluding)?
- (2) If someone is rude to you in a game or group chat, how can you remember you are a follower of Jesus, not just "one of the crowd"?
- (3) Could we set one family rule for how we will act like Jesus online (no name-calling, no joining in on teasing, pausing to pray before responding when upset)?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Identity: "They" Who Say "We Got This" vs. Those Who Need Christ**: The sermon contrasted "we got this" (unbelievers trusting themselves) with believers who rest in Jesus' finished work. Teens see this clearly in friend groups, sports, academics, and social media.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) In your friend group or online communities, what does "we got this without God" look like (self-promotion, chasing popularity, ignoring right and wrong)?
- (2) Where do you feel pressure to prove yourself or build your identity—grades, looks, followers, talents?
- (3) How could remembering "It is finished" and "Jesus brought my name to the cross" change the way you see your worth and value?

2. **Forgiveness in Real Conflict (Friends, Dating, Social Drama)**: Teens face deeper hurt—betrayal, gossip, breaking trust, early relationship issues. "Father, forgive them" becomes costly and practical.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Without naming names, can you think of a situation where a friend really hurt or betrayed you (sharing secrets, leaving you out, ghosting you)?
- (2) What would “Father, forgive them” look like in that situation—boundaries plus forgiveness, not revenge?
- (3) How can you tell the difference between forgiving someone and letting them keep hurting you? What wise boundaries might be needed?

3. **Being a Christ-Like Influence, Not a Blind Follower**: Teens live in digital spaces—group chats, DMs, social media, game chat, etc. The sermon’s call to live as forgiven people who extend forgiveness applies here too.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) In your online world, where are you most tempted to act differently than a follower of Jesus should (sarcastic comments, liking hurtful posts, joining in canceling someone)?
- (2) If Jesus read your DMs and comments (He does!), what parts would you feel good about—and what parts would you feel uneasy about?
- (3) What is one practical change you could make to reflect Jesus more clearly online (unfollowing certain accounts, not replying when angry, sending one encouraging message a day)?

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it’s okay to ask questions, even if things don’t make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Luke 23:33-34a

Words of Life

1. Forgiving Those Who Hurt Us

Bible Reference: Luke 23:34 – “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

Application: Because Jesus forgave people actively hurting Him, Gen Z believers are called to choose prayer and forgiveness over canceling, sub tweeting, or revenge—especially when misunderstood or attacked.

Scenario: You find out a friend has been talking behind your back in a group chat, twisting your words and making you look fake. Your friend group is now distant, and you’re angry and hurt. You’re tempted to expose them publicly or ice them out.

Discussion: What would it look like to respond like Jesus here—praying “Father, forgive them” before you decide what to say or post—and how might that change what you actually do next?

2. Represent Jesus Online

Bible Reference: Matthew 5:44 – “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Application: Instead of joining in digital dogpiles, Christians are called to love and pray for people who mock, oppose, or mistreat them—online and offline.

Scenario: Someone posts a mocking comment about Christians on TikTok/Instagram and tags you or your youth group. Your friends start roasting the person in the comments, and they want you to jump in.

Discussion: How could you show love and represent Jesus in the comment section—without being fake, weak, or harsh—and what might praying for that person before replying look like?

3. Overcome Evil by Doing Good

Bible Reference: Romans 12:19–21 – “Beloved, never avenge yourselves... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Application: In conflict, especially in group chats and friend circles, followers of Jesus refuse to “get even” and instead overcome evil by doing what is good, even when it costs them socially.

Scenario: A private screenshot of your text gets shared in a group chat and people start mocking you. You have receipts that could ruin the person who exposed you, and others are urging you to “expose them back.”

Discussion: What does “overcome evil with good” look like in this exact situation—and how might that choice affect your reputation, your heart, and your witness long term?

4. Representing Christ

Bible Reference: Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...”

Application: If Jesus “brought your name to the cross,” your identity is in Him—not in followers, aesthetics, academic performance, or social status. Your online and offline presence should reflect Christ in you.

Scenario: You feel constant pressure to curate a perfect image on social media—filters, body image, humor, opinions—to keep up with friends and trends. You notice you’re posting more for likes than from who you are in Christ.

Discussion: How would your posts, stories, and comments change if you honestly believed, “Christ lives in me; I don’t have to prove myself to anyone”? Be specific, not general.

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.