

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of August 16

If you were suddenly put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? For many of us who profess faith in Christ, life has a way of assimilating us into the flow of the culture around us. Today, we learn from two key individuals in John, chapter nineteen, about how personal faith must go public in order for us to impact others for Christ.

Read John 19:1-16

Jesus is sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate. Pilate is governor over Judea and wants to have nothing to do with Jesus of Nazareth. Yet, here he is, the Roman procurator caught up in the event of all time, the fulfillment of prophecies, what many call the culmination of the ages – the day when Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, would take upon himself the sin of humanity.

Note in vv 1-3, specific ways the details regarding how Jesus is treated fulfill words of Isaiah:

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip –

He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed (Is 53:5b)

Soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him –

His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man ... he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins (Is 52:14b, 53:5a)

‘Hail! King of the Jews!’ they mocked, as they slapped him across the face—

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word (Is 53:7a)

- As we peer into this passage, this point in human history, what does it mean to you that *“There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him”* ... that Jesus *“was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief”* (Is 53:2b,3a)?
- Suffering precedes glory. Scripture says if “we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering” (Romans 8:17b). What does it mean to share? What does it mean to share in the sufferings of Christ, the suffering Servant?

- Pilate is frightened when he hears the religious leaders say, “By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God” (Jn 19:7, 8). What had Pilate’s wife told her husband, according to Matthew 27:19?
- Pilate calls Jesus back into the headquarters and asks a series of questions, demanding a response (Jn 19:9-10). How does Jesus respond in v11?

Pilate does not want to sentence Jesus to death, for he finds him not guilty. Yet, the religious leaders shout: “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar’!” Upon further failed attempts to release Jesus, Pilate turns Jesus over to them, and they take him away.

Read John 19:17-27

Jesus carries the cross publicly through Jerusalem to a place just outside the city, called ‘Place of the Skull’ (in Hebrew *Golgotha*). He is crucified between two criminals. A sign in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek is placed over his head that reads: *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*. The soldiers gamble for his clothes. He assigns the care of his mother to John the Beloved.

Read John 19:28-37

Alongside vv23-24, vv28-30, and vv31-37 of John, chapter nineteen, refer to the following Scriptures and share how each is being fulfilled:

Isaiah 53:9

Psalm 22:16-18

Psalm 69:21

Exodus 12:46

Psalm 34:20

Our Plain Truth states: A personal faith must go public for you to grow and to impact others for Christ. As we read this final section, notice how two ‘secret’ disciples go public.

Read John 19:38-42

It takes great courage for Joseph of Arimathea, to go before Pontius Pilate and ask permission to take down the body of Jesus. Alongside Joseph of Arimathea is Nicodemus bringing 75 pounds of spices and precious oils to anoint the Lord’s body. Scholars say no one brings that amount of spices and precious ointments unless they are burying royalty (32.7 kilograms).

Can you imagine the care in which they lowered the lifeless body of Jesus down from the cross! ... gently yet purposefully wrapping his head, arms and legs in the long sheet of linen cloth that Joseph had just purchased (see Mark 15:43-46). Because the place of crucifixion was near a garden, it is believed the new tomb in which Joseph and Nicodemus place the body is, in fact, the burial cave belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, fulfilling the scripture that says: ‘He was put in a rich man’s grave’ (Isaiah 53:9b).

- Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you. By carrying and burying the body of Jesus, why would both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus been unable to observe Passover, according to Numbers 19:11-13?

- Gospel writer, John, captures Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus in John, chapter three, when Jesus calls him "a respected Jewish teacher" (John 3:10). The Gospel writer John speaks of how Nicodemus is present when Temple guards return before the religious leaders without arresting Jesus (John 7:50-52). Envision Nicodemus, teacher of teachers who knows the Torah and words of the Prophets of Old, beginning to understand the fulfillment of Messiah before his very eyes. What do you make of Nicodemus' spiritual growth as glimpsed in John's Gospel?

- ◇ Meeting with Jesus by night in John 3:1-21
- ◇ Defending Jesus (and the Temple guards' reaction to hearing Jesus speak) in John 7:32, 45-52
- ◇ Assisting Joseph of Arimathea (both members of the Sanhedrin) in John 19:38-42

In Closing

There may, in fact, be times or seasons when our lives emulate miniscule proof of following Christ. But faith is a journey, and spiritual growth and maturity takes effort. Remember, *Disciples are not made in a day; disciples are made daily*. The more time we take time to remember the cross and the great price Jesus paid on that cross, the more time we will spend with Jesus in spiritual disciplines that lead us to a deeper walk with Christ. May we stay the course and choose daily to turn from self and follow Jesus. He loves us. His sacrifice proves that. Let's trust him and ask for grace and strength to stand when the hour of trial comes.

One Year Bible Reading

August 16: Nehemiah 11:1-12:26, 1 Cor. 10:14-33, Ps. 34:11-22, Prov. 21:14-16
 August 17: Nehemiah 12:27-13:31, 1 Cor. 11:1-16, Psalm 35:1-16, Prov. 21:17-18
 August 18: Esther 1:1-3:15, 1 Cor. 11:17-34, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 21:19-20
 August 19: Esther 4:1-7:10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-26, Psalm 36:1-12, Prov. 21:21-22
 August 20: Esther 8:1-10:3, 1 Cor. 12:27-13:13, Psalm 37:1-11, Proverbs 21:23-24
 August 21: Job 1:1-3:26, 1 Corinthians 14:1-17, Psalm 37:12-29, Prov. 21:25-26
 August 22: Job 4:1-7:21, 1 Corinthians 14:18-40, Psalm 37:30-40, Proverbs 21:27



Text: John 19

PLAIN TRUTH:

A _____ faith must go _____ for you
 to _____ and to _____ others for Christ"

Principles of Going from Personal to Public in your Faith.

1. Salvation is _____ but discipleship will _____ you.
2. Things which remain _____ cannot be _____.
3. The more time spent in spiritual _____ the more you _____ and _____ others for Christ.
 - a. Praying for unchurched
 - b. _____ the unchurched
 - c. Generosity and _____ to invest in the Local Church
 - d. Learning in life groups, Bible studies
 - e. _____ others in the name of Christ
 - f. Worshipping regularly and inviting persons to Celebrate Recovery, Overflow, and regular worship services on Sunday morning.

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