



THE WONDERFUL CROSS

Small Group Discussion Guide: Pierced for Our Purpose

The Big Idea: Jesus took the nails in His hands to redeem the work of ours.

Icebreaker

- **The Childhood Dream:** When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- **The Reality Check:** How does that dream compare to what you are doing now? If you aren't an astronaut or a pro-athlete, are you okay with that?

Part 1: The Reality of the Cross

The sermon highlighted the physical toll of the crucifixion—specifically the "liquid fire" of the median nerve being struck by iron spikes.

1. **Read Psalm 22:16-18 and John 20:24-29.** Why do you think it was important for Thomas to see the nail marks in Jesus' hands to believe?
2. The Latin word for "excruciating" literally means "out of the cross." How does understanding the physical cost of the nails change how you view Jesus' sacrifice?

Part 2: The Theology of the Hands

In Scripture, our hands represent our **agency** (our ability to act) and our **impact** (what we leave behind).

1. **Read Proverbs 12:24 and 1 Thessalonians 4:11.** We often view work as a "necessary evil" to pay bills. How do these verses challenge that perspective?
2. **The Heart-Hand Connection:** It's been said that "your hands reveal your heart." If someone looked at how you spent your energy and "handiwork" this past week, what would they say matters most to you?

Part 3: The Great Exchange

The "thorns and thistles" of Genesis 3 turned work from a joy into a toil. But through the cross, Jesus offers a "Great Exchange."

1. **Read Galatians 5:13.** How does the freedom Jesus won for us change the way we approach a difficult boss or a stressful project?
2. **Read Colossians 3:23-24.** If you treated your current job (or your current role at home) as if you were literally working for Jesus instead of a human supervisor, what would change tomorrow morning?

Part 4: Work as Worship

In Hebrew, the word *avad* means both "to work" and "to worship." They were never meant to be separate activities.

1. The sermon mentioned three shifts that happen because of Jesus' pierced hands:
 - **Serve instead of strive.**
 - **Give instead of grasp.**
 - **Worship through daily work.**
 - *Which of these three do you struggle with the most right now?*

Closing Prayer & Reflection

Take a moment of silence. Look at your hands. Consider the tasks they will perform this week—typing emails, changing diapers, driving, cleaning, or leading meetings.

Prayer: *Lord, thank You for the hands that were pierced for us. We give You our work this week. May our "to-do lists" become acts of worship. When we feel the "thorns" of stress and pressure, remind us that we are serving You, and that our work has eternal purpose. Amen.*