

Small Group Guide: The Tabernacle and Jesus' Sacrifice



Summary:

In Mark 15:16-20 we're invited to see how even the darkest moments can be part of God's grand design. The seemingly cruel actions of the Roman guards - clothing Jesus in purple, crowning Him with thorns, and then stripping Him - unknowingly fulfilled ancient prophecies and mirrored the sacred rituals of the tabernacle. This reminds us that God's plan often unfolds in unexpected ways, using even those who oppose Him to accomplish His purposes. As we reflect on Jesus as our High Priest, sacrifice, and the living tabernacle, we're challenged to see our own struggles through a lens of divine purpose. How might God be using our difficult circumstances to bring about something beautiful and redemptive? This message encourages us to trust in God's intricate plan, even when we can't see the full picture.

Key Takeaways:

1. The Roman soldiers' actions in mocking Jesus unintentionally fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and symbolism related to the tabernacle.
2. Jesus embodies three crucial roles: He is the tabernacle (God dwelling among us), the sacrifice, and the high priest.
3. The details of Jesus' treatment before crucifixion parallel elements of the tabernacle and priestly garments, showing God's intricate plan.
4. Jesus, as our high priest, can sympathize with our weaknesses because He experienced human suffering yet remained sinless.
5. The crucifixion, intended to humiliate Jesus, actually fulfilled God's plan for our salvation.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does understanding the parallels between Jesus and the tabernacle deepen your appreciation of God's plan for salvation?
2. The sermon mentions a "shockwave through Scripture." What aspects of this connection between Jesus and the tabernacle most surprised or impacted you?
3. How does seeing Jesus as the tabernacle, sacrifice, and high priest all at once affect your view of His role in your life?
4. Discuss the significance of Jesus being clothed in purple, crowned with thorns, and then stripped before crucifixion. How does this relate to the high priest's actions on the Day of Atonement?
5. The sermon states, "Jesus is our high priest who can sympathize with our weakness." How does this truth comfort or challenge you in your daily life?
6. How does the detail and intentionality of God's plan, as seen in these parallels, strengthen your faith?

Practical Applications:

1. Spend time this week reading Exodus 26-40, focusing on the tabernacle details. Reflect on how these point to Jesus.
2. Write a prayer of thanksgiving, acknowledging Jesus' roles as tabernacle, sacrifice, and high priest in your life.

3. Share with a friend or family member one new insight you gained from this sermon about Jesus' sacrifice.

4. Reflect on an area of weakness or struggle in your life. How does knowing Jesus can sympathize with you impact how you approach this challenge?

5. Consider ways you might be unintentionally fulfilling God's purposes, even when you don't realize it. How does this perspective change your outlook on daily life?

6. Meditate on the phrase "It is finished" (tetelestai). How can you apply the truth of your debt being paid in full to a situation you're facing?

7. As a group, discuss how this deeper understanding of Jesus' sacrifice can impact your worship and devotion, both individually and as a community.

5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:



Day 1: The Tabernacle of God Among Us

Reading: John 1:1-14, Exodus 40:34-38

Devotional: Just as God's presence dwelt in the tabernacle in the Old Testament, Jesus came to "tabernacle" among us. Reflect on how Jesus embodies God's desire to be close to His people. How does knowing that God wants to dwell with you change your perspective on your daily life? Consider ways you can invite God's presence into your everyday moments, recognizing that your body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Day 2: The Perfect Sacrifice

Reading: Hebrews 9:11-14, Leviticus 16:11-19

Devotional: The elaborate system of sacrifices in the Old Testament pointed to our need for atonement. Jesus became both our High Priest and the perfect sacrifice, entering the Most Holy Place once for all. Meditate on the cost of your salvation and the depth of God's love demonstrated through Christ's sacrifice. How does this impact your understanding of grace? Take time to express your gratitude for this undeserved gift.

Day 3: Stripped of Glory, Crowned with Thorns

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11, Isaiah 53:1-6

Devotional: Jesus, though divine, humbled himself and was stripped of his heavenly glory. The crown of thorns mockingly placed on his head symbolizes both his suffering and his kingship. Consider areas in your life where pride or self-importance may be hindering your spiritual growth. How can you cultivate Christ-like humility? Pray for the strength to "consider others better than yourself" in your interactions today.

Day 4: The Veil Torn

Reading: Matthew 27:45-54, Hebrews 10:19-22

Devotional: When Jesus died, the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, symbolizing our new access to God's presence. Because of Christ's sacrifice, we can now approach God's throne with confidence. Reflect on what it means to have direct access to God. Are there areas in your life where you still feel separated from Him? Bring those before God in prayer, trusting in the open access you now have through Christ.

Day 5: Our Sympathetic High Priest

Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16, 1 Peter 2:21-25

Devotional: Jesus, our great High Priest, can sympathize with our weaknesses because he experienced human suffering firsthand. He understands our pain, temptations, and struggles. How does knowing that Jesus relates to your experiences affect your prayer life? Bring your current struggles before Him, trusting in His compassion and power to help. Consider how you can extend Christ-like empathy to others who are suffering around you.