

Small Group Guide: Mark 15:33-41 The Death of Jesus - The True Myth



Summary:

In this reflection on the crucifixion, we're invited to explore the profound truth at the heart of our faith. The death of Jesus on the cross, as recounted in Mark 15, is more than just a historical event - it's the culmination of God's redemptive plan. We're reminded that Jesus, the source of all life, willingly faced death to become our gateway to eternal life. This paradox echoes throughout creation, where stories and myths across cultures point to this ultimate truth. Just as darkness fell over Egypt before the Passover, darkness covered the land before Christ's sacrifice. His death, like the Passover lamb's blood, protects us from eternal death. In facing our greatest enemy - the cold, indifferent force of death itself - Jesus demonstrates a love so radical it transforms the very fabric of reality. As the temple veil tears, we're granted unprecedented access to God's presence. This isn't just ancient history; it's an invitation for us to live boldly in the freedom Christ's sacrifice provides, sharing this transformative truth with a world in desperate need of hope.

Key Takeaways:

1. All compelling stories and myths reflect the ultimate truth of the Gospel.
2. Jesus' death fulfills Old Testament prophecies & parallels the Passover story.
3. Death is an unstoppable, indifferent force that Jesus defeated through His own death.
4. The tearing of the temple veil symbolizes our direct access to God through Jesus.
5. Jesus' death and resurrection offer us hope and eternal life.

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon mentions C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien's conversation about myths reflecting the "true myth" of the Gospel. How have you seen this concept in stories or media you enjoy?
2. How does the parallel between the darkness during the plagues in Egypt and the darkness at Jesus' crucifixion deepen your understanding of Christ's sacrifice?
3. The sermon describes death as an "impersonal, unstoppable force." How does this perspective impact your view of Jesus' victory over death?
4. Reflect on the irony of Jesus, a carpenter, dying by wood and nails. How does this detail add depth to the crucifixion narrative for you?
5. The Roman centurion declared Jesus as the Son of God after witnessing His death. What aspects of Jesus' death do you find most compelling or convincing?
6. How does the tearing of the temple veil and its significance as explained in Hebrews change your approach to God?
7. The sermon mentions that the women were present at the crucifixion while most male disciples were absent. What does this tell us about faith and courage?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, identify a popular story (movie, book, etc.) and discuss with a friend how it might reflect elements of the Gospel narrative.
2. Spend time meditating on Psalm 22. Consider how Jesus' quoting of this Psalm adds meaning to His crucifixion experience.
3. Write a personal reflection on how Jesus' defeat of death impacts your daily life and decision-making.
4. Practice explaining to someone (perhaps role-play with a group member) how Jesus' death provides access to God, using the temple veil analogy.
5. Commit to sharing the hope of the Gospel with someone this week, remembering that truth is more important than avoiding offense.

Closing Prayer

Encourage group members to continue reflecting on the significance of Jesus' death throughout the week and to share any insights at the next meeting.

5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:



Day 1: The True Myth

Reading: Psalm 22:1-18

Devotional:

As we read this Psalm, we're reminded of Jesus' words on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This Psalm, written centuries before Christ, vividly describes the crucifixion. It reminds us that God's plan of salvation was not a last-minute decision, but a carefully orchestrated story woven throughout history. Just as C.S. Lewis came to see Christianity as the "true myth," we too can marvel at how God's redemptive narrative underpins all great stories. Today, reflect on how God's grand story intersects with your own life. How does being part of this divine narrative change your perspective on your daily experiences?

Day 2: Confronting Death

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Devotional:

Death is described as the ultimate enemy - cold, indifferent, and seemingly unstoppable. Yet, through Christ's sacrifice, death has lost its sting. As you read this passage, consider the victory we have in Jesus. Death, once our greatest fear, has been defeated. How does this truth impact your daily life? In what ways can you live more boldly, knowing that even death cannot separate you from God's love? Take time to thank God for the hope we have in Christ, who faced death head-on so that we might have eternal life.

Day 3: The Torn Veil

Reading: Hebrews 10:19-25

Devotional:

The tearing of the temple veil symbolizes our newfound access to God through Christ. No longer do we need a high priest to mediate for us; Jesus has become our mediator. As you reflect on this passage, consider the intimacy with God that is now available to you. How can you draw near to God with a sincere heart today? In what areas of your life do you need to embrace the "new and living way" opened for us through Jesus? Let this truth inspire you to approach God boldly, knowing that you are welcome in His presence.

Day 4: Unexpected Witnesses

Reading: Luke 24:1-12

Devotional:

In a culture where women's testimony was often disregarded, God chose them as the first witnesses of the resurrection. This unexpected detail adds credibility to the Gospel accounts and demonstrates God's heart for the marginalized. As you read about these faithful women, consider who the unexpected witnesses might be in your own life. Who are the often-overlooked individuals that God might be using to speak truth? How can you be more attentive to God's voice coming through unexpected sources? Pray for eyes to see and ears to hear God's truth, no matter where it comes from.

Day 5: Living as Salt and Light

Reading: Matthew 5:13-16

Devotional:

As followers of Christ, we're called to be salt and light in the world - preserving truth and illuminating darkness. This calling may sometimes put us at odds with the culture around us, just as it did for Jesus. As you meditate on this passage, reflect on how you can maintain your distinctive "flavor" and brightness in a world that may reject these qualities. How can you speak truth in love, even when it might be uncomfortable? Ask God for the courage to live authentically for Him, shining His light in your sphere of influence, always motivated by love and a desire to see others experience the life-changing power of the Gospel.