

Small Group Guide: The Centurion's Story - Resurrection Sunday, 2026

Key Takeaways

1. The Power of Jesus' Words and Actions

Even in arrest, Jesus demonstrated divine authority that knocked soldiers to the ground with just two words: "I am."

2. Silent Suffering, Loud Love

Jesus remained silent through false accusations and brutal torture, yet spoke words of forgiveness, compassion, and promise from the cross.

3. The Debt We Cannot Pay

Our sin put Jesus on the cross, but His resurrection provides complete reconciliation with God—freely available to all who believe.

4. Transformation is Possible

Even the centurion who crucified Jesus came to faith, proving no one is beyond God's reach.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Story

1. **What struck you most about experiencing the crucifixion story from the Roman centurion's perspective?** How does this viewpoint change your understanding of the events?
2. **The centurion kept asking himself, "Who is this Jesus?"** What moments in the story do you think were most pivotal in leading him to his final declaration: "Truly this was the Son of God"?
3. **Jesus spoke seven times from the cross, including "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."** What does this reveal about Jesus' character and mission?

Personal Reflection

4. **The centurion thought he had gone too far for forgiveness.** Have you ever felt that way? What does this story teach us about the extent of God's grace?
5. **The sermon mentioned trying to fill the "hole in our hearts" with pleasures and other things.** What are some things people (or you personally) have tried to use to fill that void? Why do they ultimately fail?
6. **The religious leaders who should have recognized Jesus were the ones calling for His crucifixion.** What does this warn us about religious activity without genuine relationship with God?

Application

7. **Jesus invites us: "Come to me, all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."** What burdens are you carrying that you need to surrender to Jesus?
8. **The centurion experienced a complete transformation—from executioner to believer.** What areas of your life need transformation? What would it look like to "die to yourself" in those areas?
9. **Baptism is a public declaration of faith.** Whether you've been baptized or not, how comfortable are you with publicly identifying as a follower of Jesus? What holds people back?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Daily Gratitude for the Cross:** Each day, spend 5 minutes reflecting on one specific thing Jesus endured for you (the scourging, the mockery, the nails, the separation from the Father, etc.) and thank Him specifically for that sacrifice.

2. **Extend Forgiveness:** Jesus forgave those who crucified Him. Is there someone you need to forgive? Take a step toward forgiveness this week—through prayer, a conversation, or releasing bitterness.
3. **Share Your Story:** Like the centurion's transformation, share with one person this week how Jesus has changed your life or what Easter means to you personally.
4. **Examine Your Heart:** Take inventory of what you're relying on for peace, joy, or fulfillment instead of Jesus. Confess this to God and ask Him to help you find your satisfaction in Him alone.

Scripture for Further Study

- **Romans 5:6-11** - Reconciliation while we were enemies
- **Romans 10:9-13** - The simplicity of salvation
- **Matthew 27:45-54** - The crucifixion account
- **Luke 23:32-43** - The thief on the cross
- **John 18:1-11** - Jesus' arrest in the garden
- **1 Peter 2:21-25** - Christ's example of suffering

Prayer Focus

Pray for:

- **Salvation:** Anyone in your group or in your life who doesn't yet know Jesus personally
- **Renewed Wonder:** That we would never lose the awe of what Jesus did for us
- **Boldness:** To publicly identify with Christ and share our faith
- **Transformation:** Areas where we need to die to ourselves and live for Him
- **Gratitude:** For the completed work of the cross and the victory of the resurrection

Closing Thought

"Who is this Jesus?"

This is the question that echoed through the centurion's mind until he finally declared the truth: "Truly this was the Son of God."

The same question confronts each of us. Not just intellectually, but personally: *Who is Jesus to YOU?* Is He merely a historical figure, a good teacher, a religious option—or is He your Lord, your Savior, the one who paid the debt you could never pay?

The resurrection proves His identity and validates His claims. The empty tomb declares victory. And the invitation remains: "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

He is risen! He is risen indeed!