



Small Group Study Guide  
**Sermon: When Pain Becomes Your Power**  
Scarred but Still Standing

March 29, 2026 | CrossPointe Church  
Tracy "PT" Pounders, Pastor

## INTRODUCTION

This study explores Luke 23:26–49 and the meaning of Christ’s suffering on the cross, its historic reality, the offers of mercy during mockery, and the spiritual choices witnessed there. The session will help small groups respond personally — examining sin, repentance, discipleship, and how Jesus’ sacrifice transforms lives and communities.

## KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Luke 23:26–31** — Simon of Cyrene is seized to carry the cross; Jesus warns the daughters of Jerusalem to weep for themselves. (Theme: reluctant discipleship and the cost of rejecting Christ.)
- **Luke 23:32–38** — Jesus is crucified between two criminals; the crowd, rulers, and soldiers mock him; he prays *“Father, forgive them.”* (Theme: public humiliation, mockery, and boundless forgiveness.)
- **Luke 23:39–43** — The two criminals respond differently; one derides, the other confesses and receives Jesus’ promise of paradise. (Theme: immediate gospel, confession, and grace.)
- **Luke 23:44–46** — Darkness, the temple curtain torn, Jesus’ last words, and His death. (Theme: cosmic and covenantal significance of Christ’s death.)
- **Luke 23:47–49** — The centurion’s confession, crowds’ reaction, and the faithful followers who stand at a distance. (Theme: transformed witnesses and varied human responses.)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Luke 23:26–31. Why does Jesus tell the women to “weep for yourselves and for your children”? How does the sermon’s point—“Don’t grieve at the cross without examining your own soul”—reshape your response to suffering?
2. Luke 23:26 names Simon of Cyrene. How does Simon’s forced service challenge our ideas of volunteer vs. compelled discipleship? PT said, *“Being pulled into religion is not the same as being transformed by it.”*
3. In Luke 23:34 Jesus prays, *“Father, forgive them.”* What does this teach about the scope of forgiveness? PT said, *“Nothing you’ve done is beyond Jesus’ forgiveness.”*
4. In Luke 23:39–43, the repentant thief confesses, believes Jesus is who He claimed to be, and asks for mercy. Which one of those three steps is hardest for you to do? Why?
5. In this sermon, PT said the soldiers offered Jesus a tersorium (tool used at public latrines for cleaning your bum). PT also strongly stated, *“The last taste on the Son of God’s lips was the sour sting of humiliation.”* Have you ever considered the depth of cruelty Jesus suffered during crucifixion? What else do you know of His suffering that PT may not have mentioned? Does it deepen your gratitude or devotion?
6. The centurion declares, *“This man was righteous!”* (Luke 23:47). Who in your life most resembles the centurion—hardened but open to truth? Sylvia and I often pray for strongholds to be broken in the minds of people we love. How might you pray for or engage the person you thought of?

7. PT emphasized legacy in this message (Simon's son, Rufus, became a church leader). How might we intentionally steward a legacy of faith in our family or community?
8. PT said, *"Humility is the door. Confession opens heaven. Mercy is the currency that gives us access to God."* If confession opens heaven, do you remember the time you lived under a "closed heaven" and was running from God's mercy? If you're comfortable doing so, BRIEFLY share your story of where you were and how far you've come. Keep it brief so others have time to share.

#### PASTOR'S BEST QUOTES (select excerpts you can read aloud)

- *"Christianity is a living testimony anchored in Jesus Christ — not a distant ideology but the proclamation of a life laid down and a resurrection that echoes through history."*
- *"Being pulled into religion is not the same as being transformed by it."*
- *"The last taste on the Son of God's lips was the sour sting of humiliation."*
- *"Nothing you've done is beyond Jesus' forgiveness."*
- *"You can't blame upbringing, genes, culture, or personality. The Christian story begins with plain truth: I'm a sinner. Jesus is my Savior."*

#### ACTION PROMPTS

- **Personal confession:** Spend 5–10 minutes privately using the three-step pattern from the repentant thief—admit sin, acknowledge who Jesus is, ask to be remembered—and write one sentence prayer.
- **Worship inventory:** For one week, note daily where your trust/greatest hope is placed (money, career, relationships, self, God). Honestly answer the question, "Who or what do you worship?" If God is not on the top of your list, Him to each day this week to help you refocus your worship.
- **Mercy practice:** Do one concrete act of forgiveness or reconciliation this week—call someone, write a letter, or offer an in-person apology. Report back next time.
- **Gospel invitation:** Invite one person to join you next Sunday at CrossPointe; follow up with a simple personal invitation and prayer.
- **Prayer action:** Commit to pray weekly for the spiritual growth of CrossPointe attendees and for each small group member by name.

#### CLOSING PRAYER

"Lord God, we thank You for the cross—for Jesus' willing sacrifice and the mercy offered there. Open our hearts to true repentance, humility, and devotion. Help us grow in faith, find lasting community in our small group, and invite others to meet You at CrossPointe. Strengthen each person here to live as changed people, to build legacies of faith, and to share Your grace with courage. We ask You to bless every home or family represented, to deepen our trust in Jesus, and to bring seekers to our doors. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

**PLEASE TAKE A GROUP PICTURE AND TAG PT (Franklin Tracy Pounders) and Tabatha Pankey ON FACEBOOK !!!**