

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"THE CROSS: GOD'S ALTAR" | LUKE 23:26-43 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

If you were part of the crowd at Jesus' death, how would you have reacted?

"Jesus' Prophecy" (Luke 23: 26-31)

Jesus is being led to hill for crucifixion and says to the crowd don't weep for me but for yourselves, pointing to future judgment and destruction. **Why did Jesus say not to weep for Him? How should have the crowd responded instead?**

"Jesus' Prayer" (Luke 23: 32-38)

As Jesus hangs on the cross, He prays for forgiveness for all the people because they don't know what they're doing. **What does this show about Jesus? What does that mean for Christ-followers today?**

"Jesus' Promise" (Luke 23: 39-43)

Jesus is crucified between 2 criminals. One asks to be remembered in heaven. Jesus promises that man he will be with him in paradise. **How does knowing that man was forgiven and entered heaven affect you?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

At Jesus' death there are so many reactions from people around him. Some mocked, some showed pity, and one thief asked to be freed from pain. Through it all Jesus shows grace and offers salvation to those like the other thief who recognize Him as the King and their need for help. **What makes it hard to have a good reaction to Jesus' death on the cross for you? Have you told God lately about your need for Him and His salvation? Pray God would give you a humble heart.**

The Cross: God's Altar

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-7 Cam: HS. Mdl Schl. Fellowship Night. Men's Brkfst. @Risk. Harvest Cru.
- B. Slide8 Kosovo Team: (Team: AP, Noah Denny, Norm Bell, Sadie/Christi Hartman)
1. They leave tomorrow the 19th thru 29th. They will be supporting the local church and do outreach into the community with a *youth camp, English training and encouraging Urim* (the national pastor and his family).
- C. Slide9 Fathers Day: *Fathers we want to honor and celebrate you.* Thank you for **going to work** every day. Thank you for **being present** with your children. Thank you for putting your cell phone down, and for throwing the ball around. Thank you for displaying a **real Jesus** through your life. Thanks for shining as the head of the family. Thanks for being brave, a role model, a devoted husband, and a sacrificial, humble, forgiving, father.
- D. Prayer: TY we get to do STM teams again. I pray for AP leadership. Team unity. Connection w/Kosovars. Beautiful relationships to be made. Jesus to be glorified.
1. Heavenly Father, on this Father's Day, we affirm that **You are the Father we've always long for and needed.** Thank you for adopting us into your family, through the finished work of Jesus. Thank you for being the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.
 2. Thank you for our earthly fathers, who did their very best to raise us, discipline us, lead us, show us bravery, doing the hard things when it was right, And for those believing earthly fathers who pointed their children to Jesus. And TY for the sacrifices you made for us personally.
 3. Lastly, thank you for the spiritual dads you've given us, for those of us who discovered You and Your multi-dimensional love through these spiritual men.

II. Slide10a Intro: The Cross: God's Altar

A. May I remind us on this Fathers Day. Yes, this was *Christ's sacrifice*, but it was **the Father's Love**. [not to detract in any way from *the love of the Son* who, says Paul, *loved me and gave himself for me*, Gal.2:20].

1. Slide10a But in so many of the key passages, it is the Father's love that stands out. It's clearly in Jn.3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son...*
2. It was **the Father** who delivered up his own Son, Rom.8:32 *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all.*
3. *God in his mercy has laid upon Jesus Christ the iniquity of us all.* Is.53:6
4. And it was **the Father** who made *the one who knew no sin, to be sin, for us* 2 Cor.5:21. The language of the NT points consistently to a priesthood of God the Father. It was **the Father** who brought his Son to the altar.

B. We'll see many *Contradistinctions*. The *Innocent Creator* crucified between 2 guilty criminals. The crowd cried *crucify him*; Jesus cried *forgive them*.

1. *Thabiti Anyabwile* (Tabiti Anya-Bwee-lay), Judgment is coming. God is forgiving. Paradise is offered. But the only ones who receive it are the humble who admit their sins and confess that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross to atone for their sins and was raised from the grave 3 days later.

C. Slide10c Outline: Jesus' *Prophecy*. Jesus' *Prayer*. Jesus' *Promise*.
Fulfilling Jesus' 3-fold office: Prophet, Priest, & King.

III. Slide11 JESUS' PROPHECY (26-31) *Death Walk of Jesus* READ Prophet

- A. (26) Simon of Cyrene carries the cross *behind* Jesus. That either can mean Jesus took the front of the transom/crossbar (not upright) & Simon carried the rear. Or, Jesus took it to the gate of the city (which He did) *then* Simon carried it **from** the gate to Calvary.
- B. The picture of Simon *taking up the cross* and following behind Jesus is a fitting description of *the Church* which later *carries the cross in a deeper sense*.

1. At some point Simon embraced the gospel. **It may have been the carrying of Jesus' cross that led Simon to faith in Him.**

a) What began as a **forced** and probably **resented act** of *physical servitude* became **the opportunity for spiritual life**. **And not** only for Simon himself, **but** his entire family came to salvation, **and** his wife became like a mother to the apostle Paul. (Wife & son/Rufus Ro.16:13, Mrk15.21. Church at Cyrene Acts 11:20)

C. **First** we see Jesus as **Prophet** as He gives a prophecy on the way to the cross.

D. These are the only words recorded from Jesus, **between His condemnation & the hours when He hung on the cross.**

1. **Mourning** should not be directed toward **Him but** reserved for *themselves*.

2. This points to the judgment coming on Jerusalem. [both 70ad & mid-trib]

a) **Don't weep for me**, weep because **your sins** made it necessary that He should die.

b) **Don't weep for me**, weep because **your sins** nailed *the Redeemer* to the tree.

c) **Don't weep for the crucifixion**, weep over **your sin**.

3. **Key:** To weep over a **dying Savior** is to weep over **the remedy**.

It's wiser to wail over **the disease**, **then the surgeon's knife**.

a) Jesus is never to be the object of **pity but instead of Wonder & True Worship**

(1) **The gospels** do not make **their focus** on the *torment* Jesus endured, **but on the significance of His death!!!**

E. Fire consumes **green** (moist) wood slowly, **but dry wood** burns *swiftly*. **If suffering was inflicted on an innocent man, how much more would be done to *sinner*s?**

IV. Slide12a **JESUS' PRAYER (32-38)** *priestly/bridge-builder prayer* **READ Priest**

A. Slide12b **The Skull/Calvary** – whether the **Greek** *KraNion*, **Latin** *Calvaria*, **Hebrew** *Golgotha*, each means *the place of the skull*. [explain hillside shape of a skull]

1. Slide12c **Skull Murrieta?** Hmmm [SM/CM]

2. **The cross:** *all the OT working up to it ... the NT working out from it.*

B. Slide12d He's not the King that they **expected**. He's not the King that they **wanted**. But He is the King that they *needed*.

C. (34) 7 sayings on cross – we have 3 in Luke. (1st, 2nd, & 7th/next week vs.46)

1. 1st & last are prayers to *the Father*.

2. **Wow Jesus, no resentment, no anger, no lurking desire for punishment upon the men who were maltreating Him.** [not even a little!]

a) It's as if God's *not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* 2 Pet.3:9

D. **The know not what they do - do we ever?** Sin is always **greater** than it seems, because sinners never know **the extent** of the loss involved.

Slide13a [sin will always *take you farther* than you want to go; *Keep you longer* than you want to stay; *Cost you more* than you want to spend]

E. You have heard, *To error is human to forgive is divine*. Here it is with Jesus ... *divine forgiveness*.

1. Here we have a prayer, not for Himself **but** for those that *hate & mock him*

F. Slide13b Who is the **them** in vs.34 (*Father, forgive them*)? The **soldiers**, the **priests** were present, the **religious rulers**, surely they were meant as well (these represent both worlds of **Jews & Gentiles** *do they not?*).

1. **Anyone** can *crawl inside* of the word, **them!** (spurg)

G. **Was this prayer answered? Absolutely yes.** In Acts 2, the 3000 people who were saved were **justly accused of his crucifixion**. Peter said, *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.* Acts 2:23,41.

H. Slide13c The plea today should be *Father, forgive me, for I know now what I've done*

V. Slide14a **JESUS' PROMISE (39-43) authority READ King**

A. **2 thieves. 2 different decisions. 2 different destiny's.**

1. The question is, what will you do with **the One** on the *middle cross*?

B. By this *thief* getting saved, it should give you **hope**.

C. Spurgeon said, *Jesus went through the gates of paradise with this thief saying, I bring this sinner with me, he's a sample of all the rest.*

D. Slide14b 5 ways He Saves the Thief:

1. Immediately (*today you'll be w/Me in paradise*). We also find out when we as believers die, we are w/Jesus. Our body await final resurrection, but our souls *immediately* enjoy His presence.
2. Slide14c Eternally (*today you'll be w/Me in paradise*). It's an echo of Eden, where the 1st Adam *lost* paradise but now the last Adam came to *bring* paradise.
 - a) Paradise (think Middle-Eastern mindset). If you're from an dry arid area, where there are very few trees, water's scarce, what would Paradise be to you?
 - b) *Pairi-daeza* is a Persian word meaning garden. In Semitic language it means *a beautiful garden full of trees, flowers & springs of water*.
 - (1) Now, how did paradise sound to this thirsty & suffering thief?
 - (2) A promise of ... him sitting in the shade under a tree. Green gardens all around him. His thirst quenched with ice cold water from a stream. Pain no more. Comfort, bliss, & beauty beyond imagination ... and especially *with One who is now his new found Friend!* [compare that to what he was facing just moments prior]
3. Slide14d Personally (*today you will be w/Me in paradise*). Not just you'll be in paradise/true. *Because what makes heaven paradise is Jesus.*
4. Slide14e Graciously. If there was ever someone who could not claim *any good works for his salvation*, it's this guy. He is a sample of all the rest. *This guy is saved by grace!* He doesn't know anything. He hasn't done any good works.
 - a) He knew very little theology. He never took the Lord supper. He never got baptized (*unless it sprinkled a lil bit*. which we'd argue the *sprinkled vs. dunked* debate). *All he did was cast himself on the Grace of Jesus.*
That's Good News!
 - b) If you try to gain entry into heaven, *What would you say? If you were to answer that in the 1st person you would have gone wrong. Because I -*

because I did this - because I did that. The only right answer is in the 3rd person ... because He - because He.

- c) Alistair Begg said, Think about the thief on the cross ... I can't wait to find that fellow one day to ask him, "*How did that shake out for you? Because you were cussing the guy out with your friend. You've never been in a Bible study. You never got baptized. You didn't know a thing about church membership, and yet . . . you made it. How did you make it?*" That's when the angel must have said, "*What are you doing here?*" "I don't know." "*What do you mean you don't know?*" "I don't know." "Excuse me, let me get my supervisor." They go get their supervisor angel. "So, just a few questions for you. First of all, *are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith?*" The guy said, "I've never heard of it in my life." "*And what about the doctrine of Scripture?*" This guy's just staring - and eventually, in frustration, [the supervisor] says, "*On what basis are you here?*" And he said ... "*The Man on the middle cross said I can come.*"

5. Slide 14f Assuredly. Truly I say to you. The One who has *all authority on heaven & earth*. He says, *If you believe, Truly I say to you you be w/me in paradise*. This is all about *certainty*. Luke started his gospel with *writing an orderly account for most excellent Theophilus, that he may have certainty concerning the things he had been taught*. Certainty. Assurance. Guarantee.

- a) There are only 2 kinds of people that stand before the Cross. All are faced with the decision of ... *what will you do, with the Man in the middle?*

E. At the cross at the cross. I surrender my life ... Where *Your love ran red* and *my sin washed white*. I owe all to You. I owe all to You (Jesus). *The Cross: God's Altar*.

F. After last song:

1. **Announce: Photo op w/cars. and pulled-pork Sliders.**
2. **Announce after 3rd Service Only:** We could use help removing sanctuary chairs for VBS. Jasmine will direct us where they go.

G. Keywords: Prophet, Priest, King.