

LIFE GROUPS	TEACHING PLAN	
	FW	<i>Study of John</i>
	SEPTEMBER 26	21

THE CRUCIFIXION

JOHN 19:17-42

SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

TEACHING PLAN

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying John 19:17-42. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: JOHN 19 GIVES US JOHN'S ACCOUNT OF JESUS' BEATING AND TRIAL BEFORE PILATE, HIS CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH, AND HIS BURIAL.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: IT IS THROUGH JESUS' DEATH THAT WE ARE SAVED.

GOSPEL CONNECTION: JESUS PAID THE PRICE FOR OUR SINS ON THE CROSS.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Notes:

- 1 In our culture, what crimes would one have to be convicted of to receive a death sentence?
- 2 What is the execution of a criminal meant to communicate to the general public? What other things can it communicate instead?

Only the most heinous of crimes, usually those that involve taking the life of another, lead one to face execution. Proponents of capital punishment emphasize that it serves as a formidable crime deterrent to the rest of the public. In effect, it is said to communicate, "If you commit these crimes, we will use our power to do this to you." Roman crucifixions held similar purposes, but something other than a display of Rome's power was taking place in Jesus' crucifixion. In Jesus' execution, God the Father powerfully demonstrated His righteous judgment and gracious love.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Notes:

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 19:17-27.

- What did the soldiers who crucified Jesus do with His clothes? Why did they do that?
- Read Psalm 22:18 and Isaiah 53:12. What did these fulfilled prophecies confirm about who Jesus really was?
- How can these fulfilled prophecies move believers into deeper devotion to Jesus Christ?

The soldiers who crucified Jesus stripped Him of His clothes and divided them among themselves. All four soldiers likely wanted the seamless tunic; therefore, they decided to cast lots for it. John saw a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the dual actions of dividing Jesus' clothing and casting lots for the tunic. (See Ps. 22:18.) John wanted to demonstrate to His readers that what happened to Jesus occurred according to God's plan. The evil people who crucified Jesus appeared to be in charge of these events. In reality, however, God was superintending the events to provide the way of forgiveness for sinners.

- While hanging on the cross, Jesus instructed one of His disciples to care for His mother after His death. Read John 19:25-27 again. What does this scene reveal about Jesus' greater mission, the mission for which He died?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus displayed such love for family and followers while on the cross?

Jesus looked down from the cross and saw His mother and John, the disciple He loved, standing nearby. In an extraordinary act of love, Jesus commended His mother to the care of this disciple. This statement demonstrates His selfless love for others. At a time of great pain, Jesus focused not on His needs, but on the interests of others. (See Phil. 2:4.) In one sense, this was an illustration of Jesus' larger mission. Jesus was dying on the cross for the sins of others. He came to focus on our need for a Savior and was willing to give His life so that we might have eternal life. When we fully appreciate Jesus' provision of care for His earthly mother even as He hung on the cross, we are motivated to be devoted all the more to Jesus as our Savior.

Notes:

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 19:28-42.

These verses give us the description of Jesus' final moments on the cross, including His last two statements on earth. The first statement in these verses was His admission of thirst. Jesus' admission of thirst not only reminds us of His humanity, but is also a fulfillment of Scripture.

- Read Psalm 69:21. How does this prophetic verse from the Book of Psalms help us understand the intent behind the Roman soldiers' action in verse 29?

Jesus' cry for something to drink is likely a reference to Psalm 69:21, "They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst." There was nothing compassionate about this action, as this bitter liquid was intended to prolong pain by unnecessarily extending life. Indeed, some scholars believe such sponges would have been used to disinfect public toilets.

- When Jesus said, "It is finished," to what was He referring? In what sense was it "finished"?

- How does Jesus' statement show that He was in control to the very end of His life? What does this statement suggest to believers today about reliance on God?

Notes:

Jesus' cry is one of accomplishment, not defeat. It is grammatically and thematically linked to His statement in John 17:4, "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do." Through His death, Jesus loved His disciples to the end and completed all that the Father had charged. Furthermore, these verses reveal that Jesus chose the exact moment of His death. The control was always His.

- Read Colossians 2:13-15. How does this passage help you better understand Jesus' declaration, "It is finished"? What did Jesus' death accomplish for us and for our world?
- What did John mean in stating that Jesus "gave up His spirit" (v. 30)? How does this phrase compare to simply saying, "Jesus died"?

John described Jesus' death as bowing His head and giving up His spirit. Even in His death Jesus remained in control, and the yielding of His spirit demonstrated a willingness to die for our sins. The facts of Jesus' death on the cross do not alone provide salvation. The facts are true for all people for all time. However, Jesus' death becomes effectual as an atoning sacrifice when a sinner is convicted and drawn by the Holy Spirit to repentance and faith. Jesus' provision for salvation is complete and requires no addition. Yet salvation is a gift of God that can only be received by faith apart from works. (See Eph. 2:8-9.)

- Given that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were Pharisees, does it surprise you to see them playing integral roles in Jesus' burial? (See Matthew 23:25-28 for more on Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees.)

Notes:

- What does their involvement teach us about God's sovereignty? About His saving power?

No group of people gave Jesus more trouble throughout His earthly ministry than the Pharisees—a group of religious leaders whose hypocrisy and works-based theology Jesus harshly criticized. And yet, after His death, two Pharisees played an important role in making sure Jesus was properly buried. God orchestrated events such that the very person to whom Jesus said, “You must be born again” (John 3:7), paved the way for generations to know with certainty that Jesus died and rose again. What an example of God's sovereignty. This speaks also to God's saving power in that He changed the hearts of two men from a group of people who hated Jesus and actively opposed His ministry.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Notes:

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:21, Colossians 3:14-15, Hebrews 9:22, and other verses related to the cross. How much did the cross really cost Christ?
- What difference does Christ's death and resurrection make in your daily life? What difference should it make?
- How can you use the story of Jesus' death and resurrection as a tool when you share your faith with others? How can it show others God's plan?
- How can you live out your role in God's story and invite others to do the same? How should that role affect the way you see and plan for your life?

PRAY

Close your time in prayer, praising God for who Christ is. Praise Christ for being God made flesh, who died and rose again. Thank God for the resurrection, which is the power of salvation. Pray that your group would reflect on and think about who Jesus is and all that He has done for you.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - Read Psalm 22 this week, reflecting on how it points to Jesus' crucifixion.
 - Ask God to empower you to become bolder in your witness for Jesus. Demonstrate that new boldness by sharing the gospel with someone this week.

- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.

- > The challenge to memorize John 19:30.

- > The text for next week's study, so group members can read it in anticipation of next weekend: John 20:1-18.

JOHN 19:17-42

19:17. Jesus set out carrying the cross by himself until he collapsed. Simon of Cyrene was then pressed into service, and he carried it to the execution site (Mt 27:32). He went out means “out of the city,” where Jewish custom prescribed that executions should take place (Lv 24:14, 23; Nm 15:35–36; Dt 17:5; 21:19–21; 22:24; cp. Heb 13:12). Place of the Skull translates Aramaic Golgotha; the Latin equivalent used in the Vulgate is “Calvary.”

Notes:

19:18. Jesus’s crucifixion between two criminals is reminiscent of Ps 22:16: “A gang of evildoers has closed in on me.” The passage also echoes Is 53:12: “counted among the rebels.”

19:19. The inscription on Jesus’s cross specified the crime for which he was executed, probably to discourage others from committing similar acts.

19:20. On the place ... was near the city, see note at v. 17. Aramaic was the language most widely understood by the Jewish population of Palestine; Latin was the official language of the Roman occupying force; and Greek was the “international language” of the empire, understood by most Diaspora Jews as well as Gentiles. The trilingual inscription ensured that virtually anyone could read the crimes with which Jesus was charged.

19:21–22. Pilate was unwilling to give in to further Jewish pressures. For John, the inscription unintentionally confirmed Jesus’s true kingship.

19:23. The seamless tunic may recall Joseph’s robe (Gn 37:3, 23). Similar to several later events at the crucifixion (Jn 19:28–37), the soldiers’ division of Jesus’s clothes and their casting of lots fulfilled Scripture (Ps 22:18).

19:24. The quotation is from Ps 22, a lament psalm ascribed to David. This is the first of several references to Jesus as the righteous sufferer in keeping with the experience of the psalmist (Jn 19:28, 36–37). The soldiers

did not want to tear Jesus's tunic because it was woven of one cloth. John may have purposefully shaped his account of Jesus's crucifixion in a way that highlighted the parallels and fulfillments between the experiences of David and Jesus. For instance, Ps 22:15–18 mentions the sufferer's thirst (v. 15), his pierced hands and feet (v. 16), and the preservation of all his bones (v. 17).

Notes:

19:25. His mother's sister may be Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee mentioned in Matthew and Mark. On Mary the wife of Clopas, see Lk 24:18. On Mary Magdalene, see 20:1–18 (cp. Lk 8:2–3).

19:26–27. In keeping with biblical injunctions to honor one's parents (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16), Jesus made provision for his mother, who was almost certainly widowed and probably in her early fifties, with little or no personal income.

19:28–29. The reference to Scripture being fulfilled builds on v. 24 (see note there), most likely in allusion to Ps 69:21: "They gave me vinegar to drink" (cp. Mt 27:34, 48; see Ps 22:15). Soldiers and laborers used sour wine to quench their thirst (Mk 15:36). It is different from the "wine mixed with myrrh" Jesus refused on the way to the cross (Mk 15:23). Hyssop was a plant classified in 1Kg 4:33 as a humble shrub. It was used for the sprinkling of blood on the doorpost at the original Passover (Ex 12:22).

19:30. Gave up may echo "willingly submitted to death," which was prophesied of the Suffering Servant (Is 53:12).

19:31. On preparation day, see note at v. 14. That Sabbath was ... special because it was the Sabbath of Passover week. For the Jews, bodies of hanged criminals were not to defile the land by remaining on a tree overnight (Dt 21:22–23; cp. Jos 8:29).

19:31–33. The legs of crucifixion victims were broken to hasten death. This prevented them from pushing themselves up with their legs to open the chest cavity and thus breathe better. Since the victims would now have to pull themselves up by the arms instead, suffocation occurred once their arm strength failed. See note at v. 36.

19:34. The flow of blood and water proved that Jesus was dead (1Jn 5:6–8). The passage may also allude to Ex 17:6: “Hit the rock, water will come out of it and the people will drink” (cp. Nm 20:11). The spear was about three and one-half feet long and consisted of an iron spearhead joined to a shaft of wood.

Notes:

19:36. After vv. 24 and 28–29 (see notes there), this is the third scriptural proof that shows that Jesus’s death fulfilled Scripture (Ex 12:46; Ps 34:20). Jesus escaped having his legs broken since he died so quickly, and the spear did not damage any of his bones.

19:37. The Roman soldiers again fulfilled prophecy without knowing it: “They will look at me whom they pierced” (Zch 12:10; also cited in Rv 1:7).

19:38. Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy member of the Jewish ruling council (Mt 27:57), asked Pilate for Jesus’s body. Thus Jesus was killed alongside criminals and was buried in a rich man’s tomb. This fulfilled another Scripture: “He was assigned a grave with the wicked, but he was with a rich man at his death” (Is 53:9).

19:39–40. The amount of aromatic spices brought by Joseph and Nicodemus—about seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes—was considerable (2Ch 16:14). Myrrh was a fragrant resin used by Egyptians in embalming; aloes were a powder of aromatic sandalwood; the mixture cloaked the smell of decay.

19:41. On the place where he was crucified, see notes at vv. 17, 20. The garden was apparently somewhat elaborate; note the mention of a gardener in 20:15. Garden burials are recorded in the OT (Manasseh in 2Kg 21:18; Amon in 2Kg 21:26).

19:42. Sabbath was rapidly approaching, when all work ceased, including that of carrying spices or transporting a corpse. Thus we may see it as an instance of divine providence that the tomb was nearby.