

THE CROSS

The Cross serves as the central event in the history of mankind. The Cross demonstrates God's love for us. The Cross embodies the heart of the gospel – the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (*1 Corinthians 15:1-4*). Jesus chose to suffer and become sin so that we could take on his righteousness and have a relationship with God (*2 Corinthians 5:21*). Our sins separated us from God; only in the Cross is there an opportunity for forgiveness. Many churches talk about the Cross, but judging by the way most people live, the Cross does not seem to have the same power in people's lives today as it did when the disciples of Jesus turned the world upside down. What's missing? This study aims to bring a deep understanding of what happened at the Cross and what that means for us as disciples of Jesus.

OPENING QUESTION: *Why do you think Jesus died on the cross?*

1. The Passion Account (Read *Mark 14:32-65; 15:1-37*)

- Jesus: overwhelmed, depressed, deserted, alone, defrauded, denied, & despised...
- As you read, ask, "**Why did Jesus do this?**" The answer: "**because he loves me.**"

2. Jesus' Physical Pain and Death

- One way to understand the details is to read the Medical Account (below).
- Understanding the Cross gets us in touch with how horrible sin is to God. It hurts God.

3. The Pain of Separation from God

Psalm 22:1-18, 30-31 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

- Background: This Psalm is a prophecy written ~1000 years before Jesus!
- Why would Jesus say this? The greatest challenge: Jesus was forsaken by God.
- Jesus took on my sin (the penalty of sin) and experienced a separation from God.

4. Our Response

- What words describe our condition when Jesus died for us? (*Romans 5:6-8*)
 - "Powerless, sinners, ungodly, enemies..."
 - What did Jesus do for his "enemies"?
 - He took my place and died for me, paying the penalty of my sin – death.
- What is the right response to this type of love? (*2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 20-21*)
 - What response did Paul expect? Gratitude, surrender, accepting love.
 - No longer live for ourselves; motivated to do God's will because he loves us.
 - Urgent to be reconciled to God. Jesus was our sin offering. He took the penalty for sin (death) so we can have His righteousness credited to us (a substitution).

5. Personal Application (*Isaiah 53:4-6*) What aspects of the cross do you see in this scripture?

- Remember the study on sin, your sin. Jesus died because of your sin. (*1 Peter 2:22-25*)
- We can substitute our names in this passage to make it more personal.
- **Analogy:** Drawbridge–man dies so others can live. Optional: Watch "The Cross" video.
- Pray together, expressing to God whatever is in your hearts.