

the road to the cross

Week 6 – Death & Burial mark 14-16

1. Even if you don't like Star Wars, there's a good chance that you like Yoda. Why do you think Yoda is so awesome?

Might seem like a strange intro question, and you'll probably get a lot of different answers. Try to get the idea out there that Yoda is awesome because although he looks weak he is actually incredibly strong and powerful. Great strength clothed in weakness.

As we near the end of our series on Jesus' final days before his death, we have seen that Jesus has been betrayed and arrested. His closest friends have denied knowing him as he stood trial, and he has been condemned to die by crucifixion. We pick up the story as Jesus is being led away to his death...

Read Mark 15:21-47

The third hour = 9am; The sixth hour = 12noon; The ninth hour = 3pm

2. How do you initially react as you read these verses? (What is your emotional reaction?)

A chance for them to think about what they have just read. It is likely that they might feel a mixture of anger that this occurred, but also thankfulness for what it means for us.

3. Throughout the passage there are various responses that are made to Jesus on the cross. Note who makes these responses and what they are.

| Verses | Who? | How do they respond? |
|--------|---|---|
| v29-30 | <i>Those passing by</i> | <i>They hurl insults at him, and try to show that he can't really do what he claims to be able to</i> |
| v31-32 | <i>Chief priests, teachers, criminals</i> | <i>Also hurl insults at him, and challenge him to prove himself by coming down from the cross</i> |
| v37-39 | <i>The Roman centurion</i> | <i>Recognises the significance of who Jesus is, and what has just occurred</i> |

4. Those passing by, the soldiers and rulers, and the other criminals see Jesus hanging on the cross as a sign of weakness. Why is this not the case?

*Although it looks like he is unable to save himself, in reality he has no desire to do so. Jesus was not intending to save himself, but rather through his death to save **others**. To save us. Jesus hanging on the cross is actually an image of great power and majesty.*

5. Notice above that there are essentially only two different types of responses that can be made to Jesus and his death. In what ways have you made either of these responses?

A chance for some personal reflection on what Jesus' death means to them. Get them to be honest in their reflection of how they have responded to Jesus' death up to this point.

6. What does this passage show us that Jesus' death has achieved?

*[Tough question for younger groups – think carefully about which parts you explain]
Verses 37-38 show us that the barrier between us and God has been removed (the temple curtain protected people from the glory of God), meaning that we are now able to have a **personal** relationship with him. Although not completely explicit, these verses also show the moment at which there is a 'sin exchange'. Jesus takes on the sins of all people.*

7. What does this tell us about the kind of relationship that we can now have with God?

As above, we are now able to have a personal relationship with God. Unlike the old covenant where people had to go through the priests, God's people are now able to have a direct relationship with him.

8. What danger do you think a Christian might face in losing sight of the seriousness of sin?

*We can become complacent and think that our sin doesn't really matter all that much. As a result we will become lazy about it and not pay much attention to ensuring that we are living as God's holy people. This passage reminds us of the huge cost to God as a result of **our** sin.*

9. How seriously are you treating sin in your life?

A chance for some personal reflection on what has just been discussed.

10. What danger do you think a Christian might face in losing sight of the significance of what Jesus achieved on the cross?

In this instance, we may have a misguided view of what our relationship with Jesus should look like. It is often easy to see God as nothing more than one of our mates – we desire a relationship with God, but we don't treat him as our Lord and Saviour. We're not willing to give him control of our lives, or the respect that he deserves.

11. In what ways do you need to reconsider your response to Jesus based on what he has done?

A chance to consider if they need to make a new or adjusted response to Jesus based on what they have just looked at. Push them to be honest about this.

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| <p><i>Pray as a group to thank God for Jesus' sacrifice for our sake. Pray that God would enable you to make the right response to Jesus, and to continue doing that throughout your life.</i></p> |
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