



LESSON 19 ~ SUFFERING, SHAME & SACRIFICE

John 18-19

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What big project have you ever undertaken that you finished totally and completely? What is a project that is still unfinished?

INTRODUCTION

Someone has wisely said that the Cross of Christ is the middle point of the whole Bible. It is not the middle by pages or by verse count, of course, but by *focus*. The Old Testament and most of each of the Gospels look forward to the Cross. The rest of the Bible looks back at the Cross and all that it accomplished. The Cross is the defining moment in human history – the moment that changed everything.

As we shall see in this lesson, it was on the Cross that the one perfect life our planet has ever known, the epitome of goodness, love, kindness, and gentleness met its death. The Holy One dies as the condemned one; the Guiltless for the guilty. Suffering, shame and sacrifice – all for us. *For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **John 19**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (John 16:13). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Spirit of the Living God, the One who comforts, strengthens and encourages me.

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,
with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

I ask this in the powerful Name of Jesus (as if Jesus were asking it).

Amen

2. Read **John 19** slowly and thoughtfully in your own Bible. As you read and reread, *underline or highlight* any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a *question mark* beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read this chapter in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *Amplified Version* of the Bible. It is important, however, that you don't try to answer the questions in the lesson from just the *Amplified Version*. The questions are phrased to be answered from the *New International Version (NIV)*, the *New Living Translation (NLT)*, or something similar. Using **only** the *Amplified Version* may be confusing. It is given only as a supplementary text.

3. Write one question that you have about this chapter that you would like answered as you do this lesson.

QUESTIONS

Read **John 18:28-19:16** – *Jesus Before Pilate*

1. If you were an observer at Jesus' trial before Pilate and were asked to summarize the proceedings, what would you identify as the key events or turning points of this hearing?
 - ♥ Describe Pilate as he is depicted in this story. What contradictions do you see in his character?
 - ♥ What is the irony of **18:28**? Why is it easier to follow religious traditions than to follow Jesus?
2. Why did the Jewish religious leaders take this case to the Roman governor, Pilate? Why didn't they try and condemn Jesus in their own religious courts (**18:31**)?

If the Jews had not been under Roman rule, they, as a nation, would have had the authority to execute Jesus. However, the Jewish mode for capital punishment was *stoning*, not *crucifixion* (as with the Romans). Why was it important that Jesus die by crucifixion (**Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13; John 3:14-15; 8:28; 12:32**)?

- ♥ Who is really in control of Jesus' trial (**19:11**)? How can this be a lesson to you when things look bad?
3. How were the charges that the religious leaders brought against Jesus especially designed to be brought before Pilate, the Roman governor (**Luke 23:2**)?

Jesus admits to being a king, but not of this world (**18:36**). From the Scriptures below, what do you learn about this kingdom?

Scripture	Facts About the Kingdom
John 3:3	
Luke 17:20	
Matthew 12:28; 1 Corinthians 4:20	
Romans 14:17	
Revelation 5:9-10	

- ♥ If you consider yourself a Christ-follower, what implications does Jesus' statement, "My kingdom is not of this world," have on your priorities, actions and lifestyle?
- ♥ What would it mean for you to acknowledge Jesus as king of our life? **Who** or **what** competes with Christ's authority in your life? Do you let your King decide your priorities? How so?
- ♥ What does Jesus promise to give his subjects in return for their making his kingdom their primary aim (**Matthew 6:31-3**)? Discuss how this works and what it would look like in your life. What are the risks?

4. Why does Jesus bring up the subject of *truth* with Pilate in **18:37**? What was he hoping to accomplish? Do you think Jesus is defending himself or trying to engage Pilate? How so?
 - ♥ When Pilate asked, "What is truth?", what tone of voice do you think Pilate used (**18:38**)? Sarcastic? Sincere? Despairingly? Wistfully? What is *ironic* about his question (**John 1:14; 14:6**)?
 - ♥ If someone asked you, "What is truth?", how would you answer? How important is truth? Why?
 - ♥ Jesus knew who he was, why he was born and what his mission was (**18:37**). How well do you know these things about yourself? How would knowing ourselves in this way help us in times of adversity?
5. What choice did Pilate present to the Jews (**18:38-39**) and what did Pilate expect their answer to be? Why (**John 12:12-19**)?
 - ♥ Pilate thought he had found the perfect compromise in releasing Jesus as the "Passover prisoner" (**18:39**). How did he think his solution would satisfy the religious leaders, the people and himself?
 - ♥ How does Barabbas gaining his freedom at Christ's expense illustrate the Gospel (Good News)? How does it illustrate your own story?
6. What was Pilate probably hoping would be the result of having Jesus flogged (**19:1-5**)? What was the result (**19:6**)?
 - ♥ What tactic did the chief priests use in **9:12, 15** to trap Pilate and finally get him to hand over Jesus? What emotion were they playing on in Pilate (**19:8**)? Why is this emotion such a good weapon?
 - ♥ When have you been tempted to do what *works* rather than what is *right*? What **position** or **possession** might you be tempted to preserve at the expense of doing the right thing?
 - ♥ Where do you need to stand for truth regardless of the consequences?
7. Jesus was falsely accused and convicted, and even though he had the power to save himself, he didn't use it. Why was Jesus able to do this (**1 Peter 2:23**)?
 - ♥ When you suffer unjustly or suffer for doing good, what help do you find in **1 Peter 2:23** and **4:19**?
 - ♥ How does it make you feel to realize the injustice done to Jesus at his trial before Pilate? What do you think Jesus wants you to do about present day injustices? What will you do?
 - ♥ How do you think a non-Christian would view Jesus after reading about him and the way he conducted himself at his trial? Respect? Disdain? Admiration? Mystified? Other?

Read **John 19:17-37** – *The Crucifixion*

John makes no attempt to describe the physical horror of the crucifixion, probably because it was a process already well known to his readers and he wished to emphasize other aspects of Jesus' ordeal. If you have never read an account of what the human body goes through during crucifixion and how the crucified one finally dies, you might want to do that. Crucifixion was probably the most diabolical form of death ever invented. Crucifixion was so horrible that Rome did not allow a Roman to be sentenced to it, no matter how atrocious the crime. Jesus submitted willingly to this terrible death, not only to take all our sins on himself, but to also take on the kind of death our sins deserve. He did it all so that we could be restored to a love relationship with God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

8. Instead of describing all the details of Jesus' crucifixion, John has other reasons for writing his account. What was one of his purposes as shown in **19:24, 28** and **36-37**?
- ♥ Why do you think John thought it was important to show that Old Testament Scripture prophesied the details of Jesus' death?
 - ♥ Read **Isaiah 53:1-12**. How many parallels do you see between these verses and Jesus' life experience?
 - ♥ Is the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures important to your own belief in Jesus today? Why or why not?
9. What did Jesus mean when he said it is finished (**Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:11-14**)?
- ♥ How would you describe the necessity of the crucifixion of Christ to an unbelieving friend?
 - ♥ How has the death of Jesus personally affected your life?
 - ♥ What does the Christian faith offer that no other religion does?
10. Jesus said, "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (**Luke 14:27**). According to **Galatians 2:20** and **5:24**, what do you think it means to "carry our cross?" How is it done?
- ♥ Why is the cross the symbol for Christianity? In what ways does it sum up what Christianity is?
 - ♥ Even though Jesus was God's son, he learned obedience by what he suffered (Hebrews 5:8). What are some things you have learned through suffering?
 - ♥ How do you view the crucifixion: Necessary evil? Tragedy? Victory? Other? Why?
11. The Cross of Christ not only *happened*, over 2000 years ago, but it continues to *happen* in our present-day lives, influencing us with its power and mystery. What are some specific benefits that the Cross of Christ continues to work in our lives (**Isaiah 53:5; Colossians 1:19-22; Hebrews 2:14-15**)?

Response

- What aspect of Jesus' death has made the deepest impression on you and why?
- If the horrible and unjust crucifixion of Jesus can bring about something incredibly wonderful (our salvation), what hope does that give you about suffering, tragedies and disasters you may experience and God's ability to work good from them?
- What is a situation in your life where you need God to bring good from bad? Do you believe he will (**Romans 8:28**)? How can you be *sure* that He will (**Romans 8:32**)?

Encounter with Jesus

With your spiritual imagination and the eyes of your heart, see yourself at the Crucifixion. Spend some time at the foot of the cross, looking into Jesus' eyes. What specific sins and failures in your life do you need for Jesus to take upon Himself as he hangs dying on the cross? What *life, power* and *love* do you sense flowing back to you from Jesus as he takes on the penalty for your sins? Tell Jesus how much you love him. Listen for his words of love and affirmation to you.