

Helping students understand the depths of depravity and the greater depths of God's grace for us in Christ.

PERSONAL HOLINESS | TIER 1 DISCIPLESHIP | Matthew 27:15-26

Mar 22, 2020

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: AT A GLANCE

INFORMAL: (10 minutes)

Take attendance with the LEAD App and ask guests to complete a connection card. Allow for informal conversation with your group but be prepped to transition. REVIEW Memory Verse (Hebrews 4:16). Can anyone quote Hebrews 4:12-15? GOSPEL PRESENTATION: 1 person a Sunday. Keep it under 3 min. Research the provided Gospel presentations to decide what you like best.

INTRODUCTION: (6 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: Reflect on Hebrews 7:25
PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire, see, understand, & live the truth.
BACKGROUND: Share the provided info before reading the text.
READ: Matt 27:15-26 out loud then begin the DIG Method.

DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHAT did the chief priests and the elders do to get what they wanted (v. 20)?
WHAT was the reason for Pilate's hesitation to do what they requested (v.22-23)?
WHAT did Pilate end up doing and for what reason did he do it (v. 24)?

INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (4 min)

Pilate knew the right action in this situation but WHY did he not do the right thing?
Did Jesus do anything to deserve people to cry out, "Let Him be Crucified!?" WHY not?

GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (4 min)

HOW can you identify with Pilate when you know what you ought to do but fail to do it?
What about the crowds & temple leaders? Can you identify with them? Why or why not?
Are you tempted to think the people's sin (rejecting/crucifying Jesus) is worse than your own sin? Why or why not? How are we the same?
How does your heart process through the thought that Jesus was dying for the very ones who cried out, "Let him be crucified!"?

ACTIVITY: Grace Handout (10 min)

Explain how grace gives us confidence to approach God. Brainstorm Gospel promises from Scripture. Give time for the Grace handout & wrap up with conversation about the handout.

COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study & the activity... How can we pray/encourage you this week? How can we hold you accountable this week? Close in prayer.

**February's
Memory Verse**
Hebrews 4:16

**Provided
Supplies**
Grace Handout



**Sermon
Connection**
Today's chat will be on Owen's prior sermon on Matt 27:15-26.



**Emmaus
Connection**
When a connection is being made to our discussion we will outline that here.

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: EXPANDED

INFORMAL: (8 minutes)

Take ATTENDANCE with the LEAD App.

Ask GUESTS to complete a CONNECTION card. Find ways to learn about the guest.

Allow for informal CONVERSATION but be prepped to TRANSITION to allow time for Bible discussion & community.

REVIEW this month's Memory Verse (Hebrews 4:15).

GOSPEL PRESENTATION: In response to the Discussion Guide a few weeks ago we want your small group to carve out 3 minutes each Sunday for a different person to practice sharing the Gospel. I want our Encouragers to lead the way first as to model this for the students. Keep it under 3 minutes. Once all the Encouragers have taken a Sunday to give it a shot start asking a different student (a week in advance) to come prepared to share the Gospel the following Sunday. You may need to be more hands on with some than with others. Below I listed several ways to communicate the Gospel. The first three in the list are my favorite. Before you print your Discussion Guide click the link on the pdf so you can access the one you prefer.

- 3 Circles: <https://youtu.be/V7mURm-8cOI> (there is an App for this...Life Conversation Guide or Life on Mission)
- 4 Words - God, Man, Jesus Response: <https://www.9marks.org/answer/what-gospel/>
- Life in 6 Words: <https://lifein6words.com/the-g-o-s-p-e-l-message-explained/> (There is an App for this...same title)
- 3 Minutes: <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/ad-fontes/sharing-the-gospel-in-3-minutes-or-less/>
- How to Know God: <https://www.cru.org/us/en/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html>
- Romans Road: <https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2016/09/evangelism-the-romans-road-to-salvation/>

INTRODUCTION: (7 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: Read Hebrews 7:25 “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”

Reflection... Have you ever felt beyond God's willingness to save you or not worthy of God's love?

- *This is a question that focuses in on one's assurance of God's love for them. Mark it down! There is someone in your group questioning God's love for them, doubting their position with God. A person can lack assurance for a lot of reasons. We need to be careful when trying to help someone in this position and gently try to discover why they feel this way. We don't want to quickly try to make them "get over" this feeling as much as we need to point them to where our assurance comes from...Jesus and his work for us on the cross. We look to Jesus and nothing else! If you have someone in your group feeling this way make a mental note so you can encourage them in the coming days. Feel to reach out to me as well!*

PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire, see, understand, and live the truth.

- *We never want to approach God's Word like we approach books we read for school/learning. We are not merely acquiring information. We are encountering words that are alive and change people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's position ourselves in humility and ask God for His help and to transform us!*

BACKGROUND of Matt 27:15-26: Jesus has already been arrested and the temple leaders wanted Jesus gone because the things he was teaching opposed their authority and system. They were not helping the people to come to God but were driving them away by their man made system of beliefs. Jews were not free but under the oppression of Rome. These temple leaders wanted Pilate, the Roman governor, who rules in Jerusalem, to do their dirty work and execute Jesus. As you'll read, Pilate wants nothing of their request. Instead, Pilate had apparently instituted a custom to release one of their people who was a prisoner in order to win the favor of the masses. He let them decide which one, Jesus or Barabbas. Barabbas was was a thief and a murderer. As you'll read the people wanted to release Barabbas.

READ: Matthew 27:15-26 out loud then begin the DIG Method.

Matthew 27:15-26 "15 Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. 16 And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 17 So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. 19 Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." 20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." 22 Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" 23 And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" 24 So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." 25 And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" 26 Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHAT did the chief priests and the elders do to get what they wanted (v.20)?

- They worked the crowd. This same crowd who celebrated Jesus entrance into the city just days ago was being persuaded by the temple leaders to execute Jesus. The crowds wanted Jesus to be a leader to overthrow the Roman oppression but now since that dream seems impossible they are persuaded to get rid of him.

WHAT was the reason for Pilate's hesitation to do what they requested (v.22-23)?

- From Pilate's perspective he saw no wrong in Jesus and also his wife gave him a strong admonition not to have anything to do with Jesus.

WHAT did Pilate end up doing and for what reason did he do it (v.24)?

- Pilate, like the crowds, was also persuaded to let Jesus be crucified. But why? It was Pilate's job to keep the peace in Jerusalem. Upon seeing that he was not going to convince the crowds of Jesus' innocence and seeing the crowds were on the brink of a riot, he caved. A riot would not look good on his watch.

INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (4 min)

Pilate knew the right action in this situation but (on a heart level) why did he not do the right thing?

- Ultimately his conviction for what was right was not stronger than to maintain his status as a Roman governor. Standing up for what is right would have led to mass chaos in Jerusalem. That was just too costly for Pilate. Standing up for what was right was not convenient.

Did Jesus do anything to deserve people to cry out, "Let Him be Crucified!"? Why not?

- We know Jesus was sinless but yet he was opposed. He had not done anything to warrant the treatment he was receiving. He was hated because he spoke the truth out love.

GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (4 min)

HOW can you identify with Pilate when you know what you ought to do but fail to do it?

- Standing up for what is right is easy when everyone agrees with you but when it's a just a few of you or even just you we discover how convinced we are of what is right. There is always pressure to embrace what is evil and wrong. Sometimes that pressure is external in the form of circumstances or other people. Sometimes that pressure is internal in the form of a wrong desire for pleasure or a desire to be approved by people rather than by God.

What about the crowds & temple leaders? Can you identify with them? Why or why not?

- Our students may not see the connection they have with the crowds/temple leaders, but our proneness toward evil and our willingness to embrace sin is hatred toward God and just as violent as the crowds when they cried out, "Let him be crucified!"

Are you tempted to think the people's sin (rejecting/crucifying Jesus) is worse than your own sin? Why or why not? How are we the same?

- This may be a little redundant to the last question so help them talk it out. We tend to minimize the significance of our sin, as well as, the impacts it will have on ourselves and other people. Maybe ask a follow up question like, "In what ways do we minimize our sin?"

How does your heart process through the thought that Jesus was dying for the very ones who cried out, "Let him be crucified!"?

- It is good that we feel the weight of our sin. The more we can understand out depravity the more we can enjoy the grace of God die for the ones who have hated him.

ACTIVITY: Grace Handout (10 min)

EXPLAIN: Upon a conversation like this on sin we may be tempted to act like Adam and Eve and hide in shame and fear. But amazingly, because Jesus was crucified and resurrected back to life we don't have to. We are invited to approach God with confidence because of the grace Jesus purchased for us with His life?

DISCUSSION: Before passing out the handout brainstorm as a group and see how many specific scriptures you all can come up with that encourage us with the Good News. Hopefully they can come up with John 3:16 at least?

- Here are some options...John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:21

HANDOUT: Give students the Grace handout and allow some time to process through what it asks them to do. After some time of reflection encourage students to share which promise of grace/good news listed in their handout encourages them the most and why?

COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study or other spiritual struggles... How can we **pray** for you? How can we **encourage** you this week? How can we hold you **accountable** this week?

- Please use the above questions & **refrain** from stating, "Does anyone have any prayer requests?" This is too general & doesn't ask the student directly about spiritual issues. Until your group develops greater community invite students to connect with you individually.

PRAY: Spend time in prayer as a group.

- This will depend upon the life of your small group and the willingness of the individuals. A big win would be that everyone gets prayed for and every person prays. However, if your group isn't there yet take small baby steps throughout the year.

ENCOURAGE: Pray for each other & check in with each other for encouragement & accountability.

- As the adult encourager set the tone and be the lead prayer warrior this week. Give them an example to follow by checking in with your small group via text, GroupMe, or whatever means your small group has adopted for regular communication.

POST SMALL GROUP STUDENT CONNECTION

CONNECT: With your small group or the students as individuals this week by...

- Create a jpg (picture) through YouVersion App for the verse Hebrews 10:24-25 and share it with your small group.
- Pay close attention to the responses (or lack of responses) given this morning, especially during the activity. How can you pray/encourage/disciple the individual students in your group?