

Jesus the Dying King

Appetizer: At a Colorado ranch, there was a girl who told some students how she came to Christ. She used to wear a cross on a chain, simply as a decoration. One day another student asked her, "Why do you wear a cross? Do you know what it means?" She was taken by surprise and stuttered that she just liked crosses. But the question stayed with her and haunted her until she joined a Bible study group where she learned about Jesus and the meaning of his cross.

Discussion: How is the cross sometimes used today by people who don't know what it means? What does the cross mean to you?

Main Course: Read John 19:16-37.

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. In verses 17 and 18 John uses very few words to describe the physical act of crucifixion. Why do you think that is?
3. Notice the title that Pilate puts over Jesus' head on the cross (vv. 19-20). Why did he put it there if he didn't really believe it?
4. Jesus' concern for his mother is a tender, last human act (vv. 25-27). What insight does it also give us into her relationship between Jesus' earthly and spiritual families?
5. A) It has been said that Jesus' cry "It is finished" (v. 30) was a shout of triumph, not a cry of resignation. What had Jesus finished?
B) What does that mean for you and me? (See John 1:29; 17:1-4).

Read John 19:38-42.

6. What does the story of the burial add to the significance of Jesus' death?
7. The cross becomes the dividing line between belief and unbelief. Who in this chapter is on the side of belief, and who is on the side unbelief? Explain.

8. The soldiers' gambling (v. 24) seems like a small detail. But here and in verses 28 and 36 John sees the crucifixion as fulfilling Old Testament Scripture. What significance does this give to Jesus' death?
9. Why are the incidents in verses 31-37 about not breaking Jesus' legs but piercing him with a spear important----- What do they prove?

Dessert: Nicodemus has appeared twice before in John's Gospel (see 3:1-12; 7:50-52) What effect does Jesus' death seem to have on him?