

◦ JOURNEY TO THE CROSS ◦

**REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS  
2022**

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# **JOURNEY TO THE CROSS -**

## ***The Centrality of the Cross***

(20 March 2022)

Many people wear or display a cross as a symbol of their faith. Many cathedrals and older churches are laid out in the shape of a cross. Yet the choice of the cross as the dominant symbol of the Christian faith would have seemed very strange to those living in the 1st century. Why?



**In Mark's gospel, he records 4 teachings by Jesus in quick succession.**

### ***Read:***

Mark 8:31-33, 9:30-32, 10:32-34 and 10:45. What are the key elements of his death that Jesus explains to them?

What does Jesus' teaching tell us about his attitude toward his death?

How do Jesus' predictions of his death give readers of Mark's gospel greater confidence in who Jesus is?

What response does Jesus receive from the disciples and what does this teach us about their attitude toward his death?

Read John 10:11-18. What things does Jesus want his disciples (and us) to know and understand?

What personal encouragement do you take from knowing Jesus took the journey to the cross intentionally?

What personal challenge comes from reading about the place that the death of Jesus played in the lives of the disciples and the early church?

In what way can you intentionally reflect on the death of Jesus as we approach Easter?

### ***Further readings for this week:***

Acts 2:14-39, 3:12-26 and 4:8-12 record the 1st sermons Peter preached.

**Reflect** on how Peter explains the cross and the meaning of Jesus' death

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 and Galatians 6:14, Paul speaks of the place that the death of Jesus has in his life and ministry.

**Reflect** on what he writes.

# JOURNEY TO THE CROSS -

## *Jesus went to the cross for us*

(27 March 2022)

Describe a situation where you realised that you were completely unable to save yourself or make a situation right. How did you come through it?

### **Read:**

Read Isaiah 53:1-6. What strikes you about this description of the Messiah, written hundreds of years prior to the coming of Jesus? What connections can you make between this description of the Messiah and the gospel accounts of Jesus?

What reason does the prophet give for **why** the Messiah will suffer? In the context of the passage, what 'healing' is given particular emphasis as a result of the death of the Messiah?

Read 1 Peter 2:24-25. Notice the wording that Peter uses from Isaiah's prophecy. Why would he want his readers to think back to that prophecy?

For what purpose was Jesus crucified, according to Peter here? Why is the 'tense' that Peter uses (ie past, present or future) important in his description of what Christ accomplished?

John Stott writes, "Before we can begin to see the cross as something done **for** us, we have to see it as something done **by** us". It is easy to read the gospels and blame Pilate, Caiaphas and Judas for their role in the death of Jesus. However, what role did we play?

Read 1 John 1:5-10. What strong warnings and equally strong promises do these verses contain? Why is repentance such an important component of the Christian life?

This Sunday we finish(ed) the service by celebrating the Lord's Supper. Reflect on Luke 22:1-23 where Jesus explains the significance of the bread and wine.

### **Further readings for this week.**

**Reflect** on what each of them have to say about the reason for Jesus' death.

Romans 5:1-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

Hebrews 9:23-28

### **During the week,**

**Listen** to or sing the song, 'How Deep the Father's Love for Us', and reflect on the words, especially in the 2nd verse; 'Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders;

Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice, call out among the scoffers.

It was my sin that held Him there, until it was accomplished;

His dying breath has brought me life,

I know that it is finished.'



# **JOURNEY TO THE CROSS -**

## ***Jesus bore the penalty of our sin on the Cross***

*(Sunday April 3)*

### **Read:**

Matthew 26:36-44 and Luke 22:39-46.  
Why is Jesus so distressed?



What is this “cup” that holds such horror for him? Isaiah 51:17 and Jeremiah 25:15 are just 2 of many references to God’s cup. How does this explain Jesus’ distress?

Last week Kathy spoke about the significance of the Passover. What is the significance of the lamb in the Passover story? (See Exodus 11-13 if your memory needs prompting) How does this explain John the Baptist’s declaration in John 1:29?

Turn to Isaiah 53:1-6 again. The prophecy makes it very clear for whose sins the Messiah is killed. What similarities can you draw between the image of the Passover lamb and the Suffering Servant?

The writers of the New Testament make it clear that Jesus not only died for us, that is, to bring us into relationship with God, but that he also died as one of us.

Read 1 Peter 2:22-25 where he uses wording and imagery from Isaiah 53. How does he explain what happened when Jesus was crucified?

Read what Paul writes in Galatians 3:10-14 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. How does he explain what happened when Jesus was crucified?

Going back to where we started, answer again why Jesus was so filled with anguish and distress in the garden of Gethsemene.

Read Matthew 27:45-46. How do the above passages allow us to understand the significance of the darkness and the cry of desolation?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be both fully human and fully divine?

How have these passages shaped the way in which you respond to the crucifixion of Jesus this Easter?

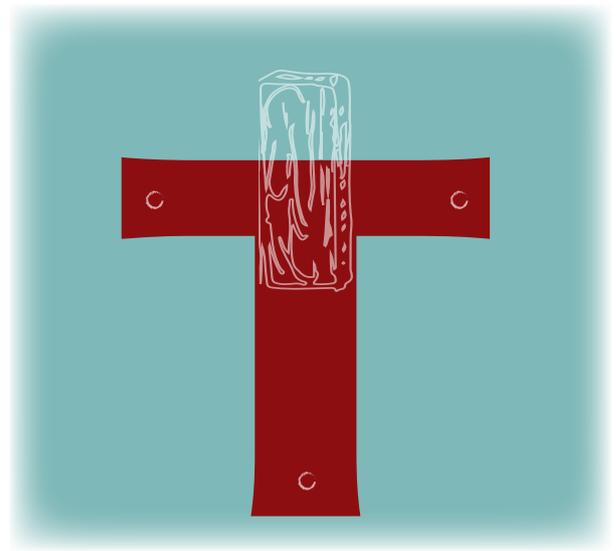
# **JOURNEY TO THE CROSS -**

## ***At the Cross, Jesus brings us into a new relationship with God***

*(Sunday April 10)*

### **Read:**

Read John 3:14-17. When it says that through Jesus, the world would be 'saved', how do you understand what this means? For example, what are we saved from? How are we different from someone who is not saved?



The New Testament present 4 pictures that explain the salvation that Jesus Christ achieved for us on the Cross. Each picture is drawn from the everyday life of 1st Century Jews.

*The 1st image is drawn from the Temple and describes Jesus' death as a sacrifice for our sins. Many of the passages from the past 2 weeks have spoken about this.*

Read Heb 9:11-14. Consider the imagery which the writer uses to explain what Christ has accomplished. What connections does the writer make between the temple and the person of Jesus Christ? What is the writer's intention in doing so?

Read how John describes the salvation that Jesus obtained for us in 1 John 1:7-10 and 2:1-2. What does this add to the passage from Hebrews?

*The 2nd image is drawn from the slave market and describes Jesus' death as paying a ransom for our lives or buying us back from slavery.*

Read Galatians 4:4-5, Ephesians 1:3-10, Colossians 1:13-14 and Hebrews 9:15. In what ways, and to what had we been held captive?

How does this image from the slave market of us being bought back, complement the image from the temple? What does it say about who we are now 'owned' by?

*The 3rd image is drawn from the Law courts and speaks of Christ's death justifying us.*

Read Romans 3:21-26 and 5:1-2. What does it mean that we have been justified? How is being 'justified', different from being forgiven? What is the consequence of our justification?

*The 4th image is drawn from family relationships and speaks of Christ's death reconciling a broken relationship.*

Read Romans 5:9-11. How does Paul describe the link between our justification and our reconciliation?

Paul understands reconciliation as including, but going beyond a personal relationship between us and God. What does 'reconciliation' encompass according to Paul in these passages:

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Colossians 1:15-23

Which of these 4 images (if any) have you found most powerful in conveying what it means to receive salvation because of the death of Jesus Christ?

Spend time thanking God for the salvation you have received.

# **JOURNEY TO THE CROSS -** ***At the Cross, we see the victory that Jesus Christ has won***

*(Easter Weekend)*

Traditionally, churches have celebrated Good Friday with solemnity and Easter Sunday with celebration. What is the danger of seeing Good Friday as 'defeat', and Resurrection Sunday as 'victory'?

## **Read:**

There are many passages to reflect on below. Feel free to space them out over the coming days.

Read Philippians 2:5-11. Rather than being embarrassed by the manner of Jesus' death on the Cross, what does this passage show us about how the early church understood his death?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. How does the death of Jesus Christ demonstrate the justice and the wisdom of God according to Paul?

Read Romans 6:11-18. What does Paul teach concerning the victory over sin that Jesus Christ achieved and our response to that victory?

Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17. Despite all that Paul is facing, what is he confident in?

Perhaps the most obvious victory that we see at the Cross is that it proves that Jesus has obtained victory over even death itself! Read Hebrews 2:14-15. How does the writer of Hebrews describe the power that death holds over us?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57. How does Paul explain Jesus' victory over death and the consequences for each one of us?

The victory that Jesus achieved on the cross was complete and absolute. However, until Christ returns, we will continue to live in a world that is marred by sin and death. To finish off this series, read Revelation 1:12-18. What confidence do we gain when we read this description of John's vision of the resurrected Christ?

