

Bible Study: The death of Jesus

You'll get more out of the study if you discuss it with others. Jesus says where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is there with them.

Monday John 19:12-16 (NRSV)

Pilate tried to release [Jesus], but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

Pilate found no case against Jesus, but had him tortured (as noted in John 19:1 and following). Pilate was hoping that would pacify the angry mob. But you can't reason with unreasonable people. Pilate either needed to take a stand against their injustice or give them their way; they would have no middle ground. In the end he caved in to their demands.

When have you stood up to unreasonable people?

When have you caved in to their unjust demands?

Tuesday John 19:16b-22 (NRSV)

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

What was the difference to the chief priests between what Pilate wrote and what they wanted?

What was the difference to Pilate?

What might you have written?

Wednesday John 19:23-25a (NRSV)

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."
And that is what the soldiers did.

Psalm 22 was written hundreds of years before the crucifixion of Jesus. But many of the passages in the psalm had parallels at Jesus' death. Jesus quoted the first line of the psalm when on the cross. See also verses 7-8, 17-18 and 29-31.

Which parts of Psalm 22 are the most meaningful to you?

Thursday John 19:25b-27 (NRSV)

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Jesus had brothers and sisters, but as the oldest, he was responsible for caring for his mother – and he charged John to carry out that task in his absence.

What has it been like for you to care for a parent, if you have had that responsibility.

What do you suppose it was like for John and Mary?

Friday John 19:28-30 (NRSV)

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

James Montgomery wrote:

*Calv'ry's mournful mountain climb; there adoring at his feet
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete
"It is finished!" hear him cry; learn from Jesus Christ to die.*

What do you think of Jesus' statement, "It is finished"?

What do you think he meant?

Saturday John 19:31-37

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

See Psalm 34:19-22. What do you notice?

See Zechariah 12:10. What do you notice?

See Isaiah 53. What do you notice?

What captures your attention most in the crucifixion narrative?

For more great Bible Studies, go to <http://www.LaJollaLutheranChurch.com>

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible (NRSV), copyright, 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S. A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.