

Small Group Discussion Guide

“reLENTless” (pt. 3) – 4/6/2014

Scripture: John 19:1-18

Bottom Line: In Jesus' relentless pursuit of the cross, we know that God knows and cares about our pain.

INTRODUCTION: As we draw closer to Easter, we are studying the life and death of Jesus. On this journey in Holy Scripture, we see at least two things: the repeated sinfulness of man and the passionate pursuit of Jesus to save man by his death on the cross. Despite man's sinfulness, Jesus loved them.

UNPACKING THE GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE:

Read John 19:1-8

What is the significance of the crown of thorns and the purple robe?

- Both symbolized royalty. The Romans were mocking Jesus and his claim to be a king. In the end, Pilate caved to political pressure instead of standing up for justice. He condemned an innocent man and thus fell in line with the rest of sinful humanity in need of grace.

Read John 19:9-11

What does Jesus' statement in verse 11 mean? Caiaphas delivered Jesus over to Pilate. How does this make Caiaphas guilty of a greater sin?

- Jesus essentially said that God gives all power to those who have it on Earth. Pilate and Caiaphas both were in office because God placed them there. However, Caiaphas was clearly guilty of abusing his power in Jesus' case by labeling him with false charges such as blasphemy and treason.

Read John 19: 12-18

What is ironic about the last part of verse 15?

- The Jews charged Jesus with blasphemy and treason because he said he was God's Son (Matt 26:63-65) and because he said he was a King

(The word Messiah or Christ implied kingship). Yet, here the Jewish leaders commit blasphemy and treason against their own beliefs by announcing that they had no king but Caesar. By denying the Messiah, they had denied God himself (Jn. 12:44).

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE GOSPEL APPLIES TO MY LIFE:

How do I know that God cares about my pain, suffering, and hurts?

- The answer is Jesus. He came to Earth, sent by the Father, to be the rescuer of all who would trust in him. His death on the cross destroys the punishment that we deserve because of our sin. Christians are now reconciled to God, and while we suffer in this life for various reasons, we look forward to a new heavens and a new earth where suffering will be a thing of the past.
- Jesus does not just leave us to hope for the future as a relief for present suffering. He is with us in the midst of our suffering, and indeed, he is the very strength that carries us through our suffering. Also, our suffering is not in vain. God uses these unfortunate circumstances to mold us into people that think and love just like Jesus (Romans 8:28).

LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE:

Suffering in this life is a reality. How do I live in such a way as to glorify God in the midst of suffering?

- Fix your eyes on Jesus who went to the cross.
 - Hebrews 12:2-3. Jesus endured much for us and he is with us in the midst of the pain.
- Pour out your pain to Jesus.
 - Hebrews 4:15-16. He knows, understands, and has experienced. He not only sympathizes with our pain, he empathizes with us.
- Know that the cross is not the end of the story.
 - Resurrection – his resurrection ensures your resurrection.
 - Ascension – he is in control.
 - Christ's Return – Justice will be done.
 - Your immediate suffering is not the end of your story.
- Place your joy in Jesus himself, not joy in circumstances.
 - Let Jesus be the one that defines you, not anything else.