

Community Group Discussion Questions

THE LAST WEEK – NO. 4 “The Lord of Death” – John 19:31-42

Theme: *Jesus’ ability to control His death and burial means that He is worthy of our faith and commitment!*

In this last part of John 19, we find Jesus on the cross in a state of death. Of course, someday life will end for us, as well. About 152,000 people throughout the world will die today, the same tomorrow, and the day after that. That’s 55.3 million every year. We know that death is inevitable (Ps.89:48). The universality of death stems from the universality of sin (Rom.5:12). Consequently, the Bible describes those “...*who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying*” (Heb.2:15). This fear of death causes people to seek relief through pleasure, work, material gain, and even religion.

Can death be conquered? Is there a way to escape from the fear of it and to overcome it? The passage we come to today in John’s Gospel provides us with a thrilling record of Jesus’ power over death *while dead!* He can do what no one else has ever been able to do: control and conquer death. And, just as wonderful: what He did for Himself He promises to do for all who believe in Him. By dying, Jesus conquered death, including the fear of it, and turned it into that which ushers those who love Him into His presence.

Gathering Together (Icebreaker)

Share about a time that you were introduced to the reality and permanence of death. Perhaps you lost a pet or a family member.

Growing Together (Truth/Equipping)

Read John 19:31-42:

1. Why does death exist in the world? See Genesis 2:15-17 and Romans 5:12.
2. What are some of the ways in which non-Christians seek to cope with the reality and fear of death? See Hebrews 2:15.
3. We know from the various Gospel accounts that Jesus died at 3pm on what is called Good Friday after being on the cross for just 6 hours. How do you account for the fact that Jesus died sooner than most other victims of crucifixion? See Mark 15:44.

4. What was the purpose of breaking the leg bones of the two men crucified alongside of Jesus? Why didn’t the soldiers break Jesus’ leg bones?
5. John is the only Gospel writer to include the incident of a soldier piercing Jesus’ side with a spear. What might John’s reasons be for including this incident?
6. What do we know about Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus? See also Matthew 27:57 and John 3:1-7. What may have motivated these secret followers of Jesus to come forward and serve now?
7. It is sometimes argued that people back in the first century were predisposed to believe in supernatural events such as a bodily resurrection but that, today, in this age of enlightenment and technology, we know better. What in this story would suggest that Jesus’ followers were *not* expecting a resurrection?
8. What evidence is there in the events surrounding Jesus’ death and burial, as described here by John, to confirm the claim that He really was the Christ, the Son of God?

Getting Real with One Another (Accessibility)

1. What concerns or fears do you have regarding your own death? What helps you to cope?
2. What would you share to comfort a fellow Christian who was terrified of dying? See Psalm 116:15, Revelation 21:4, and Romans 8:35-39.
3. Are there additional promises from the Bible that you find particularly encouraging in addressing anxiety about death?

Group Prayer Time (Supplication)

1. Take time during your prayer gathering to thank the Lord for His willingness to suffer and die as your substitute.
2. Pray for the impact of Holy Week services: Maundy Thursday Communion Service (April 1) and Easter Sunday (April 4).