



groups

Week 3: Easter

Sermon Date: April 20-21, 2019

SPECIAL NOTE: During this week, there are two options for your Life Group, and a guide for each of those options:

1. Consider using this group meeting as a time to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus and end by serving communion.
2. If you don't sense that this is right for your Life Group, there is a LifeGroup discussion guide related to Jesus' final words.

Option #1: Guide to Leading Communion

For more details on why and how to lead communion in your Life Group, see the "Communion Guide for Leaders" located here: <https://www.fhcgroupleaders.org/resources>

Before the Group Meets

- **Purchase grape juice and pour it into a cup.** We recommend juice over wine since you may not know who in your group struggles in secret with alcohol dependency.
- **Purchase pita bread (or other soft bread) and cut it into small pieces.** Soft bread, like pita, absorbs the juice well so when the group members dip the bread into the cup, it will soak and hold the juice better.
- **Pray for this time of remembering the Lord and His sacrifice.** Ask the Holy Spirit to open your group members' hearts to hearing and experiencing the presence of God.
- **Send an email or text to your group, telling them that you're planning on observing communion together.** This will give people the opportunity to ask questions and/or prepare themselves for this special event.

During your Group Meeting

- **Remind your group of the significance of communion.** This is a time to focus on and remember the death of our Lord for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus instated communion as a means to experience His presence in a special way and to remember His death as a fulfillment of the promises of God.
 - *Remind your group that communion is only for those who have placed their faith in Jesus as Savior.*
- **Encourage a moment of silent prayer to allow people to confess their sins to God.**
- **Read a passage that focuses on the sacrifice of Jesus.** Here are some suggestions: Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, John 19. Philippians 2:1-11.



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- **Spend one more minute in quiet reflection.**
- **Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, and then give instructions to take a piece of bread, dip it in the juice, and then eat.**
- **Spend another minute or two in prayer and reflection.**
- **End your time of remembrance by singing or listening to a worship song (suggestions below), or by praying out loud together in thanks to God.**
 - Death Was Arrested, by North Point InsideOut - <https://youtu.be/uMsMiluCUUI>
 - Singing in the Victory, by Austin Stone Worship - <https://youtu.be/BddA2EvYWUY>
 - Lamb of God, by Vertical Worship - <https://youtu.be/b1AmLL4Jd20>



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Option 2: Life Group Discussion Guide

Theme: Jesus' final words prior to His crucifixion speak to God's sovereignty, Jesus' humanity and deity, and Jesus' completed work on the cross.

- **If you could choose your last words to your friends and family, what would they be?**

Ask a volunteer to read Luke 23:39-43.

- **What are some distinctions you see between the two criminals who were next to Jesus?**
- **How was the second criminal's faith revealed in what he said? How does this give us hope for forgiveness?**

Leader's Note: The first criminal who spoke out wanted to use Jesus—His power and deity—to save himself from suffering the punishment for his crimes. However, the second criminal recognized his own sinfulness compared to Jesus' deity and holiness. Even as they were all on their crosses, the second criminal believed Jesus was still the King of kings, as seen in his request for Jesus to remember him in His kingdom. Jesus' acceptance of that criminal into paradise with Him gives all people great hope. On the cross we see that Jesus was not afraid of what would happen to His kingdom. Although it looked as though His mission had been thwarted, He knew and demonstrated that His kingdom was being brought to fruition through His death. In response to the criminal's faith in Jesus as the Son of God, his recognition of his own sinfulness, and his understanding that he needed Jesus in order to enter the kingdom (i.e., heaven), Jesus gave the man assurance that he would join Jesus in paradise. The criminal was obviously not perfect when he called out to Jesus; he hadn't cleaned up his act. But the direction of his faith was more important than the perfection of his faith.

Ask another volunteer to read Mark 15:33-39.

- **What did it mean when Jesus said, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" What implication does this have for our lives and relationship with God?**
- **Do you think this passage reveals more about Jesus as a man or Jesus as God? Explain.**

Leader's Note: In this scene, we see both Jesus' divinity and humanity intertwined. Not only did Jesus feel the pain and agony that was death on a cross, Jesus also fully experienced the horror that was separation from God. He is eternally God, but in that moment. He was separated from God the Father as He bore the full wrath and judgment of God for the sins of man. These words also reveal Jesus' divinity and identity as the Messiah, as it is an allusion to Psalm 22, a psalm that has many prophecies of Jesus' death on the cross—including verses 1, 2, 7, 16, and 18. This is a great reminder of the sovereignty of God in the midst of suffering. He was in control and had given purpose to Jesus' death. Suffering itself does not equal separation from God; only a life that rejects God leads to eternal separation from Him. All things, good or bad, are used to fulfill the plan of God.



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Ask another volunteer to read John 19:28-30.

- **Which of Jesus' words in this passage point to His human nature? Which words point to His divine nature?**
- **What did Jesus say was finished? How does this impact us now?**

Leader's Note: Jesus' expression of thirst displayed His humanity. Jesus was on the cross for at least three hours (recorded in Matthew 27). As He was on the cross, fulfilling the plan of God for salvation, Jesus experienced real, human desires. He felt the torment and anguish of having nails driven into His hands and feet. He felt the agony of the weight of His body on the cross. And He felt thirsty. In every way, He felt the full physical horror of the crucifixion. We are reminded that Jesus' divinity cannot be separated from His humanity, as this quote points to Psalm 69:21. As the Messiah, Jesus lived out the fulfillment of Scripture. Jesus' suffering was part of God's original plan for salvation. God became man and walked, talked, breathed, and experienced life fully as a man. When we experience suffering, pain, and temptation, we can come to Jesus knowing that He can empathize with us. Jesus displayed His divinity through the words, "It is finished." This was the Messiah, the Son of God, who was prophesied throughout the Old Testament as the Savior for Israel. Jesus accomplished salvation as He experienced the cross and bore the full wrath of God for our sin. Even as Jesus gave up His spirit, it was of His own doing (John 10:18). These words do not mean that God's plan ended at the cross. Three days later Jesus rose from the grave, and one day He will return as the triumphant King. This final statement is one of victory. Through the cross, man and God were restored in relationship, death and sin were defeated, and Jesus was exalted as the Savior King.

- **Are there times when you, like the first criminal, try to use God for your own gain? What does it look like to fear God and not seek to use Him?**
- **When thinking about Jesus' being forsaken on the cross, does that stir up praise in your heart? Because He endured the cross, you never have to experience life apart from God. How do you need to respond to this reminder?**
- **In what ways does the cross give you hope in every situation?**

Close in prayer, thanking God for these last words of Jesus on the cross. Thank God that you have been restored to Him because of the finished work of Jesus in your place. Pray for the guidance to live daily in light of the cross.