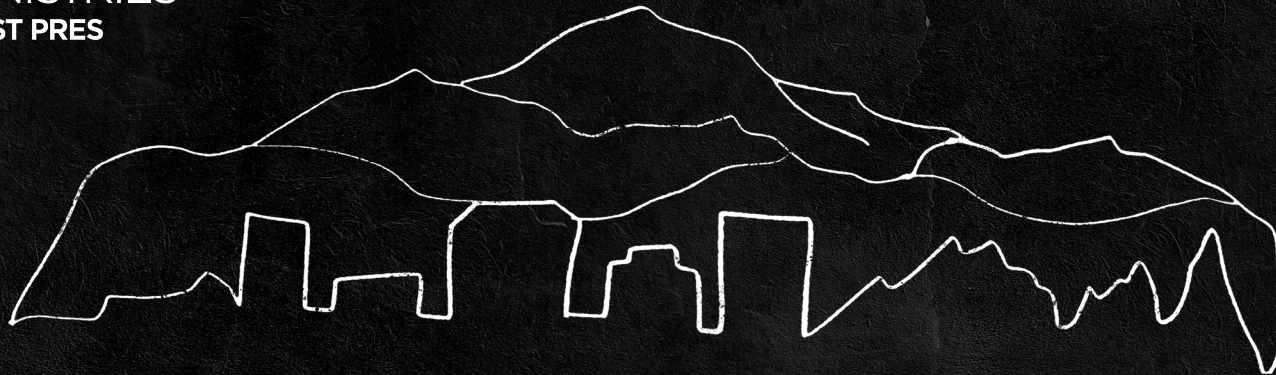




STUDENT
MINISTRIES
FIRST PRES



STUDENTS'
WORSHIP
GUIDE

To Give His Life
series

THIS WORSHIP GUIDE BELONGS TO:



HEY STUDENTS!

Over the next eight weeks our church is celebrating Lent, which is just a fancy word for a time of preparation and reflection on Easter. As our pastors are talking about the book of John in the main worship services, we want to give you another way to look at these verses from the Bible—on your own, with your family or in your small group.

There is so much to learn in every passage of Scripture, so this worship guide gives you a place to reflect on what is said from up front but also dig into the verses in a deeper and more personal way.

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Have it with you when you're listening to the preaching, bring it with you to your small group, and keep it handy for your personal devotional time. We hope you learn new things about the God who came to earth to die for you. And more than anything, we pray you grow in the knowledge of "how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:18) for you!

Lots of love,

Harper and Heather



TO THE GRAVE: JOHN 11:38-53

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

"What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation."

⁴⁹ Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. ⁵³ So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

How awesome that we have a God who feels deeply, like we do!

Look back a few verses to John 11:25 for the previous conversation. What does this show about how Jesus treats people?

What would you be thinking if you were here for this?

Jesus' power and influence are so strong that the Pharisees worried everyone might believe if they don't stop Him.

MY NOTES: _____

The raising of Lazarus from the dead signals that Jesus, at this point, can raise a dead man back to earthly life. But Lazarus will die again. It is only in His own death that Jesus will defeat death once and for all and will open the way to eternal life.

– Pastor Jennifer Holz



DIG IN:

The poem below, written by Lucille Clifton, shows the way Lazarus was changed by his encounter with Jesus. This week, read the poem and find some time to talk to your family or small group about change. How have you changed:

- From childhood until now?
- From the first day of school until now?
- From before COVID until now?
- From before knowing Jesus until now?

lazarus

second day

i am not the same man
borne into the crypt.

as ones return from elsewhere
altered by what they have seen,

so have i been forever.
lazarus.
lazarus who was dead.

what entered the light was one man
what walked out is another.

A FUNERAL PROCESSION: JOHN 12:12-25

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

² The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

¹⁵ “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”

¹⁶ At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

¹⁷ Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸ Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”

Jesus Predicts His Death

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³ Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”

They took palm branches. What would you bring if you heard Jesus was on His way?

We're told a number of times in the Bible not to fear. Why shouldn't we be afraid? Where are some other "do not fear" passages?

Jesus came to save ALL who believe, not just the Jews. What does this mean for us?

Jesus is using extreme language here to emphasize a point. He's not actually saying you have to be miserable; how do we explain this? (see John 10:10 and 1 John 2:15!)

At this point in His life, Jesus had what we often long for: adoring fans, followers who treated Him like royalty! And yet, Jesus knew that these things were fleeting, that God had called Him to something more. God had an even greater purpose for His life. What might God have in store for you?!

– Pastor Greg Hartnett



MY NOTES: _____

DIG IN:

Read the blurb above from Pastor Greg. He says “God had an even greater purpose for [Jesus’] life. What might God have in store for you?!” Sometimes God has plans for our lives that surprise us but are often even better than the thing we could have imagined for ourselves!

What do you think about this? Have you ever experienced this? If so, what was that like? If not, what might it look like to pray that God shows you just a glimpse of what He’s doing in your life?

Ask your family and your small group about times they’ve been surprised by the work God did in their lives.

FOR THIS REASON: JOHN 12:26-36

²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’?” No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰ Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

³⁴ The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’?” Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

³⁵ Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. ³⁶ Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Even Jesus is troubled. What does He do when things are unsettling? (see Phil 4:6-7, Matt 6:25-34)

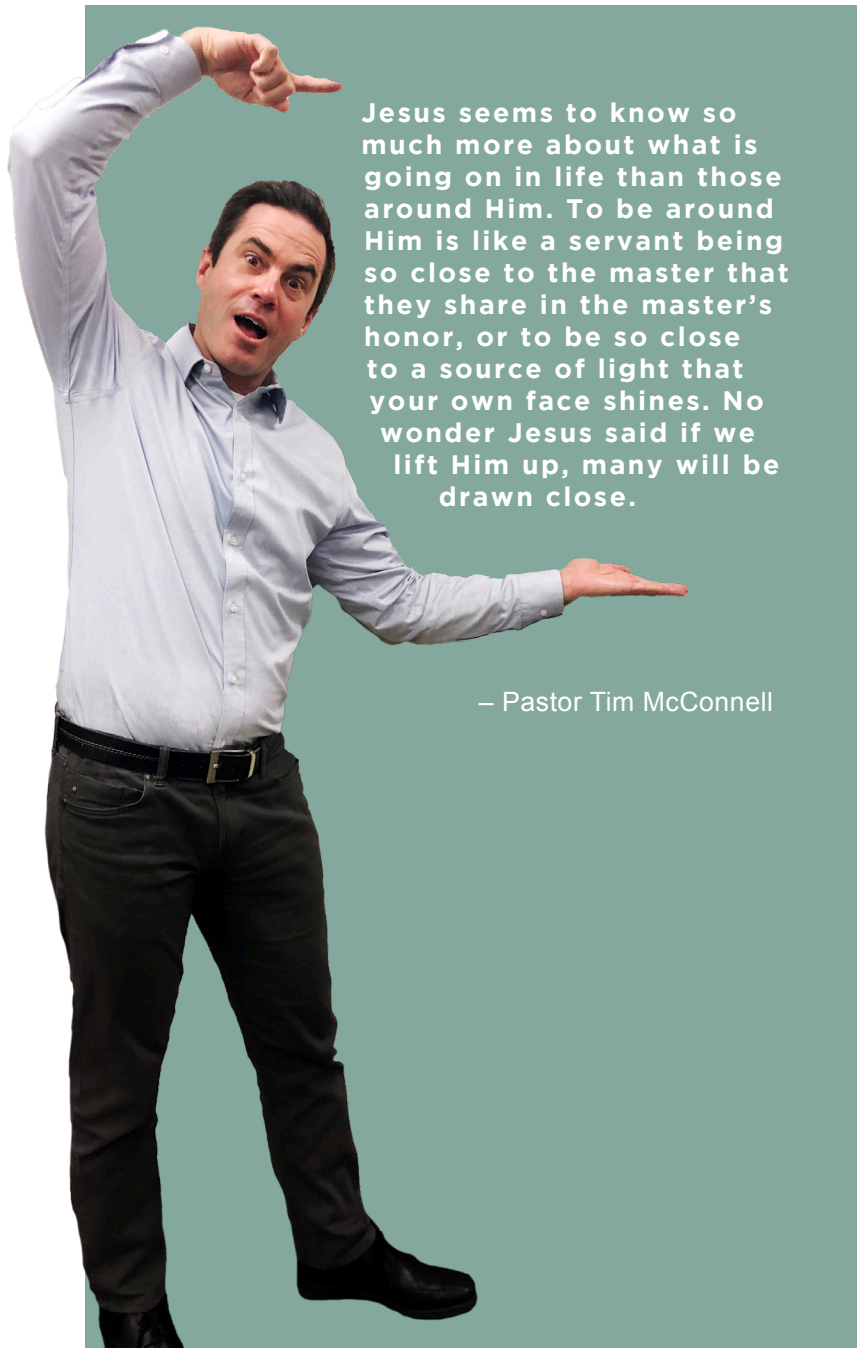
Luke 22:42 & Mark 14:36

Again, Jesus wants ALL people to come to Him. How does this impact how you treat other people?

Who does the crowd think Jesus is vs. who Jesus really is?

See John 9:5

Check out Matthew 5:13-16



Jesus seems to know so much more about what is going on in life than those around Him. To be around Him is like a servant being so close to the master that they share in the master’s honor, or to be so close to a source of light that your own face shines. No wonder Jesus said if we lift Him up, many will be drawn close.

– Pastor Tim McConnell

MY NOTES: _____

DIG IN:

In verse 34 on this passage, the crowd shows that they don’t understand who Jesus is. Maybe you’ve felt alone in a crowd, too. Have you ever felt like the people around you don’t understand you? What is it like to know that Jesus has experienced that as well? How does He respond to this experience? What can you learn from this passage for the next time you feel misunderstood?

JESUS KNEW: JOHN 13:1-14

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

¹³ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸ "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹ "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

Even (and especially) through His death, He loves YOU!

This is a big deal! Peter is shocked by Jesus' actions. Why? (see Philippians 2:3)

Symbolic language — what is Jesus really saying?

Application: how can we "wash one another's feet"?

MY NOTES: _____


DIG IN:

At the end of this passage, Jesus says, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” What are some ways you can “wash the feet” of those around you? Write your ideas below now so you don’t forget! Then check in next week to see if you did them. What did you think about this exercise? How did it feel?

- How I’m going to “wash my family’s feet”:
- How I’m going to “wash a friend’s feet”:
- How I’m going to “wash a stranger’s feet”:

Jesus gives His disciples the ultimate example of what it means to take the role of a servant. To wash feet is to care for others without expecting anything in return. What love! The disciples were those that Jesus loved, but also those who would later betray and even hurt Him. Jesus leads the way in showing what true unconditional love is about.

– Pastor Matt Holtzman

A photograph of Pastor Matt Holtzman, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a black puffer vest over a plaid shirt. He has his arms raised in a gesture of praise or excitement, with his hands open. The background is a solid teal color.

LIFE AFTER LIFE: JOHN 14:1-14

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

¹ "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going."

Context: the disciples are finally starting to grasp that Jesus is leaving, and they are freaking out.

See 1 Corinthians 2:9

Jesus the Way to the Father

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

I AM: see Exodus 3:14 for another place God uses this name for Himself. Why does this matter?

This is a new level of intimacy even we can have with the Father through Jesus!

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

Does God also live in us? (look up verses on the Holy Spirit)

Whoa! Even greater things? What does this mean?

Does that mean that ALL our prayers will be answered with a "yes"?



Jesus commands those who love Him not to fear because Jesus is “the way and the truth and the life.” The child of God rests secure in the promises of God. Do you believe what Jesus says?

– Pastor Michael Thornton

MY NOTES: _____

DIG IN:

In this passage, Jesus says that He is “the truth.” We hear a lot about truth in our culture today. How do you define truth? How do you figure out what is true and what is not? Talk to your family about how they define truth and what they think Jesus has to do with truth.

GREATER LOVE: JOHN 15:1-13

The Vine and the Branches

⁵ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

See Colossians 3:1-4
or 1 John 2:28-3:3

Seems harsh. Is Jesus being cruel here? What other Scripture should we look at?

This is a big claim! Does this mean God is a genie, that we can get whatever we want from God? If not, what might it mean?

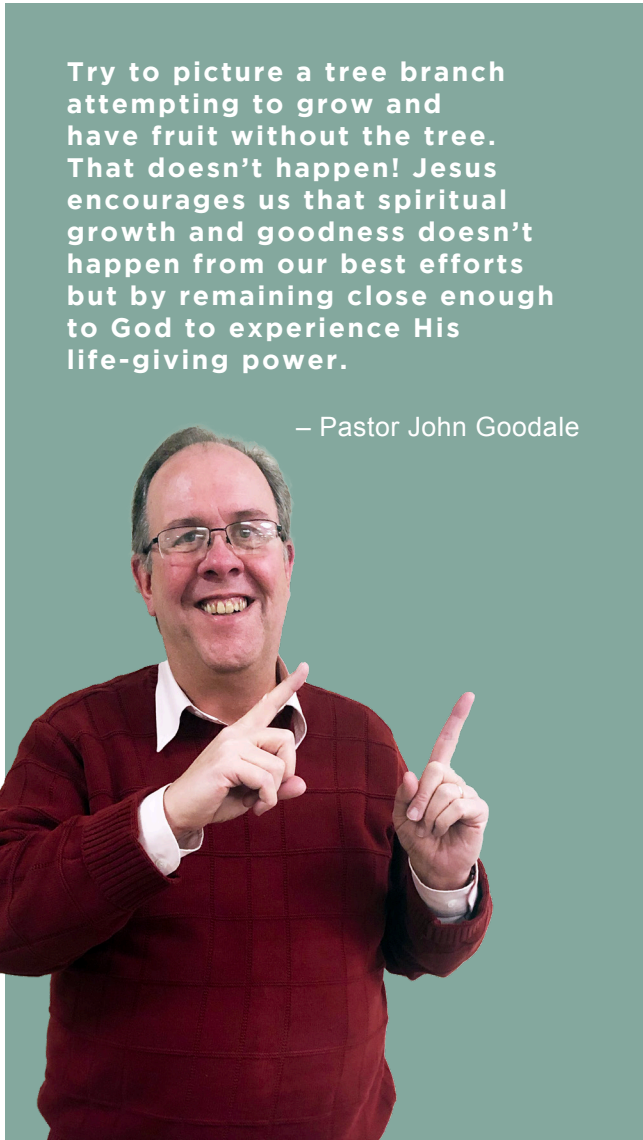
All of this "pruning" brings JOY!
Have you found that in your life?

What does this mean for us in everyday life?

MY NOTES: _____

DIG IN:

Go to YouTube and search “basics of shrub pruning” (there’s a short video from the BBC Gardeners World Magazine). Does this video help make more sense of this passage? Talk with your family or small group about why Jesus would use the metaphor of pruning.



Try to picture a tree branch attempting to grow and have fruit without the tree. That doesn't happen! Jesus encourages us that spiritual growth and goodness doesn't happen from our best efforts but by remaining close enough to God to experience His life-giving power.

– Pastor John Goodale

THE TRUTH: JOHN 18:28-40

Jesus Before Pilate

²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰ "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

³¹ Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. ³² This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

³⁴ "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

³⁵ "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

³⁶ Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷ "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

³⁸ "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

⁴⁰ They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Context: To be in right relation to God, the Jewish leaders felt they had to follow certain laws to separate themselves from everyone else. How does that contrast with how Jesus approaches people?

There's a lot of dialogue here. If you need help reading it, get people in your house to role-play it! Or check out the Message translation of this passage.

Woof! This is a relevant question right now! Jesus doesn't answer here, but what does the Bible say about truth?

Even Pilate couldn't find fault. Why did he give in to the crowds then?

Use your imagination. Put yourself on the street outside Pilate's palace. Who do you see? What do you hear? How do you feel about what you observe?

– Pastor Linda Boyles



MY NOTES: _____

DIG IN:

Read the questions above from Pastor Linda. She wants us to try to place ourselves in Jesus' story. Does this help you understand it at a different level? Talk to your family or small group about what it was like to dig deeply into the story of Jesus' trial.

HE GAVE HIS LIFE: JOHN 19:17-30

¹⁷ Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

¹⁹ Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. ²¹ The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

²² Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

²⁴ “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

“They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.”

So this is what the soldiers did.

²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” ²⁷ and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Total rejection of Jesus (see Isaiah 53:1). But why? Why did the Jewish leaders hate Him so much?

See Psalm 22

Even as He’s dying for their salvation, Jesus cares for people in a tangible way. What does this mean for us?

See Psalm 69:21

BIG DEAL!
What is finished? What does that mean for us? (Hebrews 9:11-12)

MY NOTES: _____

DIG IN:

Jesus references how He is fulfilling Scripture a couple of times in this passage. Do you know how many prophecies He fulfilled in His short time on earth? Use the QR code to check out this cool graphic and see!



You would think that crucifixion would be enough for anyone to have to bear, yet we see in this passage that those around Jesus added to His pain in the moment. Do you in your life add to the pain? How can you live your life, giving more thought and thankfulness for the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross?

– Worship Leader
Chris Cullins



LIFE DEFEATS DEATH: JOHN 20:19-29

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Why were they so afraid?
How would you have felt?

God invites us into His story just like He invited Jesus. Isn't that crazy?

Like Genesis 2:7, Jesus is again breathing new life into people. What is this new life?

Thomas is often known as Doubting Thomas. Is that fair? Do you think you would've believed right away? Or would you have needed help like Thomas? Why?

Does the Bible really tell us that we should never have any doubts? Look for other passages that talk about doubt.

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

MY NOTES: _____

DIG IN:

In this passage, Thomas isn't convinced that Jesus is alive until he sees the resurrected Jesus. What truth in Scripture do you have the hardest time believing—about God and about yourself? Talk to your family and small group about these passages. What do they think about them? Remember everyone has questions about Scripture, and it's OK to ask questions and wonder with people. You might even find they have some Scriptures they wonder about, too!



As a kid, one of the annoying things about adults was that they were always asking me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I had ideas but even those ideas about what I would do in the world kept changing. Here in John 20:21, I realized that Jesus cares more about how we are rather than what we are.

– Pastor Junior McGarrah

REFLECTION:

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL IN-PERSON YOUTH GROUP

Youth group is back *in person!*
Youth group is a place made especially for students to be known and loved for who they are. The high-energy environment encourages students to be silly, ask questions and have good conversations about life and faith with other students and loving leaders.



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High School

Sundays at 3–4:30 p.m.
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