



Small Group Discussion Guide: Week 1: Power of Forgiveness

Introduction:

As we enter into the Easter season we put our attention on the cross and the empty tomb. This new series focuses on the final words Jesus spoke during the crucifixion. Jesus spoke seven times from the cross, they were His last words. In these final words we have a summary of the extraordinary character of Jesus and of God's plan for humankind. We will dive into the Gospels to examine what Jesus' final words were.

Last week we looked the power of forgiveness and how God wants to set us free. This week we will focus on Jesus' 3rd and 4th statements from the cross, where he says, "Women behold your son", and "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me". These two statements will help us understand the power of relationships, and how we are created to be in relationships with each other.

(Leader Insight) Jesus spoke 7 times from the cross. He has been on the cross for about 3 hours since his crucifixion started at around 9 am. The Jewish day started around 6:00 am (sunrise) and so the third hour would be 9:00 am. During the first 3 hours on the cross Jesus spoke 3 times, and one of those sayings was *“Woman behold your son,”* and looking at the disciple John during the same phrase, Jesus says to John, *“Behold, your mother”*. At the 6th hour of the day or 12:00 noon the sky turned dark and darkness swept over the entire earth. This is not an eclipse or some random thunderstorm, but was the full wrath of God being poured out Jesus. It is in time from 12:00 pm to 3:00pm that the land experienced this darkness, and is the setting at which Jesus speaks his 4th statement from the cross. He says, *“My God My God, why have you forsaken me.”* Basically, this is when Jesus bore the full punishment of sin and God could not look at him, and Jesus knew the separation from the father.

Read: John 19:25-27 & Matthew 27:45-49

We will apply the **H.E.A.R** method of Bible study for this series.

- **Highlight:** Read and observe everything in the passage(s).
- **Explain:** Based on your reading, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** Understand how the meaning of the passage affects your life.
- **Respond in Prayer:** Pray God’s word back to him, asking to believe, share, and put the Bible into practice in your life and relationships.

Discussion Questions

Highlight

Question 1: What is being described in these passages? What is happening?

Question 2: What are some things you notice from these passages? What is the context in which this is taking place?

Question 3: What do you notice as the theme for these verses?

Explain

Question 4: In John 19:25-27, Why do you think John includes this phrase from the cross? (no other gospel account has this phrase)

Question 5: Who is he talking too?

Question 6: Why do you think Jesus says this? What does he really mean by this statement?

Question 7: Why does Jesus address John? What is he telling John to do with his mother? (see verse 27 for answer)

(Leader Insight) Jesus, from the cross has been there about 3-4 hours at this point, and the crowds were still there. Jesus was suspended about 4-8 feet in the air and he could see what those around him were doing. He looks out and sees his mother along with other friendly faces, and sees how much pain she is in. He reassures her that this was part of God's plan. It is believed that Joseph (Jesus' earthly father) had passed away and Mary was a widow. The only disciple that is present at the cross (that we know of) is John.

Question 8: How did Jesus display the heart of God by telling John to take care of his mother?

Question 9: In **Matthew 27:45-49**, what is the setting now? What is significant about verse 45?

Question 10: What do you think caused the darkness noted in verse 45?

Question 11: Explain the context of what is happening in verse 46! What does this mean when Jesus cries out " My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Question 12: **Read Psalm 22:1-18**. How does Psalm 22 parallel the text in Matthew 27:27-49?

Question 13: How does verse 46 help us see the power of relationship? Why does Jesus make this statement?

(Leader Insight) At the 6th hour of the day or 12:00 noon the sky turned dark and darkness swept over the entire earth. This is not an eclipse or some random thunderstorm, but this was the point the full wrath of God is being poured out Jesus. It is in time from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm that the land experienced this darkness. Basically, this is when Jesus bore the full punishment of sin and God could not look at him. It was God turning his back on Jesus, and the darkening of the sun could represent the judgement of God on the world and those who killed Jesus. This is the only time that Jesus knew the separation from the father and that is why he cried out in anguish. This was a cry of relational anguish as his relationship with the Father had been broken.

Question 14: Jesus feels the pain of the Father being separated from him. This was the "full cup" that Jesus was referring to when he prayed in the garden " that he would drink the full cup of the Father". This is the only time in scripture that Jesus did not refer to God as Father, but as God which signified the separation.

How does walking with God in a relationship help change your actions and attitudes? Describe a time when felt distant from God?

Apply

Question 15: How do these passages help shape the way you look at the value of relationships?

Question 16: What did you learn from this week's discussion?

Question 17: Describe how tension in a relationship with someone can affect you? How did this make you feel? What changed in you the way you viewed that person?

Question 18: How do these passages help us understand the power of the cross even more? What did you learn about how God responds to sin?

Respond in Prayer

Next Steps-

- 1. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take in the next 7 days.**
- 2. Pray and Write down the names of some relationships that have some tension.**
- 3. What are some next steps you can take to restore your relationship with God and with others?**
- 4. Share with the group what you are going to do this week to help apply what you have learned?**

Pray & Dismiss