



The Unchanging Connection to the Cross?

If you have a pattern of having someone share their *Story of Faith* (life before Jesus, encountering Jesus, life since/lately with Jesus) and/or sharing *Evidences of God's grace*, begin with that, followed by a time of thankful prayer for Christ's work in the individual's life/the grace in your lives.

OPENING COMMENT

For those of us who have been Christians for a while the centrality of the Cross of Jesus is so familiar that it can be taken for granted. The means by which Jesus died can be overlooked in light of the Glory of resurrection, but there are some precious truths to be gleaned from reflection on what significance the cross brings to our faith and posture towards a Holy and merciful God.

READ THE TEXT: [John 19:17-27](#)

^{16b}So they took Jesus, ¹⁷and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. ¹⁹Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.' ²²Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' ²³When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, ²⁴so they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.' This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, 'They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.' So the soldiers did these things, ²⁵but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's



sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The desolation and suffering Jesus endured on the cross is something that we, as sinners, should have rightly endured. Instead he graciously endured our suffering on our behalf. In what way does this reality make you uncomfortable?
2. In what way does this experience of Jesus suffering provide comfort and peace?
3. Unintentionally the inscription of "King of the Jews" declared the true nature of the one being crushed. How might this picture of kingship influence our understanding of leadership, power, and ultimately grace?
4. Ultimately, we see the great compassion of a God who loved us enough to send Jesus to endure the shame of the cross and reconcile us to himself. What truths does this reveal about our condition and God's character?
5. Which "connection to the cross do you most identify with/most resonates with you? Why?
6. How might understanding these aspects to the cross of Christ reorient our understanding around Jesus' call to pick up our cross and follow him?

CONCLUSION

The character and purpose of God is most clearly seen in the cross. It is here we see that His holiness demands justice, His worth demands a righteous penalty, and His mercy results in self-sacrificing grace for those who would believe. The cross stands at the centre of our faith reminding us of both our desperate position before God and simultaneously His unimaginably deep love for us.

SHARE & PRAY

- Share how you can pray for each other in light of this study.
- Conclude by spending some time praying for one another, for the areas of growth and grace you are seeking, and the needs among you.

