

## Christian Basics Program

### Session 3: Jesus' Death

#### Facilitator's Guide

##### Ask:

How has the past week been for you?

Do you have any questions from what we chatted about last week?

**Important - Please Note:** During your meeting, only look up and read the Bible passages that are contained within the boxes. The Bible passage references contained within the body of the information or following the "See Also" text should not be covered during your meeting as it will make the meeting very long. Encourage the participant to look up the passages later and ask any questions they may have at a future catch-up.

##### Introduction

In the last session, we learnt that when Jesus walked on earth, He was identified by God, people and spiritual beings as the "Son of God". He did many supernatural works which proved that He was worthy of the title "Son of God". However, the greatest work of Jesus happened when He was crucified and died on a Roman cross. Jesus's death on the cross provided the solution to the problem of our separation from God, as a result of our sin. In this session we will learn more about the death of Jesus and why it was so important to every human being.

#### 1. Jesus predicted His death

Jesus' death on a cross did not happen without His foreknowledge or consent. In fact, He told his disciples at least three times that He was going to be put to death.

##### ***Matthew 16:21***

<sup>21</sup>From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

(See also: Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:22)

**Ask:** What stands out to you about Jesus' statements in this verse?

## 2. The night before Jesus died

On the Thursday night during the Jewish feast of Passover, Jesus shared a meal with twelve of His closest disciples. During that meal Jesus did something very interesting with the bread and the wine.

### **Matthew 26:26-28**

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

(See also: Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Cor 11:23-25)

**Ask:** What do you notice about what Jesus says about the cup of wine that He is sharing?

Jesus was telling them that His body was going to be given for them, and His blood would be shed for them so that their sins could be forgiven. We learn in other parts of the Bible that sin could only be forgiven through the shedding of blood (see Hebrews 9:22; Leviticus 16). Jesus, the Son of God, would shed His blood so that those who put their faith in Him could receive the forgiveness they needed to be able to be in relationship with God.

Following the dinner, Jesus and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives to pray. He began to be sorrowful and prayed to God the Father.

### **Mark 14:36**

<sup>36</sup> "Abba, Father," He said, "everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will."

(See also: Matt. 26:36-44; Mark 14:32-41; Luke 22:39-42)

**Ask:** What do you notice about Jesus' prayer?

Ultimately it was God's will that Jesus would die on the cross, and Jesus went willingly to suffering and death, even though He did not deserve it. Jesus had led a sinless life (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 John 3:5) yet He would be falsely accused and put to death.

## 3. The sentencing of Jesus

Following Jesus' prayer in the garden He was betrayed by one of His closest followers,

Judas Iscariot, who led the Jewish temple guards to capture and arrest Jesus (Matt 26:37-56; Mark 14:43-46; Luke 22:47-53). They brought Jesus before the Jewish religious council (called the Sanhedrin).

**Matthew 26:59-66**

<sup>59</sup>The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death. <sup>60</sup>But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward <sup>61</sup>and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

<sup>62</sup>Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" <sup>63</sup>But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

<sup>64</sup>"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

<sup>65</sup>Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. <sup>66</sup>What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

(See also: Mark 14:55-64; Luke 22:66-71)

**Ask:** What do you notice about Jesus' trial before the Jewish religious council?

When Jesus replied, "You have said so" (also translated as "It is as you said"), He was affirming that he is the Messiah, the one God promised in the Scripture to save the people of Israel from oppression. Jesus claims to be the Son of Man referring to a heavenly vision of God's throne in Daniel 7. The vision reveals one like a "Son of Man" who is given power and rule over all of creation.

As a result of Jesus' statements about Himself, the Jewish ruling council accused Him of the sin of 'blasphemy' which is claiming to be God (John 10:33). Jewish religious law demanded that a person found guilty of 'blasphemy' should be put to death.

Because Israel was ruled by the Romans at the time, people could only be put to death under Roman law by a Roman official. The religious leaders mocked Jesus, (Mark 14:65, Luke 22:63) before sending Him to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

**Luke 23:13-15**

<sup>13</sup> Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, <sup>14</sup> and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined Him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against Him. <sup>15</sup> Neither has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; as you can see, He has done nothing to deserve death.

(See also: Matthew 27:19-24; John 19:4)

**Ask:** What do you notice about Pilate’s statement concerning Jesus?

However, because it was the Passover feast (a special celebration remembering how God had miraculously rescued the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt) he gave the crowd accusing Jesus the option of choosing to have Jesus or another prisoner called Barrabas set free. The crowd chose Barrabas and called for Jesus to be crucified (Luke 23:18-20). Pontius Pilate wanted to please the Jewish leaders and so he ordered that Jesus be crucified.

#### 4. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

Following a brutal flogging and mocking by Roman soldiers (Matt 27:26-31, Mark 15:15-20, John 19:1), Jesus was forced to carry His cross to a hill named Golgotha. He was then nailed to that cross alongside two criminals and suffered horrendously for the next 6 hours.

**Luke 23:32-46**

<sup>32</sup> Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Him to be executed. <sup>33</sup> When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Him there, along with the criminals—one on His right, the other on His left. <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up His clothes by casting lots.

<sup>35</sup> The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at Him. They said, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”<sup>36</sup> The soldiers also came up and mocked Him. They offered Him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup> and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save Yourself.” <sup>38</sup> There was a written notice above him, which read: this is “The king of the Jews”.

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked Him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise."

<sup>44</sup> It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, <sup>45</sup> for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup> Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, He breathed His last.

(See also: Matt 27:32-51; Mark 15:20-38; John 19:16-30)

**Ask:** What stood out for you as you read this account of the death of Jesus?

## 5. What did Jesus' death achieve?

In the passage above, we learnt that when Jesus died, the curtain of the temple was torn in two. This was very significant as the curtain in the Jewish temple separated the 'Holy Place' from the 'Most Holy Place' where God was most present in all the earth at that time. Only the Jewish High Priest could enter the 'Most Holy Place' and only once a year after he had sacrificed an animal and cleaned himself. The tearing of the curtain now symbolized that all who wanted to be in relationship with God could now do so because of the death of Jesus on the cross.

### **Colossians 1:21-22**

<sup>21</sup> Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. <sup>22</sup> But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation - <sup>23</sup> if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.

(See also: Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

For people to be able to enter the presence of God, their sins had to be removed. On the cross, Jesus was punished for our sins so that they could be removed and we could

come into the presence of God.

**Hebrews 9:27-28**

<sup>27</sup>Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, <sup>28</sup>so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

**1 Peter 3:18**

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

(See also: 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2; Colossians 2:14; Galatians 1:4; Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:10)

On the cross Jesus also broke the power of Satan/The Devil over humans that he gained when Adam and Eve first obeyed him in the Garden of Eden.

**Hebrews 2:14-15**

<sup>14</sup>Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil — <sup>15</sup>and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

(See also: 1 John 3:8)

**Looking Forward**

Jesus' suffering and death on a Roman cross, achieved restored relationship with God and eternal life for all those who put their faith in Him and His finished work on the cross. However, Jesus' death was not the end of the story. What happened next is a confirmation that those who put their faith in Jesus can be assured of having eternal life in the presence of God.

**Questions**

1. What stood out most for you in our discussion today?
2. What will you do as a result of our time today?

3. Who in your life do you think would be interested in hearing about what you have discovered today?
4. How can I be praying for you this week?

### **Prayer of Salvation**

If the person has not yet put their faith in Jesus, you can ask them if they would like to do that today. If they would like to do that, tell them that you are going to lead them in a prayer but that you would like to discuss with them what the words of the prayer will be. Discuss the following prayer with them before leading them through it line by line.

#### **Prayer to Make Jesus Lord of Your Life**

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died on the cross to rescue me from sin and eternal separation from God.

I ask for Your forgiveness for all of my sins and I choose to turn from them and make You the Lord of my life.

I receive Your forgiveness and ask You to come and live in me and help me to love in the same way that You do.

Thank-You for the free gift of salvation and for making me a child of God.

Thank-You that you will never leave or forsake me and that I can be assured of spending all eternity in heaven with you, only because of what You did on the cross for me.

May Your will be done in my life.

Amen.