

Sermon: The Death of Life**Text: John 19:16-42****Discussion Questions:**

On my very first Sunday here at King Street Church, a dear elderly woman in our church family approached and admonished me (in the *“advise and strongly urge”* way—not the *“warn and reprimand”* way) by saying: “I want to hear you mention the cross each and every Sunday! I don’t want a Sunday to go by that you don’t bring us to the cross!” Talk about delivering a clear message! And I haven’t forgotten it. I can tell you that her words run through my mind each and every week as I prepare messages.

Which leads to some good discussion questions—

- Why do you think she said this?
- What is SO IMPORTANT about the cross of Jesus that it needs to be shared so frequently?
- How would you summarize “the message of the cross”?
- What do you think the Apostle Paul meant when he stated in 1 Corinthians 1:18: *“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing”*? What is so foolish about the cross?

Examination:

- Read **John 19:16-27**
 - After Pilate condemned Jesus to be crucified, John tells us that Jesus left the Roman palace carrying His own cross (v. 17). The phrase “carry your cross” was actually something Jesus had said to His disciples in Matthew 16:24-26:

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

What do you think Jesus meant when He said that we must take up our cross?
 - John makes it crystal clear throughout the events of the Passion that Jesus is in total and complete control. Even here, in verse 17, it’s not that Jesus was “taken” out to be crucified—or “led” out. John states that Jesus “went out.” How does this choice of words make clear that Jesus is in control?
 - John tells us in verse 20 that many Jews read the sign [JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS] that Pilate had prepared and fastened to the cross (making sure everyone could understand it by printing it in 3 languages). What do you think these “many Jews” thought when they read this? What do you think the Jewish leaders thought (v. 21)? Why do you think Pilate did this? Why did he say he did it (v. 22)?
 - How ironic is it that the Roman soldiers wouldn’t rip an undergarment—and yet had no qualms ripping a human body and nailing it to a cross? Read Psalm 22:16-18. How amazingly SPECIFIC is this prophecy!
 - John gives us great detail in verses 25-27. He tells us that HE was at the cross (the only disciple we’re aware of). That Mary was there, and two other Mary’s. That Jesus was caring for His mom. What stands out to you about these verses?
- Read **John 19:28-37**

- Why do you think John wants us to know that **only after everything had now been finished** did Jesus admit to being thirsty? Why only after it was finished did Jesus feel at liberty to admit His thirst? While there is no clear Old Testament cross reference to this statement—do you suppose this could be a reference to Psalm 69:19-21?
 - Do you think the soldiers were showing kindness to Jesus by offering him a sponge soaked with wine vinegar (v. 29)?
 - The three words, “**It is finished**,” could well be the three most power-packed words in the entire Bible. What was finished? How did Jesus’ death finish it?
 - We’ve noted that throughout John’s Gospel, we see how Jesus was in complete control. Things never caught Jesus off-guard. Events never overtook Jesus. When Jesus was arrested in the garden—He was in control of the entire situation. While He was being questioned by Annas and Pilate—it was actually Jesus questioning them. Jesus wasn’t taken to the cross—Jesus went to the cross. And here, even at the very end of Jesus life, how do we see Jesus remaining in control (v. 30)?
 - How does verse 31 explain why the Jewish leaders called an emergency meeting of the Sanhedrin the night before and exerted extreme pressure on Pilate to send Jesus to the cross with such urgency?
 - How is it that breaking the legs bring about death while on a cross (v. 32)?
 - Why does John stress the fact that the man (soldier) who actually pierced Jesus side—proving beyond any reasonable doubt that Jesus was actually dead—gave clear and indisputable testimony to the fact that Jesus was dead (v. 35)?
 - Read Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20; and Zechariah 12:10. How do these Old Testament passages relate to the events on the cross?
 - Why does John continually cite Old Testament passages as they related to the events of the Passion? Does this do anything to impact your personal faith?
- **Read John 19:38-42**
 - Luke’s Gospel tells us that Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the 70-member Sanhedrin. How much of a risk was it for him to go to Pilate to request the body?
 - Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin, and is well known for having visited Jesus at night in John 3. If these men weren’t wealthy and highly influential, do you think they would have been granted permission to the body?
 - The Passion of Jesus began with Jesus being arrested in Gethsemane, and concludes with His burial in a new tomb. In both cases, John points out that they were in “a garden.” How might Jesus’ victory over sin in “a garden” correspond to Adam and Eve’s incalculable sin in “the Garden” of Eden?
 - Verse 42 mentions two conditions that led to Jesus being buried in this particular tomb (timing and proximity). Does this give the impression that had they not been in such a hurry—that Jesus might have been buried elsewhere?

Application: John records the crucifixion so we might know that Jesus really did suffer; He really did die; and He really did rise again to be our King. As you go about your life this week, remember that Jesus bore the cross for you so that you could have life and be a part of his eternal kingdom. May the cross be central to everything that you are and do this week! Make a commitment to cling to the cross of Jesus as you live your life. In moments of trial and difficulty understand that the cross is your strength and your identity as a child of God.