



WEEK 4

- **What's your most prized possession? How would you react if you were forced to give it away? Could you make that kind of sacrifice? Explain.**

Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death.

Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him. While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway.

Mark 14:43, 60-63, 65-68 (NIV)

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

It was the third hour when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.

At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the

ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Mark 15:16-27, 33-37 (NIV)

Key Thought: Mission requires sacrifice without excuses.

- **How does thinking about reading about Christ's suffering on the cross move you to action?**
- **What excuses do you use to avoid carrying out your mission?**
- **What things do you need to sacrifice in your life so that you can fully carry out the mission God has called you to?**
- **Why is it better to suffer for doing good than to suffer for doing bad?**
- **What does Christ's sacrifice mean to you personally? How has it transformed your life?**
- **How do you think God feels when we give Him excuses for not carrying out his work? How different do you think your life would be if you stopped making excuses?**
- **What sacrifices have you already made that God called you to make? How have these sacrifices impacted you?**
- **How can you use Christ's crucifixion to motivate you to carry out your mission?**
- **In what ways have you suffered for doing good in carrying out your mission? How has God strengthened you in those times?**

Final Thought: The sacrifices required for mission are worth it. Are you willing to sacrifice your life for your mission? We may never suffer like Jesus did, but we must be willing to go that far.

For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and Scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- When you see a cross in or on a church building, what usually comes to mind?

Explore

Read Mark 15:21-31.

- What role did Simon of Cyrene play in Jesus' life? (15:21)
- Why did Jesus not carry the cross Himself? (15:21)
- What did the soldiers offer Jesus once they reached the place where He would be crucified? (15:23)
- What offer of help did Jesus refuse? (15:23)
- What did the soldiers do with Jesus' clothes? (15:24)
- What was significant about the notice that was placed on the cross above Jesus? (15:26)
- Who was crucified with Jesus? (15:27)
- How did the people insult Jesus when He was on the cross? (15:29-30)
- What did the teachers of the law say about Jesus while He was dying? How? (15:31-32)
- What challenge did Jesus ignore? (15:31-32)

Reflect

- Why do you think Jesus refused to accept a drink that could deaden His pain?
- What kind of suffering did Jesus endure for us?
- What emotions do you think Jesus felt as He was led away and crucified?
- How can you thank the Lord for the hidden ways He works in your life?
- Jesus was closely identified with criminals during His death; what significance does this have to you?
- How would your life be different if Jesus had taken up the challenge of the religious leaders and come down off the cross?
- What emotions do you feel when you think about the crucifixion of Christ?
- Why is this tragic story about Christ called "good news"?
- What has Christ's sacrifice accomplished for you?
- What did Jesus do for you with His death on the cross?

Apply

- What is one way you can say thank you to Jesus for paying for your sins?