

Essentials of Discipleship 2: Trusting in the Crucified Jesus

When Paul was setting out the very most important things about Christian faith for the first century Corinthian Church he wrote: '... I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that *Christ died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures...' (1 Cor 15.3-4).

Part 1: Sharing about the death of Jesus

In small groups of 2-4:

- Tell the others what the death of Jesus means to you.
- Do you have a favourite song, Bible passage, poem or activity that helps you to think about Jesus death?

Part 2: Thinking about the death of Jesus

This week we are looking at Jesus death 'for our sins'. The Bible uses rich imagery to show us what Jesus did for us on the cross:

- From the Temple - Jesus death is a sacrifice for sin
- From warfare - Jesus death is a victory over sin
- From commerce - Jesus death bought us back
- From relationships - Jesus reconciled us to God
- From the law courts - Jesus took the guilt of our sin.

Read Leviticus 16.15-22; Romans 3.21-26

- What do you think the point of having two goats as part of the same sacrifice is? What actions are performed with each goat? What do they symbolise?
- The word used in Roms 3.25 for expiation/sacrifice literally means mercy seat. How does this relate to the Leviticus passage, do you think? What does Jesus death being a redemption (Roms 3.24) mean? (See Leviticus 25.47-55)
- What benefit did this have for us (v24)? How do we receive this benefit (v24)? What benefit does God receive (v26)?

Read Colossians 1.19-23; 2.13-15

- Who and what was against God before Jesus died? What has happened subsequently? What is our relationship with God now?
- Can you think of a human story or illustration to describe what has happened at the cross? How similar is it to the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15. 11ff)?
- What response is expected of believers here?

Part 3: Responding to the Cross

Read Matthew 18.23-35; Galatians 2.20; 1 Corinthians 2.1-5

- What different ways do these text suggest that we respond to the sacrifice of Jesus?
- What other changes of attitude and behaviour flow from trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins?

Part 4: For Further Study:

Read Isaiah 53 and 1 Peter 2.21-25.

- What causes are there for the suffering of God's servant? What are his rewards? How do each of these apply to Jesus?
- Make a list of the references/allusions to Isaiah 53 in 1 Peter 3. What do you think 1 Peter is talking about when it speaks of our being healed by his wounds?