

Personified: Meeting Jesus on the Way to the Cross

Week 7 – March 29, 2021

Scripture: Matthew 27:11-26

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Have you ever had an experience where you felt bound by a scenario or situation, but then something unexpected happened and you were “free to go”?

Read Matthew 27:11-26 together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Wrapping up this series looking at 7 very real and human moment's in Jesus' life, we come to a moment when Jesus is treated unfairly. He is exhausted, dirty, bloody and beaten, chained and bound, and facing death. Standing next to him is Barabbas, a criminal sentenced to death. The Roman governor Pilate offers to release one prisoner and the people watching must choose. This was customary during Passover – a way for the government to keep the people happy. The people choose Barabbas. Barabbas is released; Jesus is handed over to be crucified.

When Jesus was on this earth He was fully God and fully human. He was moved by beauty, He faced human expectations, He served others, He loved those who hurt Him, He was forced to face brokenness, and He was betrayed by His closest friends. Jesus experienced moments similar to moments we each experience. His humanity offers us hope and we have the promise that Jesus will never leave us.

Share your thoughts about following questions:

1. Barabbas is not set free because the crowd wanted him free, he is set free because Jesus wanted him free. Jesus is not a poor victim, he is a willing replacement. Jesus loves Barabbas and in this moment demonstrates that the cross is about forgiveness.
 - a. Read Romans 8:1 and Luke 7:47. Does God's promise encourage you to forgive others? How does forgiveness and love work together?
 - b. When we begin to embrace unfairness, we step onto a path of forgiveness. What other things stop us from taking this step?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. This single verse is a summary of the gospel. Consider what it means to be reconciled with God in each of these ways. Reflect on the beautiful moment when Jesus died as our substitute.
 - a. He became our imperfection so that we could become His perfection
 - b. He became our guilt so that we could become His innocent
 - c. He became our death so that would we become His life
3. Human beings crave connection with one another, yet we fear connection because people can unfairly treat us and hurt us. Jesus' response to His own unfair moment was to choose forgiveness. As His followers how can we do any less than to offer the forgiveness we've received? Read Matthew 6:14-15. What do we gain when we risk unfair treatment and forgive others for hurting us?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that the starting point of our relationship with Him is forgiveness. Thank God that when we choose to forgive others, we choose to fully embrace the gift Jesus gave us at the cross. Ask God to give us the strength and courage to forgive, even when treated unfairly or we don't get an apology or complete redemption. Thank God for the promise that He will never leave us.