



LESSON FOUR: The Cross

To learn how to most effectively use this study,
listen to these lessons and follow along in the guide before you study with
someone.

The Way of Discipleship Tutorials **by Robert Cox**

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STUDY #4 - THE CROSS

STUDY GOALS

- **To help your friend know what their sin did to Christ and what Christ did to take care of their sin** (Isaiah 53, 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Note: Showing them how much Christ loves them is the first step to their loving and obeying God (see 1 Jn. 4:10, Jn.14:15, 2 Cor. 5:14). Remember to tell them what Jesus has done for them before you tell them what they need to do for Jesus.

- **To influence the student to follow Christ as they come to realize the depth of God's love for them** (2 Corinthians 5:14, John 14:15).

STUDY PREP

In this study your focus will be on what our sin did to Jesus and what he did to rescue us from sin's destructive consequences. The study reveals Christ's love for us by looking at the price Christ paid for our sin. Explain to your student that Isaiah 53 is a foundation of the cross study like Romans 7 was for the "sin" segment.

In the next study, Discipleship, you will call your student to make a radical, life changing commitment. The difficult decision to follow Christ requires a strong, compelling motivation. Christ's love for the student is that motivation (see 2 Corinthians 5:14). **Before you tell the student what they need to do for Jesus (discipleship) make sure that you have clearly told them what Jesus did for them.**

Also be aware that the nature of this segment will require you to do more of the talking. During "The Cross" study you will read all of Isaiah 53 two times. In the first reading you will explain the passage in a general way (what it meant to the eunuch of Acts 8 and the Jews). The second reading is all about personal application. The intent is to make the student feel both guilt and gratitude; guilt for causing Christ's death and gratitude for the incredible and personal love of God.

In the second reading it is especially vital that you read slowly and clearly. Isaiah 53 allows you to “preach Christ and Him crucified,” (1 Corinthians 1:23, 2:2) in a very personalized way. To communicate Christ’s love effectively it's essential that you connect with the emotion of the passage. **The key to this connection is a personal understanding of Christ’s love for you and your student.** In the days before the study take the time to study, meditate and pray about the passages in this segment of the study. Do not begin the study until you have reflected on the passages in a personal manner!

Remember to explain the context of this passage before you begin to read it. Isaiah’s prophecy about Jesus was written approximately 600 years before his birth. Isaiah 53 shows that the cross was not an accident, but a part of God’s plan.

You can also remind the student that this is the same scripture that the Ethiopian eunuch was reading when he encountered Philip and subsequently became a follower of Christ. The conversion of the Eunuch clearly demonstrates that the truths contained in Isaiah 53 have the power to propel the God-seeker through every obstacle or excuse they face in becoming a Christ follower. Know the passage well!

READ:

Isaiah 53:1-10

NOTE: This time you read out loud for your student and explain the passage as you go along.

Isaiah 53:1

¹ Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

- Before Jesus came, He knew that many of the people would not even believe what he had to say.

Isaiah 53:2

² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He

had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

- God the father was watching Jesus, but Jesus was in a vulnerable position.
- Jesus came into the world as an ordinary, even unattractive person not a superstar.
- Jesus can relate to people who feel “down and out.”

Isaiah 53:3

³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

- Jesus knew that the people (you and I) would reject him and even be ashamed of him.
- I have at times been ashamed of Jesus (give personal examples). Have you?
- Could the Ethiopian Eunuch (from the first study) relate to Jesus' feelings of rejection? Yes! And Jesus could understand how the eunuch felt!

Isaiah 53:4

⁴ Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

- Even though Jesus realized how people would treat him, he still came to save them.
- The Jewish people thought that Jesus was cursed by God (see Deuteronomy 21:23) and that he was getting what he deserved for his crimes.

Isaiah 53:5

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

- Jesus was not receiving the punishment for his sin, he was receiving punishment for all mankind's sin.

Isaiah 53:6

⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- Even while Jesus was loving like that they (we) didn't care!
- And Jesus still willingly paid the price... for their (our) sin.

Isaiah 53:7

⁷He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

- Lambs were not slaughtered because they are guilty - they were slaughtered because of someone else's guilt (see Exodus 12:21 if needed - in Old Testament times lambs were sacrificed for people's sin).

Isaiah 53:8

⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

- Jesus would never have physical children (the Ethiopian Eunuch could relate to this pain).

Isaiah 53:9

⁹He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

- This specific prophecy was fulfilled and is verifiable - another reason to believe that the Bible is not just some old book.

Isaiah 53:10

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

? Isaiah states that it was “*God’s will*” for Jesus to suffer. Think about this: why would God want for His son to suffer?

- Before we attempt to answer “why” Jesus suffered, let’s look at how He suffered.
- In order to understand that we’re going to look at the crucifixion in the New Testament. We will talk more after about why after we do that.
 - (Ask your student to leave a bookmark at Isaiah 53 and turn to Matthew 27).

READ:

Matthew 27:11-50

¹¹ Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.

¹³ Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” ¹⁴ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

¹⁵ Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. ¹⁶ At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” ¹⁸ For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

¹⁹ While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹ “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor. “Barabbas,” they answered.

²² “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

²³ “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

²⁵ All the people answered, “His blood is on us and on our children!”

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷ Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). ³⁴ There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.

⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

The New Testament reveals that Jesus experienced every type of pain on the cross: *physical, emotional, and spiritual.*

➤ Physical Pain:

- v.26 “...*But he had Jesus flogged..*” Jesus was flogged 39 lashes with a ‘*flagrum*’- a leather whip with bone chips, rock and iron woven into it. Many died during this process.
- v.29 “...*twisted a crown of thorns and set in on his head.*”
- v. 35 “*When they had Crucified him...*” Jesus was nailed to the cross through a pressure point in the wrist (considered part of the hand).

➤ Emotional Pain:

- v. 22-23 “*Crucify him!*”... He was rejected.
- v.29 “...*and mocked him. Hail, king of the Jews!*”
- v.30-31 “*They spit on him, took the staff and struck him.*”
- v.39-44 “... *hurled their insults at him...*”
- v.50 “*with a loud voice he dies...*”

➤ Spiritual Pain:

- v.46 “*My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*”

MAKE SURE TO READ WITH YOUR STUDENT AT THIS TIME:

[Medical Account of the Crucifixion](#) attached to the end of this document.

REMEMBER:

- It was God’s will that Jesus be “*crushed*” (Isaiah 53:10).
- That’s because something was going to happen after His suffering that would make it all worth it!

READ:

Isaiah 53:11

¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

- Something would occur after Jesus death that would make it all worth it, something would “satisfy” him.

? What was going to happen that would make Jesus’s sacrifice “worth it” to Him?

- People choosing to embrace him and accept his forgiveness would make his death meaningful and satisfying.

? Why was it God’s will for Jesus to suffer the way He did in order for sin to be forgiven? Couldn’t God have invented another way?

- God loves us and wants a relationship with us. He also knows us better than we know ourselves, and He understands we struggle with doubting His love.
- God chose suffering and sacrifice on the cross to prove to us beyond a shadow of a doubt how committed He is to having a relationship with us.
- Anytime we think about the cross, we should think, “That’s how much God loves me! He did that for me!”
- If God had done anything less we would find reasons to doubt His love for and commitment to us.

READ:

Isaiah 53:12

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- While Jesus did suffer and die, ultimately he rose from the dead defeating sin and death not only for himself, but for all who would follow him!
- When we choose to follow Jesus, we choose to "play for the winning team" who will enjoy the spoils of victory in the end!

PERSONALIZED READING OF ISAIAH 53:

Isaiah 53

NOTE: To make the passage personal read the text substituting Jesus in place of "He" and the persons name in place of "we," "man," "our," and "us."

"Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² Jesus grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. Jesus had no beauty or majesty to attract _____ to Jesus, nothing in Jesus appearance that _____ should desire him.

³ Jesus was despised and rejected by _____, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom _____ hide their faces he was despised, and _____ esteemed him not."

- This prophecy has been fulfilled with many people, even Christians being ashamed or embarrassed about Christ and his teachings.

⁴ Surely Jesus took up _____ infirmities and carried _____ sorrows, yet _____ considered Jesus stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But Jesus was pierced for _____ transgressions, Jesus was crushed for _____ iniquities; the punishment that brought _____ peace was upon him, and by Jesus wounds _____ is (can be) healed. _____, like a lost sheep, went astray, _____ turned to his/her own way; and the LORD has laid on

Jesus the iniquity of _____.”

- Let your student know that Jesus knew that he/she might not accept Jesus because they want to do their own thing. But he loves them so much that he died to give them a chance.

⁷ Jesus was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; Jesus was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so Jesus did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment Jesus was taken away. And who can speak of Jesus' descendants? For Jesus was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of _____ Jesus was stricken.

⁹ Jesus was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though Jesus had done no violence, nor was any deceit in Jesus' mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush Jesus and cause Jesus to suffer, and though the LORD makes Jesus' life a guilt offering, Jesus will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in Jesus' hand.

¹¹ After the suffering of Jesus' soul, Jesus will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify _____, and he will bear _____ iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give Jesus a portion among the great, and Jesus will divide the spoils with the strong, because Jesus poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For Jesus bore the sin of _____, and made intercession for the _____.

CLOSING QUESTIONS:

? Isaiah (v.10) states that it was “*Gods will*” for Jesus to suffer. Why would he want that?

- Because God loves you and wants a relationship with you.
- Because God knew that if he did anything less than sacrifice his own son for us, we would find some way to doubt his love for us. Jesus' sacrifice PROVES how much God loves and cares for humanity!

MENTION:

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

"God made him no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might be the righteousness of God."

- God gave Jesus and Jesus sacrificed himself so that we could have a relationship!

? **Verse 11 (of Isaiah 53) implies that your response can give Christ a sense of satisfaction in his suffering on the cross. How do you think you can do that?**

- Jesus will be satisfied if you commit your life to following Him (like the Ethiopian).
- You can also make it “all for nothing” as far as you are concerned by rejecting Jesus.)

CLOSE

Challenge: Be open and honest with your personal sin struggles. Openness allows God to forgive you and disciples to help you.

Commitment: Will you, in gratitude, commit to taking a radical approach to dealing with sin in your life.



Medical Account of the Crucifixion
Truman Davis, M.D., M.S.
Reprinted with Permission from *Arizona Medicine*, March 1965

The physical trauma of Christ begins in Gethsemane with one of the initial aspects of His suffering the bloody sweat. It is interesting that the physician of the group, Luke, is the only one to mention this. Luke's biblical account tells of Jesus suffering: *"And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."*

Though very rare, the phenomenon of hematidrosis (*he-ma-ti-dro-sis*), or bloody sweat, is all documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest. One of the soldiers struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards taunted Jesus to identify them as they each passed by, spat on Him, and struck Him in the face.

In the early morning, Jesus, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, is taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia. It was there, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Barabbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

Preparations for the scourging are carried out. Jesus is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force across Jesus' shoulders, back and legs thirty-nine times.

At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper and deeper into the subcutaneous (sub-cu-ta-neous) tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises, which are broken open by subsequent blows.

Finally, the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in the provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns is pressed into the scalp of Jesus.

Again there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body). After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, the soldier's tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from His back. This has already become adherent in the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal just as the careless removal of surgical bandages, causes excruciating pain- almost as though He were again being whipped, and the wounds again begin to bleed.

Jesus is then led off to be crucified. The heavy beams of the cross are then tied to His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves and the execution detail, begins its slow journey. The weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. Jesus stumbles and lacerates the skin and muscles of His shoulders. Jesus tries to rise, but His human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

At Golgotha, the beam is placed on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders pressed against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He then drives a heavy, wrought iron nail

through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The beam is then lifted in place at the top of the posts and the titulus reading “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” is nailed in place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each. As Jesus pushes Himself upward to avoid the stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal (me-ta-tar-sal) bones of the feet.

As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in a deep relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by the arms the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but not exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order get one short breath.

Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, Jesus is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain, as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium (par-a-car-di-um) slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues - the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasps, *“I thirst.”*

Jesus can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, He straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, *“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”*

Apparently to make double sure of death, the legionnaire drove his spear through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the paracardium and into the heart. Immediately there came out blood and water. We, therefore, have rather conclusive postmortem evidence that Jesus died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to the shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the paracardium.

Thus we have a glimpse of the manifestation of evil which man can exhibit toward man and toward God. This medical description of what Jesus endured on the cross is apt to leave you hopeless and depressed. How grateful you can be that, *“He Did This Just For You”* showing you a glimpse into what God did to win your heart.

