

Adult Group Study Guide for March 15, 2020

Series: "I Believe" - "He suffered under Pontius Pilate..."

Goal: To explore the meaning and purpose of the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross.

Key Verse: *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* - 2 Corinthians 5:21

1. Recall a time in your life when you suffered. How clear is that memory? What happens when you recall that event? Which was worse – the physical or emotional suffering?
2. Read the story of the suffering of Jesus on the cross in one of the gospels (Matthew 27:32-54; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49; or John 19:17-37). What jumps off the page as you read this story? In his message Pastor Austin said, "The cross is at the crux of the faith." Why do you think that is true?
3. The story of the death of Jesus contains a lot of details which can be verified by other non-Christian historical records. Notice how the story about the trial of Jesus names the Roman governor, Pilate. Why are the historical details so important?
4. Although many people suffer in this life, death on a cross was especially brutal. You may want to watch the short video clip from the Son of God movie at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9UN7IpxrNM>. If you have small children, it would be more appropriate to watch the Saddleback Church video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HL8R158Ujp4>. What words would you use to describe the death of Jesus to someone who never heard about it?
5. The story of the arrest of Jesus in Matthew 26:53-54 reminds us that the death of Jesus was voluntary. Jesus had the power to stop it, but he didn't. It wasn't the nails that kept Jesus on the cross, it was love. Read John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16. What do these verses have in common besides their numbers? (See also John 10:17-18)
6. Read the key verse above (2 Corinthians 5:21). In what ways was the cross an exchange? Read Colossians 2:13-15. What is the debt that we owe? How has that been cancelled? Pastor Austin concludes his message by saying, "Jesus paid a price he didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay." Carry that thought with you this week.