

CONSIDER THE CROSS / APRIL 20

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Read & Pray

The sermon passage was Luke 23:1–26. Read Luke 23:1–12 and 18–23, which captures some key themes. After reading, pray for God to open our hearts to discuss and apply these truths.

Sermon Recap

Review the sermon with your group, highlighting the following:

- "At the center of Christianity is not a new perspective on life or a new moral code, but an empty tomb that literally changes everything."
- "Luke 23 marks that dividing line with humanity. In Luke 23, we meet five people ... whose different responses to the cross literally divide them for eternity—some going on to everlasting life, and others to everlasting death."
- "Pilate was so preoccupied with earthly pressures that he didn't have time to consider a question like who Jesus actually was."
- "Jesus has no answer for the superficial [Herod]. He reveals himself only to those who seek him with all their hearts."
- "Billy Graham famously said, 'It's not most people's sins that will send them to hell; it's their good works, their false sense of righteousness.'"
- "Barabbas is the first in a long line of people who are going to be set free because Jesus dies in his place."

Group Discussion

1. Pastor J.D. identified five responses to Jesus (preoccupied, superficial, proud, guilty, disciple). Which response do you most identify with and why?
2. How does Pilate's preoccupation in vv.1–7 reflect our distractions that keep us from seriously considering Jesus?
3. Consider the religious leaders' response to Jesus. Of all the people, why is it that the people *this* involved in religious work are so far away from Christ?
4. Pastor J.D. asked, "Which side of Jesus are you on?" How would you answer that today, and what leads you to that answer?
5. How does Jesus' silence, showing him pleading guilty for our sins, deepen your gratitude for his death in your place?

SCRIPTURE

- "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him." - **Romans 6:5–8 (ESV)**

PRAYER

- Ask God to expose areas of distraction or indifference in our lives that keep us from seriously considering who Jesus is and what he's done.
- Pray for humility to overcome pride, like that of the religious leaders, and to embrace God's grace with a surrendered heart.
- Praise God for Jesus' substitutionary death, and ask for the Spirit's power to walk in a manner worthy of Christ.