

# *The Easter Experience*

## **Episode Three: My Pain is Understood**

### Opening Thoughts

1. The Big Question: if there is a loving God why is there so much heartache and suffering? Have you asked this question? How would you answer this if someone you cared about asked? Why do good, logical, and sound biblical answers sometimes fall short of solving the problem?
2. The disciples were just men. They did not think they were heroes or kings, or even leader material. But everyone struggles with a bit of ego, and these twelve disciples were little different than other men of their day. What did you learn about the disciples and their purpose based on their arguments over who was the greatest? What do you suppose they were thinking when Jesus called them to leave their lives and families to follow him?
3. How do you find significance in your life? In your home? In your job? What compromises are asked of you in those places? How do people find their significance in the church?

### **Read Luke 22:39-44.**

<sup>39</sup>Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup>On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." <sup>41</sup>He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup>"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." <sup>43</sup>An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. <sup>44</sup>And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."

4. How do you handle crisis? How do you cope with the most difficult aspects of life?
5. What stands out to you about Jesus' prayer? Does Jesus really think God will change His mind?
6. How does this scene impact the meaning of the words "Thy will be done?"

### **Read Matthew 27:25-30**

<sup>25</sup>All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"  
<sup>26</sup>Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.  
<sup>27</sup>Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. <sup>28</sup>They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup>and then

twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. <sup>30</sup>They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again."

7. Why were these Roman soldiers so cruel to Jesus? What does this indicate about the soldiers' view of Jesus and themselves?

### **Read John 19:16-37**

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). <sup>18</sup>Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

<sup>19</sup>Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>20</sup>Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. <sup>21</sup>The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

<sup>22</sup>Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

<sup>23</sup>When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

<sup>24</sup>"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said,

"They divided my garments among them

and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.

<sup>25</sup>Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup>and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

<sup>28</sup>Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." <sup>29</sup>A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. <sup>30</sup>When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

<sup>31</sup>Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. <sup>32</sup>The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. <sup>35</sup>The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup>These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," <sup>37</sup>and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

8. There is a powerful verse that we should take note. John 19:28 states, "Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." What does it mean that Scripture was fulfilled?"

### **Read Psalm 22**

- <sup>1</sup>My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from the words of my groaning?
- <sup>2</sup>O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, and am not silent.
- <sup>3</sup>Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the praise of Israel.
- <sup>4</sup>In you our fathers put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.
- <sup>5</sup>They cried to you and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not disappointed.
- <sup>6</sup>But I am a worm and not a man  
scorned by men and despised by the people.
- <sup>7</sup>All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads:
- <sup>8</sup>"He trusts in the LORD;  
let the LORD rescue him.  
Let him deliver him,  
since he delights in him."
- <sup>9</sup>Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me trust in you  
even at my mother's breast.
- <sup>10</sup>From birth I was cast upon you;  
from my mother's womb you have been my God.
- <sup>11</sup>Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.
- <sup>12</sup>Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

- <sup>13</sup>Roaring lions tearing their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.
- <sup>14</sup>I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted away within me.
- <sup>15</sup>My strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.
- <sup>16</sup>Dogs have surrounded me;  
a band of evil men has encircled me,  
they have pierced my hands and my feet.
- <sup>17</sup>I can count all my bones;  
people stare and gloat over me.
- <sup>18</sup>They divide my garments among them  
and cast lots for my clothing.
- <sup>19</sup>But you, O LORD, be not far off;  
O my Strength, come quickly to help me.
- <sup>20</sup>Deliver my life from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.
- <sup>21</sup>Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- <sup>22</sup>I will declare your name to my brothers;  
in the congregation I will praise you.
- <sup>23</sup>You, who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you descendants of Jacob honor him!  
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
- <sup>24</sup>For he has not despised or disdained  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.
- <sup>25</sup>From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows.

<sup>26</sup>The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
they who seek the LORD will praise him—  
may your hearts live forever!

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the LORD,  
and all the families of the nations  
will bow down before him,

<sup>28</sup>for dominion belongs to the LORD  
and he rules over the nations.

<sup>29</sup>All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.

<sup>30</sup>Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.

<sup>31</sup>They will proclaim his righteousness  
to a people yet unborn—  
for he has done it.

9. Take a pen and underline all of the statements that applied to or were fulfilled by Jesus.
10. As you study the written and visual depiction of Jesus' torment what stands out to you?
11. Why is it important for Christians to understand and mediate on the severity of Jesus' suffering?
12. In Matthew 26:53 Jesus says that He has over twelve legions of angels at his disposal for protection; why did they not intervene? Who was holding them back? Why?
13. God turned his back on Jesus. How is that "good news" for the world?
14. What can you do today to show your gratitude to Jesus?

## Digging Deeper

The suffering Jesus experienced both before and during his crucifixion immediately became the focal point of the gospel message concerning salvation and atonement. As you conclude this week consider the biblical depiction of his suffering and torment.

1. Who “struck” the Messiah at Calvary?
  - a. Isaiah 53:4-6- \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who “delivered” Jesus to his crucifixion?
  - a. Romans 8:32- \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who “used the cruel actions of evil men” to accomplish good purposes?
  - a. Acts 2:23- \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why are the above answers significant? What difference do they make?

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5. Visit [www.simplesmallgroups.com](http://www.simplesmallgroups.com) and read the transcript of Lee Strobel’s interview with Dr. Alexander Metherell in *A Case for Christ: A Journalist’s Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*.

How does the intensity of Jesus’ torment help us to believe that he can understand the pain and sorrow we experience today?

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## **Digging Deeper Answers**

1a. "God"

2a. "God"

3a. "God"