



Sermon Discussion Questions
03-15-26

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Sermon Series: I Believe
Week 4: Friday - Jesus: Crucified, Dead & Buried

1. ICE BREAKER: The Apostles' Creed connects Christians today with believers throughout history. What is something meaningful that has been passed down to you from someone in a previous generation (a tradition, value, object, or lesson)?
2. Read our Scripture for this week, John 18:28-40:

²⁸Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰"If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

³¹Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. ³²This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

³⁴“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

³⁵“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

³⁶Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

³⁸“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”

⁴⁰They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

What do you notice as you read this Scripture today? Compare and contrast the reactions and words of Jesus, Pilate, and the Jewish leaders.

3. Throughout the history of the Church, creeds have served to synthesize Scripture, defend against false teaching, and connect us to the historical Church. This week’s line of the Creed says: “He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended to the dead.”

Which of the creed’s purposes do you find most important? Why? Why do you think it is important that the Creed anchors Jesus’ suffering to a real historical person like Pontius Pilate?

4. This part of the creed reminds us that Jesus endured all of this for our sake. John 15:13 says, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

How does it make you feel that Jesus considers you a friend? Pastor Dale shared the illustration of an Honor Flight, and the sober realization that those who serve in the military also lay down their lives for others. Share personal connections that you have to those who have served our country.

5. Historically, it is known that Jesus was crucified, dead and buried. But the important question for us to ask and understand is not just, 'what happened?', but 'why?'

If someone asked you why Jesus died, how would you explain? Why does sin require God to come and deal *directly* with it?

6. One of the reasons Jesus came and died on the cross is to pay our debt. His death on the cross created the opportunity for our atonement - our reconciliation with God. He paid a debt we could never have paid on our own.

Talk about the illustration Pastor Dale shared of the NYC Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, and how he paid the debt of a woman in the court room. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus paid a debt you owe? Has anyone ever done that for you in a different way?

7. Read Colossians 2:13-14, *"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."*

React to this verse. How does this illustrate atonement? What stands out to you about what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross?

8. Jesus also suffered, was crucified, dead and buried in order to enter our pain. Read Hebrews 4:15-16, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*

What does it mean to you that Jesus has been tempted in every way? How do you approach God's throne of grace with confidence? How does remembering what Jesus went through change the way you think about His love for you?

9. PRACTICE: This whole series will be spent in the Apostles' Creed. For your weekly faith practice with your group, we encourage you to end by saying the Apostles' Creed together. Perhaps you will memorize it by the end of Lent! Try to really think about the words and their meaning as you say them out loud.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead.

The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there, He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.