



**Sermon Series: My Encounter with Jesus**

**To be used with Session 5: Jesus Died for Me**

**Sermon Title Possibilities: A Death with Purpose**

**Scripture: John 19:16-19,28-30,38-42**

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the Bible study “My Encounter with Jesus” this sermon will empower believers to share the gospel. We will also receive insights for developing strategies to deal with today’s cultural injustices.

**Introduction:** Our current society is engaged in a call to eradicate various types of injustices. This call is often focused on providing all people with equal outcomes regardless of their circumstances and ethnicity. In some ways, Jesus’s death can be seen as a great equalizer given that His blood provides the same amount of eternal life to all who claim Him as their Lord and Savior (6:53-56). Still, the modern conversation about ending social injustice ignores the fact that people will sometimes persecute the righteous. This is what happened to Jesus when He was crucified. Pilate explained several times that he found “no guilt” in Jesus (18:38; 19:4,6,12). Still, the crowd called for His death. Jesus suffered and died as one who was innocent. He broke no laws of His society and even enhanced the society of His day, but He still was treated unjustly.

We can expect to be treated similarly. The difference is that our actions are not always righteous. As Peter explains, even though good actions should not lead to suffering, sometimes they do (1 Pet. 3:13-18). Thus, we must focus on doing good. It is of no credit to us if we suffer because we decide to sin (1 Pet. 2:20). The story of Jesus’s crucifixion provides us with insights into developing a strategy for dealing with unjust situations in our own time and day.

### **1. Sinless Christ Died for Guilty Me - John 19:16-19**

- The Jewish authorities wanted to harm Jesus for disrupting their cultural systems. However, these authorities were often conflicted because Jesus fulfilled all of the Messianic signs. He spoke clearly about how His actions reflected God’s design for the Old Testament (7:25–31). After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees decided they could no longer allow Jesus to continue because too many people would

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begin to believe in Him (11:45-48a). Instead, they chose to side with Rome to keep their power and status (11:48b). The plans they put in place to get rid of Jesus (11:53) culminated in His crucifixion.

- The same political maneuver to side with Rome can be seen in how the Jewish authorities respond to Pilate's examination of Jesus. As noted above, Pilate clarified that he could find "no guilt" in Jesus. Still, the Jewish authorities stuck to their plan and proclaimed that they were aligned with Caesar so that they could force Pilate's hand. This political tension led Pilate to want to rid himself of Jesus even though Jesus was innocent. In this way, the authorities obtained their goal so that one man died for the entire nation (11:49-50). However, they did not realize that God planned to use their desire for injustice to bring mercy, grace, and forgiveness to the world. In other words, God's purpose was to use Jesus to take "away sins" even though there was "no sin in him" (1 John 3:5).

## **2. Jesus Fulfilled His Purpose - John 19:28-30**

- From an earthly perspective, Jesus was politically outmaneuvered. He was crucified as a criminal among criminals (19:18). But this great injustice does not get the final say. This is because Jesus is from above and is above all (3:31). Though He humbly came down to earth, He came to set us free from sin, if only we would believe in Him (8:23). He had all authority. Still, He submitted himself to earthly authority so that His purpose could be fulfilled (19:11).
- This purpose is also related to why Jesus asked for a drink before He died. As stated in John 1:28, Jesus fulfilled Scripture when He asked for this drink. The most likely reference is Psalm 69:21. Contextually, Psalm 69 relates to how God will vindicate the oppressed if their desire for righteousness caused their oppression (Ps. 69:4a). God will not let evil go unpunished. However, sometimes the righteous will have to restore something even if they did not steal it (Ps. 69:4b). Normally, restoration is placed on the thief once he is caught with valid evidence (Prov. 6:31; Exod. 22:1, etc.). Because of the fallen nature of life, the righteous will often be called upon to restore others even when it leads them to obtain a loss. Jesus exemplified this by erasing our debt by His death on the cross (Col. 2:14).

## **3. Be Ready to Stand for Christ - John 19:38-42**

- Once Jesus died, the political war ended. The Pharisees had won, at least in earthly terms. This reality was felt by Jesus's followers as well. Thus, Joseph of Arimathea appeared to have done his best in dealing with the situation. To get Jesus's body to an empty tomb, Joseph needed to get the body from Pilate. This is why Joseph went in secret. He could have caused an uproar between the Jews and Pilate, but this would not have been expedient and could have resulted in him losing access to the body. Similarly, Nicodemus also worked with Joseph to secure Jesus's body. Given the reminder that

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Nicodemus first met Jesus during the night (19:39; 3:1–2), it seems best to assume that Nicodemus also worked in secret.

- Perhaps one important lesson to be learned from these two disciples, is that standing for Jesus sometimes means standing in secret. This is not the same thing as denying Christ as Lord and Savior. Instead, this looks more like what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus had many occasions where He could have defended Himself and possibly convinced Pilate to let Him go free. But Jesus stayed silent. Similarly, there might have been other ways for Joseph and Nicodemus to have retrieved Jesus's body but, at the time, working in secret appears to have been the best method.

**Conclusion:** The death of Jesus should always be in our thoughts so that it affects our actions. We should always want to help others come to an understanding of who He is and what He has done for us, and the world. Jesus is the only way to salvation. He is the bread of life. As the apostle John boldly proclaims to us in 19:35-37, he bore witness to these events so that he could write them down for us, so that we would believe. As such, we should also seek to make this same effort. This might mean working in secret sometimes as Joseph and Nicodemus did. This might also mean confronting the political forces of our day as Nicodemus did before the Pharisaic counsel (7:50–52). We might not always know the right way to respond to every circumstance in life. We do know that our efforts will never be in vain so long as we seek to proclaim God's righteousness to the world. Social unrest and injustice will probably remain until Christ returns. We should make every effort to bring righteous judgments to earthly circumstances (7:24), but even when this is not possible, we should suffer through injustice for the sake of the gospel.

### Author Bio

*Dr. Ron Lindo, Jr. graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with a PhD in Old Testament. He currently serves as the Chief Academic Officer for Jackson Theological Seminary in Little Rock, Arkansas, while teaching High School Math and Bible at Baptist Preparatory School. He is also one of the life group leaders for his home church, the Church at Rock Creek. He and his wife, Maya, have been blessed with four wonderful children.*

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