

The Cross

Matthew 27:45-54

“About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”)” - Matthew 27:46

Main Point: Jesus’ death on the cross was the greatest historical and spiritual event ever

Introduction: Use the following questions to introduce the topic of discussion -

Think about the last time the power went out at your home. What did you miss the most?

Have you ever experienced an earthquake of any magnitude? What thoughts crossed through your mind?

As we focus this week on the death of Jesus, we see he endured one of the most excruciating executions in history - death on a cross. Jesus took on this incredibly painful experience because of His love for the Father and love for His people. We are included in those who were redeemed by His sacrifice. As Romans 5:8 says, “God demonstrates His own love towards us in this, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” When we understand the significance of the events surrounding His crucifixion, our eyes are opened to the truth of Jesus’ words, His place in God’s plan, and His home in our hearts.

There were four significant things that happened at the cross:

1) **DARKNESS COVERED THE LAND.** Have a volunteer read **Matthew 27:45-49.**

Of all the miracles God could have done to draw attention to the cross, why do you think he utilized this miracle of darkness?

Darkness is a sign used throughout the Bible. Ask for volunteers to read the following passages: Genesis 1:2; Exodus 10:21-22; Amos 8:9-10; and John 1:5. What does darkness signify in each of these passages?

Look more closely at John 8:12. If Jesus is the Light of the world, what does that imply about the world? What does it imply about you?

2) **THE BARRIER OF SIN CAME CRASHING DOWN.** Read **Matthew 27:50-51.**

How did people approach God throughout the Old Testament? Read Leviticus 16:2-17.

What role did the curtain of the temple play in this relationship? What was the significance of the temple curtain being torn at the time of Jesus' death?

3) **THE DEAD WERE RAISED.** Read **Matthew 27:52-53**

How might the people have attempted to explain the earthquake as coincidence or a common natural occurrence? Would it have been easy to do the same once the tombs of holy people began to break open?

4) **JESUS WAS RECOGNIZED AS GOD'S SON.** Read **Matthew 27:54.**

What was the impact of the centurions testimony? Putting yourself in his place, what other explanation would there be for all that occurred?

What should the grace, freedom, and joy of our lives prove about the uniqueness and credibility of Jesus' claims to be the true Messiah?

As followers of Jesus, how should our words and actions prove that Jesus was not merely good man, teacher, leader or revolutionary? How should the world view His role in our lives instead?

Apply It:

What are some practical ways we can be light-bearers to the people we know who are trapped in the darkness? Who is someone you can help this week? What should the impact of Jesus' identity as the Light of the world have on your everyday life? What impact should it have on the role our church plays here in the community and throughout the world?

Pray:

Thank God for His unfathomable love for us—the love that sent His only son to die the ultimate death of sin in our place, offering true freedom, deep joy, and eternal life to all who believe in and follow Him as a result. Pray for the faith to take hold of the truth of His unique life and unmatched resurrection.

Coming up at VillageChurch:

March 31st - Easter Eggstravaganza (Sign up to work a station; fill goody bags and click eggs!)

April 1st - Easter Sunday (VillageKids Choir singing)

April 22nd - BIG Tent Revival

May 13th - Mother's Day: Baby Dedication, VillageKids Choir singing