

Growth Group Questions

Passion Sunday, March 24, 2024

Introduction

The Sunday before Easter has long been celebrated as Palm Sunday, a day to remember that triumphant scene when Jesus rode into Jerusalem to songs and signs of victory. However, it has also long been used as a week to remember the Passion of Christ. The reading of the passion history from one of the gospels prepared people to walk with Jesus in this Holy Week. There is no right or wrong answer on which focus is better since God hasn't given a command. Discuss the two themes and identify benefits of either one as we begin Holy Week.

Into the Word – Matthew 21:1-11

1. Even though our focus this year is on the Passion of Christ, we still enjoy hearing the Palm Sunday Gospel. Identify as many miraculous parts of this account as you can.
2. “Son of David” was a title with a specific meaning to the people of Israel. Who does the crowd think Jesus is?
3. This day, Jerusalem cries out “Hosanna” as Jesus enters. Five days later crowds would cry out “Crucify him!” God’s enemies turned the people against him. Identify enemies or temptations that we face which threaten to turn our praises to God into curses.

Into the Word – Luke 22:1-53 (The Upper Room & the Garden)

4. Skim over Exodus 12:1-20 for a refresher on the Passover & Unleavened Bread festivals. What is the symbolism of each?
5. As Jesus institutes the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, he speaks about the “new covenant in my blood.” Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and discuss why this new one-sided covenant was superior to the old two-sided covenant God made with Israel.

6. In Exodus 24, blood was used to seal the covenant between God and man. Essentially, the contract was signed in blood. Jesus’ blood in the sacrament is “resigning” or reassuring of the new covenant. Explain why we need this reassurance frequently and regularly.
7. Find one other part of this Passion section you’d like to talk about and discuss it with the group.

Into the Word – Luke 22:54-23:25 (Jesus on Trial)

8. Peter and Judas both betrayed Jesus by their words or actions, but one was lost and the other saved. We teach that repentance has three parts: (1) sorrow over sin, (2) desire to stop sinning, and (3) recognizing that God forgives sin. Which part kept Judas from repentance and led to his damnation while Peter was restored?
9. Luke records nothing of the illegal midnight trials Jesus faced before the Jews. (You have to read the other gospels for that part of the history.) Pilate finds Jesus without guilt but ultimately condemns him to crucifixion. Why?

Into the Word – Luke 23:26-56 (Crucifixion & Burial)

10. Review the timeline of Good Friday for yourselves.
What time was Jesus crucified (Mk 15:25)?
When did the sky go dark?
When did he die?
11. The curtain in the temple was as wide as your hand. What was its symbolism in separating the Most Holy Place from the rest of the temple? What does its tearing show us? (Read Hebrews 10:19-22)
12. Since Jesus died on Friday afternoon and rose Sunday morning, how can we say he was in the tomb for three days?

Closing Prayer: Precious Savior, bless me to see the depth of your love on display this Holy Week, and let that love stir in me a heart of faith eager to serve you in all I say and do. Amen.