

# Adult Teaching Resources

April 14, 2019



## Lenten Season (March 10-April 14)

### Purposeful Love

John 12:1-8 – “The Scent of Love”

**Luke 23:1-49 – “Of Passion and Pain”**

## Easter Season (April 21-June 2)

John 20:1-8 – “Best. News. Ever.”

### Resurrection Realities

Acts 5:27-32 – “First Allegiance”

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# Of Passion and Pain

Luke 23:1-49

## FIT Teaching Guide

by David Woody

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

### Bible Background

*“But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.” Luke 23:49*

Today we begin Holy Week. We know the stories. We know what will happen. We know what to expect. But, we still find it all a little unbelievable.

Today, we spend our time exploring Luke version of Jesus’s crucifixion.

### Opening

Welcome everyone to class on this Palm Sunday. After everyone has arrived, ask your larger group to find a partner. After all the partnerships have been formed, ask these questions for conversation and discussion:

When was the first time you heard the story of Jesus and the crucifixion?

What do you remember about that first encounter with the story?

How old were you?

Where did you hear it?

What impact did it have on you?

How has that shaped the way you live?

Give each couple time to share, then open the conversation to the larger group asking for volunteers to share their experience with this story.

### Reading the Bible

Ask each partnership to find another partner group for this part of the lesson. In these groups of four, ask each group to work together, without scripture, to retell the story of Jesus coming before Pilate up to his crucifixion. Give everyone time to think and talk through the story. After each group walks their way through their version of the story, ask them to compare what they remembered with the actual story from scripture as someone in the class reads the story out loud.

## Making Connections

Have you ever been found doing something you thought was right, but someone else thought was wrong? What was the situation? How did you feel? What ultimately happened?

What is your experience with legal proceedings? Do you think the accused gets a fair say in a trial question mark why do you say that question mark do you think Jesus got a fair say at his trial? Why do you say that?

When have you “passed trouble” to someone else? What were you avoiding? What ultimately happened?

What is the expected role of a leader in a situation when the status quo is challenged? How did Herod make a mockery of his position with Jesus? What do you think would have happened if Herod treated Jesus with respect and decency?

When have you experienced a mob mentality? Did the mob get what they wanted?

When have you prayed for those who have hurt you? How were you hurt? What was your prayer?

Our Lesson Writer says, “The scene was steeped in irony. Some shouted: “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” (v. 35). They did not understand that, precisely because Jesus was the chosen one of God, he *could not* save others (including them) *and* save himself at the same time. Christ had to lose himself in order to save the world.” What does it mean that Christ had to lose himself in order to save the world?

## So What?

Ask your large group to form small groups again. Challenge each group to create a way to explain the story and its significance to a child.

What is the story?

What are the theological truths you want to share?

How do you share those theological truths in a way that will be easy to understand?

What facts do you leave in?

What facts do you leave out?

Ask each group to share with the larger group.

## The Challenge

This week share this story with someone who needs to hear it. Pray that the words will be a seed that is planted in the heart of the hearer.

## Prayer

*Loving God, this is a hard week. The story getting to Easter Sunday is one we would rather avoid. But, we can't. We need to experience the suffering to enjoy the celebration. Be with us this week, Lord, as we remember the suffering of your Son, our Savior. Amen.*

## Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

**The text**—The Revised Common Lectionary’s gospel text for this week is Luke 22:14 – 23:56, or Luke 23:1-49. The first option is far too much to cover in a single Bible study with any depth, as it begins with the Lord’s Supper and ends with Jesus’ burial, including all the intervening events. The second text is also challenging, as it begins with Jesus being brought before Pilate and ends with his death on the cross. It is more manageable, however, and will be our choice.

**The Sanhedrin**—The Sanhedrin, which Luke calls “the assembly of the elders,” was the supreme governing body of the Jewish people at that time. It consisted of seventy-one priests, scribes, and elders and held, under Rome, wide-ranging powers of self-government. The ruling council found Jesus worthy of death, but Rome did not grant it the power of capital punishment.

**Herod**—The area we think of as Israel was ruled by Herod the Great from 37 BCE until about 4 BCE. Herod was appointed by Rome as a client “King of Judea” around 40 BCE, but didn’t gain full control until 37 BCE. He was known as a great builder – hence the name “Herod the Great” – but also as a paranoid ruler who coldly assassinated anyone he perceived as a threat, including his Jewish wife Mariamne and her sons.

After Herod died, his kingdom was divided among three of his sons. The northern and eastern areas of Iturea and Tracheonitis were allotted to Herod Philip, perhaps the most competent of the three, and he ruled there from 4 BC to 34 CE

Herod Antipater (better known as Antipas) was given charge of Galilee, which he ruled from the city of Tiberius, which he built on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, from 4 BCE to 39 CE. Antipas famously divorced his first wife and married his brother Philip’s wife, Herodias, after she divorced Philip to marry Antipas. John the Baptist sharply criticized the arrangement, and lost his head as a result (Matt. 14:1-4).

Herod Archelaus was put in charge of Judea and Samaria, but ruled only from 4 BCE to 6 CE. Archelaus was so cruel and incompetent that the Romans deposed him, made Judea a “procuratorship,” and ultimately put a series of prefects in charge of Jerusalem and the surrounding area. Pontius Pilate was the fifth of these, ruling from 26-36 CE.

Thus, when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem brought Jesus before Pilate, who didn’t really want to condemn Jesus, he tried to defer his case off to Herod Antipas, who ruled Jesus’ home area of Galilee.

## Digging Deeper *continued*

**Who's to blame?**—While the Roman leader Pilate passed the sentence, Luke insists that he did so only at the instigation of the temple officials. But who's really to blame?

The late Malcolm Tolbert observed that many generations of Christians have avoided the implications of the cross by blaming it on the Jews, while failing to see that the people who killed Jesus were no different than we are, preferring to silence the voice of God and take over the world for ourselves. This, he wrote, is the ultimate idolatry. “In this sense the crucifixion is not only something that happened a long time ago; it takes place every day in our own world” (“Luke,” in the *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 9 [Broadman Press, 1970], 178).

How do you react to this statement?

**Simon of Cyrene**—Cyrene was a city in northern Africa, located where Tripoli, the capital of Libya, is today. Mark tells us that Simon was the father of Rufus and Alexander, who must have been known to his readers in the early church (Mk. 15:21).

**Paradise**—The word for “paradise” seems a bit unusual, given that we would expect Jesus to affirm that the thief would join him in heaven, or in the kingdom. The term translated “paradise” (*paradeisō*) is derived from an Old Persian word meaning “enclosure,” with the extended meaning of a garden or park. The word came to be used in conjunction with heaven, perhaps speaking of a garden or area within it (2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7).

# The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

## What is the green wood and dry wood of v. 31?

Jesus' prediction of Jerusalem's destruction was peppered with comments designed to intensify its impact. That day would bring such suffering to them and their children that they would claim barren women most blessed, a turnaround from the normal view (v. 29). They would call for the mountains to fall on them and bring a quick end, for they would be better off dead than facing what came with the end of the city (v. 30).

Finally, he said "For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (v. 31). This verse has puzzled interpreters for years. Some have sought a connection with the wood of the cross, but that is unlikely.

The saying is probably proverbial and subject to application in different circumstances. The most common view is that here the "green wood" represented Jesus and the "dry wood" represented Jerusalem. If such suffering could come upon the innocent "green wood," how much worse would the disaster be for wood that is guilty and spiritually dry, like seasoned firewood?

A related interpretation suggests that if Jesus' tragic death could occur when Jerusalem was relatively peaceful (like green wood), what atrocities might happen if tensions rose and it became like a tinderbox?

Both scenarios are harbingers of trouble to come: the women might mourn over Jesus' death, but a day would come when the entire city would face a devastating destruction.