



ICEBREAKER: When was a time somebody let you off the hook? What did it cost them?

READ: John 19:16-30

“Do you see the glory of God in his wisdom, power, righteousness, truth, and love, supremely disclosed at Calvary (the Cross), in the making of propitiation for our sins? The Bible does; and we venture to add, if you felt the burden and pressure of your own sins at their true weight, so would you.”

--J.I. Packer, *In My Place, Condemned He Stood*

CONTENT QUESTIONS

I. Why did Jesus have to die? :: Real Forgiveness is Costly ::

“Forgiveness means bearing the cost instead of making the wrongdoer do it, so you can reach out in love to seek your enemy’s renewal and change. Forgiveness means absorbing the debt of the sin yourself. Everyone who forgives great evil goes through a death into resurrection, and experiences nails, blood, sweat and tears. Should it surprise us, then, that when God determined to forgive us rather than punish us for all the ways we have wronged him and one another, that he went to the Cross in the person of Jesus Christ and died there?”

--Tim Keller, *A Reason for God*

1. Read Hebrews 9:11-22, 26-28.¹ What did Jesus death cost him (9:12, 14, 15, 22, 26, 28)? What does it bring those who believe in Him (9:12, 14, 15, 22, 26, 28)? (Try to explain in your own words)

2. What is offensive (surprising) about the idea that forgiveness of sin must come through the death of Jesus (to our culture, to you)? What does it reveal about the seriousness of sin and the depth of God’s love?

3. When was a time it cost you to forgive and move forward with a relationship (what did it cost)? What is a current relationship you can bear the cost and forgive another?

II. Why did Jesus have to die? :: Real Love is a Personal Exchange ::

“The essence of sin is we human beings substituting ourselves for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for us. We...put ourselves where only God deserves to be; God...puts himself where we deserve to be.”--John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

¹ See also: Matthew 26:26-29, Psalm 22

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.² What is the cause of Jesus having to die (5:15, 19, 21, quote above)? What is the status and response of those who he died for (5:14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)?
2. Do you view yourself as: a new creation, a reconciler of the world, an ambassador for Christ, reconciled to God, the righteousness of God all through the death of Jesus? (Expound on why or why not)
3. What is challenging about not doing anything to earn God's favor and only accepting Jesus free gift of life?

III. Why did Jesus have to die? :: Real Sacrifice is Personal

"...when I realized I was actually inside Jesus's story (and he inside mine) it changed me. The fear and pride that captured my heart was finally dislodged. The fact that Jesus had to die for me humbled me out of my pride. The fact that Jesus was glad to die for me assured me out of my fear."--Tim Keller, A Reason for God

1. Read Romans 5:1-11.³ What does God bring and reveal through the death of Jesus (5:1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11)?
2. What area(s) of your life are you prideful and do not think Jesus had to die for you? What area(s) of your life are you fearful that Jesus was not glad to die for?
3. How can having peace with, access to, grace from, rejoice in, hope in, love from, reconciled to God (see 5:1-11) through Jesus' death bring freedom to be in true relationship with Him? What does that look like for you?

CONNECTING QUESTIONS

1. What does Jesus death on the Cross mean to you?
2. Think about the implications of believing in Jesus: you are the righteousness of Christ. a new creation, an ambassador for Christ, reconciled to God, have peace with God, forgiven, loved. Do you live out of that? What would it look like if you did (think about how you view yourself, others etc.)?
3. What is one passage, thought or idea that stood out to you in this lesson? Why? How can the group pray for you to apply it to your life?

² See also: 1 Peter 2:21-25

³ See also: 1 John 3:16; Galatians 4:3-7