

**Series:** Receiving life by believing in God's Son (a Gospel of John study)

**Sermon Text:** John 19:24-27

**Key Words:** Care Through Pain

(\*This account is also found in Matthew 27:32-38; Mark 15:21-28; Luke 23:26-34)

Our mini-series from 19:16-37 is called, "*Looking up at the cross with John.*" It's a study of some observations he made about the cross. Each week, as we inch closer to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel, we'll remind ourselves why it was written. John 20:30-31 explains that "*Jesus did many other signs...not written in this book; but these are written so you may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" Overall, our mini-series is meant to convey this...

**BIG IDEA:** There's more to Jesus than meets the eye.

So far, we've made two observations in this series. ***Observation #1: The crucifixion was Christ's coronation.*** ***Observation #2: Jesus' death fulfilled oodles of prophecies.*** Instead of seeing the cross merely as an instrument of death, John viewed it as a throne on which Jesus was glorified and lifted up for all to see the long-promised "*King of the Jews*" as a king for all nations. John has carefully led us to this conclusion since chapter 1. He revealed Jesus as co-Creator, God in a human body; and He cited numerous prophecies and miraculous signs to prove Jesus had fulfilled (accomplished) the work (purpose) of Old Testament characters and images like Adam, Israel, the temple, the feasts (Passover, Tabernacles, etc.), the Good Shepherd, the Messiah (Christ), and the Suffering Servant from Isaiah 40-55 (a.k.a. The Servant of The Lord) who faithfully suffered on behalf of His people.

This brings us to ***Observation #3: The king of the world cares about his individual subjects.*** His disciples, who haven't been centerstage in a while, suddenly emerge in ***verses 24-25: So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister*** (Jesus' aunt, whom we think was John's mom--making him Jesus' cousin cf. Matthew 27:56), ***Mary the wife of Clopas*** (of whom little is known), ***and Mary Magdalene*** (from whom Jesus cast out 7 demons cf. Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2). It seems Rome viewed women and children as less of a threat because we see an abundance of female disciples here and 1 guy (John). If John was under 20 years old, as we think, Rome could've viewed him as too young to take up the reigns (big mistake, right?). Although, if we consider what happened in the High Priest's courtyard, a more likely theory is that he had friends in high places. John is super interesting to study in terms of his character, connections, and endurance.

***Verses 26-27*** describe a tender moment: ***When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the***

*disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.* Why entrust her care to Cousin John and not His half-brothers? One reason might be what John told us in 7:5--Jesus' brothers were not yet believers. Regardless, isn't it remarkable how Jesus conveyed such love towards Mary and John here? His willingness to enter their suffering and be with them for the long haul is inspirational--He loved them to the end, even with His dying breath! I mean, first off, we sort of expect kings to pursue kingdom expansion at the expense of people, but not Jesus! Consider this great comment from Pastor Bruce Milne: *"Here is a king whose embrace is as wide as the world, the one to whom 'all authority in heaven and on earth has been given' (Mt. 28:18) and yet who can simultaneously embrace each of us in a personal, loving commitment which is the dance of our hearts."* So, what's the takeaway? In God's kingdom, no one is expendable--we all matter to the King, who is never too busy to care about our concerns!!

This brought another takeaway to mind: Faith impacts the way we suffer. I'm ashamed to admit how pain brings out the worst in me. My temptation when I'm hurting is to make it all about me (e.g., what's been done to me, what I've lost, who is on my side, what I think I deserve). Anyone like that? Jesus modeled a more faithful way to suffer! We often just think of Him as God, but Jesus was also a real person, who endured real pain without ever giving up on God! In His excruciating moment, faith empowered a practical expression of care for others. Instead of being selfish with His body, He let it be a stage for God's glory to be seen at great cost to Himself. This made me think of Romans 12:1-2 (NLT) where the Apostle Paul pleads with us to: *"give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."* So, when the world says, "My body, my choice" faith pleads with us to trust Jesus who said, *"If you want to be my follower, you must deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow me."* That's hard truth, isn't it? According to our Creator, denying self is more life-giving than indulging self. Of course, we all sense the pain and difficulty of living that out. We need support, compassion, and assistance, which is why, like Jesus, our calls for obedience must include sincere offers to assist with the challenges. On the flip side, I also get the desire to shut people out of my pain because who wants to relate or risk exposure when your world is falling apart, right? Well, observing the way our Savior suffered has been transforming my perspective. His example teaches us

that pain isn't a pass to treat others poorly nor is it a reason to doubt God's love. We're to view trials, like Jesus did--as a chance to prove the quality of our faith and how God is the worthiest object of our faith. Faith in the gospel of His life, death, and resurrection can empower us to do unimaginably hard things--to believe God's ways are right, superior, and worthwhile, even if obeying seems unbeneficial in the moment. Jesus trusted God through this nightmare scenario, so therefore then so can we. Now, in closing, this made me think of 2 truths I (we) can no longer ignore: First, I can endure anything if I (we) have access to the same faith (and Holy Spirit) Jesus did. Second, Jesus proved such an amazing God deserves my (our) obedience, especially when I'm (we're) hurting. To trust Him and follow His Son includes crucifying my desire to appear successful, inviting people into my pain (humiliation), and caring for them as they watch me get crucified. I've discovered, like Jesus did, that trials are the only way to know God and others on deeper levels. You know how God promises to never leave or forsake us? Well, the shocking thing is the way He does that through people. God graciously gives us friends, like He did for Jesus, who are willing to listen, who gladly walk alongside us in trials, and who refuse to walk away or use it against us when they discover our weaknesses.

**Let's pray:** Father, being a disciple of Jesus is a high calling and comes with great cost. Anyone can praise God when life's good, but Jesus didn't really need to die for that. It's scary to say "yes" to His invitation to suffer with Him, but it's tremendously comforting to have someone along for the ride who has mastered the subject. By faith, may we live a life worthy of Christ's gospel, so others always see us standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by our opponents--believing this is a clear sign to them of their destruction but of our salvation from God. Help us to see we've been granted the privilege not only to believe in Jesus, but also to suffer for his sake, and are engaged, not in some strange new dilemma, but in the same conflict we saw in the lives of His apostles. Amen. (This prayer is from Philippians 1)

**Let's sing:** "There is a Fountain"

So, what's your NEXT STEP?

- Remember, our next step always begins with faith in Christ. Either placing faith in Him for the first time or exercising faith to repent, change, and grow. Either way, His Spirit will help you.

**Quotes related to this passage:**

- **How John could be at the cross:** "So why didn't they arrest 'the disciple Jesus specially loved'? How did he manage to be there? As with 18.15-16, I think the answer must be that he was still very young. He was just a lad. The soldiers wouldn't regard him as a serious potential revolutionary. He wasn't about to rally the others, to choose a new leader and carry on the

kingdom-movement that had now come to a sorry end. He may not yet have turned twenty. He probably hadn't yet grown a beard. He didn't look a threat." Professor NT Wright

- **John and Jesus were cousins:** "If this is true (and I believe it is likely), it explains why the mother of these young men could expect special favors from Jesus (Matt. 20:20; Mark 10:35). It also helps explain why in the present verses (John 19:26–27) Jesus speaks when he sees his mother and the Beloved Disciple standing before him. Jesus now is appealing to a family responsibility that will be a feature of John's own discipleship. His form of address, "Woman!" is respectful (not impolite, see comment on 2:4), and he is pointing Mary to John (the Beloved Disciple), placing her under the protective care of this disciple." Professor Gary Burge
- **John caring for Mary:** "The personal detailing of the women in the other gospels may imply an identification of his mother's sister, Mary (25), with Salome (Mk. 15:40), 'the mother of Zebedee's sons' (Mt. 27:56). If this is so then James and John were, like John the Baptist, Jesus' cousins, and that helps give meaning to Jesus' action (26–27). In his concern for his mother, he puts her in the care, not of his natural brothers who at this point do not believe, but of the other side of the family, in the person of his cousin John, where she would find a believing and supportive relationship." Pastor Bruce Milne

#### Quotes related to the larger context:

- **Full life:** John said he wrote this letter to help us find "*fullness of life through believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*" Chapters 1-12 contain 3 years of real-life stories where people met Jesus during His public ministry. Chapters 13-21 slow way down as Jesus began to reveal His (God's) heart to His disciples in the week leading up to the cross and resurrection.
- **Book Context:** The Gospel of the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, provides a clearly stated purpose. *John 20:30-31* says, "*Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" Some people demand to have all their questions satisfied before bowing to Jesus, yet John claimed his limited account was enough to bring anyone to faith. As we read it, our Savior and friend emerges from the pages as a real person in the real world. Jesus shows us what we could become, if we too would rely on His infinite Father who will gladly supply whatever we need.
- **Life in his name:** Life is the Greek word, "zōē", which means "Life, Living, Lifetime, Life-Giving" and is where we get the word, "zoology" in English. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says it's "used in the NT of life as a principle, life in the absolute sense, life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the Incarnate Son to have in Himself, Jhn 5:26, and which the Son manifested in the world, 1Jo 1:2. From this life man has become alienated in consequence of the Fall, Eph 4:18, and of this life men become partakers through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jhn 3:15, who becomes its Author to all such as trust in Him, Act 3:15, and who is therefore said to be 'the life' of the believer, Col 3:4, for the life that He gives He maintains, Jhn 6:35, 63. Eternal life is the present actual possession of the believer because of his relationship with Christ, Jhn 5:24; 1Jo 3:14, and that it will one day extend its domain to the sphere of the body is assured by the Resurrection of Christ, 2Cr 5:4; 2Ti 1:10. This life is not merely a principle of power and mobility, however, for it has moral associations which are inseparable from it, as of holiness and righteousness. Death and sin, life and holiness, are frequently contrasted in the Scriptures."

**Other Articles/Songs/Videos:** Please ask us about many other resources.

**Direction for discussion leaders:**

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the discussion around 30mins. Go for a single, not a home run.
3. Keep the group small for deeper sharing. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

**Let’s prepare for our sermon from John 19:24-30.**

- As you read this passage, what stands out to you in terms of the characters and the words spoken?

**Let’s apply our sermon from John 19:24-30.**

- What keeps you from fully engaging the needs and concerns of others? When was the last time you gave full attention to the problems of others? Do you only do this for your closest friends? Would you ever consider doing this for a stranger or someone you feel is less deserving?
- How do you typically respond to suffering and being hurt? What can we learn from the way Jesus suffered related to things like discussing it with God, confidence in God, and caring for others as we suffer? Are people able to see that God is enough for you in both good times and bad times? Please share some examples that could help us process this hard truth.

**Here are some great resources for digging deeper into community group life...**

How life together looks <http://austinstone.org/stories/film/item/140-missional-community-lukes-story>

Rethinking what we do [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvWnXYSELF4&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvWnXYSELF4&feature=player_embedded)

Numerous articles to provoke thought <http://tod dengstrom.com/archives/>

What groups of 2-3 might look like <http://tod dengstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LTG-Overview.pdf>