

3. God's Silence and His Power

Matthew 27:50-54 NLT - 50 Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit. 51 At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, 52 and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. 53 They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people. 54 The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"

As Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world, God silently watched as the full extent of sin unleashed its last violent act on the author of life. And then God was silent no longer. Death, sin and suffering would not have the final say.

What was behind the curtain in the temple? What was significant about the tear starting at the top of the curtain? Where does God's presence (Spirit) currently dwell? What was the demonstration on earth that the power of death and the grave were defeated?

WRAP-UP

Jesus willingly endured the cross for one reason, to redeem us from death to life. Sin had separated us from God and we were helpless to make our way back. But Jesus took our place and suffered a death that was rightly ours. God's unfailing love overcame every obstacle and conquered death and the grave to take us from forsaken to adopted.

MEMORY VERSE

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. -2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge- Spend some time this week expressing thanksgiving to God for the love He demonstrated and the sacrifice He paid so that you could have a relationship with Him.

"From Forsaken to Adoption"

7: A Lenten Series #4

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most heart-breaking words Jesus spoke from the cross are found in Matthew 27:49, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" After suffering the humiliation, torturous treatment and excruciating pain of crucifixion, Jesus experienced complete separation from God. The impact of losing contact with the Father may have been the most devastating blow of all. Forsaken, abandoned, deserted He cried out but there was no reply, only silence. If we ever needed a demonstration of the weight of our sin, this moment gives us a picture of its true cost. But how did this happen? Why did God forsake Jesus when we were the guilty ones? In this study we will take a look at the seriousness of sin and the depth of God's love for us as revealed on the cross.

Ice Breaker

As a child, did you ever find yourself separated from your family?

Key Passage

Matthew 27:45-46 ESV - 45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Sin Separates us from God

Romans 5:12 NLT - 12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

In our culture, sin is not often a topic of discussion, even in most churches. It is the dark secret in everyone's closet- we all sin, and nobody wants to acknowledge that. And because we all sin, it seems like not such a big deal. Everyone does it, and God forgives us, right? But we have lost sight of the true cost and insidious nature of sin. It turns out, it is a big deal.

Isaiah 59:2 NLT - 2 It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

Psalms 22:1-2 ESV - 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

What does Isaiah tell us happened to our relationship with God because of our sin? How do we see that truth, prophesied in Psalm 22, demonstrated on the cross?

Perhaps you've wondered why God could not "overlook" our sin and allow us into His presence. When we begin to realize the gravity of sin our question shifts from "why can't God overlook our sins" to "how is it possible that God forgives sin".

Psalms 97:2 NLT - 2 Dark clouds surround him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

We know God is just and God is righteous, so we can't expect Him to ignore what justice demands of our sin. What does Romans 6:23 tell us we have earned by sinning?

Romans 6:23 NLT - 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

And yet in His infinite love God was able to both uphold justice and extend mercy, but only through the price paid by Jesus on the cross.

How do you respond to the statement "My sin is why Jesus was on the cross."?

2. God's Nature and Love on Display

Jesus on the cross is a display of God's unfathomable love. What did it take for God to redeem us back to Himself after we were separated by our sin? The cost was tremendous, but God would do anything to get us back.

To redeem mankind Jesus would have to:

- Suffer greatly.

What was Jesus' reply to the suffering He would face?

Matthew 26:39 NLT - 39 He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

- Take upon Himself every sin of all mankind ever committed.

What was gained for us when Jesus became sin for us?

2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV - 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- Endure the curse meant for us

How did we as Gentiles benefit when Christ took the curse of the law?

Galatians 3:13-14 NIV - 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

How did the Old Covenant laws and animal sacrifices point the way to what God knew would ultimately be required for our salvation?

Hebrews 10:9-12 NLT - 9 Then he [Jesus] said, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. 10 For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. 11 Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. 12 But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand.