

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 3: The Gospel Come To Life Lesson 38: The Crucifixion and Burial



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: Matthew 27:32-66; John 19:31-42

Gospel Focus: Hebrews 12:1-2

Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand that Jesus obediently allowed Himself to be put to death to pay for the sins of the world.
- Students will understand that Jesus conquered death and the cross so that we could have life in Him.
- Students will consider what it means to endure for their faith in their current contexts.



Overview

In this lesson we'll look at two gospel writers and their perspective on Jesus' crucifixion. We'll see how the events of that critical moment in history had been prophesied about long ago, and how Jesus wasn't forced to go to the cross; He instead did it willingly. Finally, we'll discuss how Jesus' death on the cross impacts us and gives us confidence to endure suffering on His behalf.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 38 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 38, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

Matthew

Author: Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.

Time frame: Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

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Purpose: Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

John

Author: The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.

Time frame: The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.

Purpose: John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now 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." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

Hebrews

Author: Originally this letter to the Hebrews was entitled "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews." However, since the Reformation it's been widely recognized that Paul was probably not the writer. There's simply not enough textual or historical evidence to prove his authorship. Early historians suggested the author is perhaps Barnabas or Apollos, though there is no way to know for sure.

Time frame: Hebrews was almost certainly written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD since the author does not mention or give any hint to this catastrophic happening.

Purpose: Hebrews was written to address Jewish converts to Christianity and challenge them to hold fast to their newfound faith. Many of them were resorting back to old traditions and some were even considering merging with certain Jewish sects. Because of increased persecution of Jewish converts to Christianity, many of them were tempted to resort back to old rites and rituals purely to avoid the pain. The challenge from this Hebrew Christian writer to Hebrew converts was to hold fast to their Christian faith and not to slip back to their Hebrew roots.



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing

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throughout the story of the Bible.

- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students to understand what Jesus endured, why Jesus endured, and why they too must endure suffering for their faith.
- **Set-Up:** Before your group time, go to <http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/10-famous-christian-martyrs/> and select a few martyrs listed on the page and print off the information about them.

FIRST, explain to students how many people have given their lives for their faith over the years. Emphasize that these martyrs understood that since Jesus endured even death on the cross for them, that they might also face death for their faith in Him.

THEN, ask for some volunteers to each read about one of the martyrs you chose. After the students have read, ask something like:

- **What do you think about when you read stories like this?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Is giving your life for your faith something you think would be difficult to do?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What about Jesus giving His life for us? Do you think that was easy for Him to do? Why or why not?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, explain to students that in this lesson you’re going to be exploring the obedient sacrifice Jesus made for all humankind—and how they, like the martyrs, are expected to be willing to do the same. Transition to The Story by saying something like:

- **We’re continuing a year-long look at how the Good News of Jesus Christ can be found throughout the entire Bible. On this stop we’ll spend some time examining the obedient sacrifice of Christ while considering the possibility of enduring suffering for your faith in your own life.**

The Story

- **Goal:** To see that Jesus obediently allowed Himself to be put to death in order to pay for the sins of this world.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it’s not essential.

FIRST spend a couple of moments explaining the events leading up to this point in the life of Jesus. If you’d like, use the “Connecting The Dots” section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

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Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Jesus' public ministry had been going on for a while now, gaining Him many followers.**
- **With many followers came some powerful enemies from within the church.**
- **Having been arrested and put on trial, Jesus was preparing now to face punishment that He did not deserve.**

NOW, ask students to turn to Matthew 27:32-66. You can use the information from the Bible Background to give some context about the book of Matthew if you'd like. Explain to the students that this is a long passage you'll be looking at. Let them know that you'll be reading and talking about it in chunks.

THEN, read or have a student read Matthew 27:32-44. Ask something like:

- **What emotions would you have felt if you were the one ordered to carry Jesus' cross?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **What are some of the ways Jesus was mocked in this passage? What stands out to you most? Why?**
 - o Answers will vary. Some answers include: being offered a bitter drink, having His garments divided, the sign that read "King of the Jews," being crucified in between two robbers, and a number of verbal assaults.
- **Why were the chief priests, scribes, and elders so eager to mock Jesus?**
 - o Answer: The religious leaders of the day had always had a problem with Jesus. They believed His message would undermine the authority and systems they had in place that gave them power. They were worried about people following Him rather than them. So, they were thrilled when they got what they wanted by not only getting rid of Jesus, but doing it in a shameful way.
- **What do you know about crucifixion as a way of being put to death?**
 - o Answers will vary. Explain to students that crucifixion was one of the most excruciating ways a person could be put to death. They would probably die of either shock or suffocation.

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 27:45-50, and ask:

- **What does the darkness over the earth represent?**
 - o Answer: God's judgment.
- **What is the significance of what Jesus said in verse 46?**
 - o Answer: He is quoting Psalm 22:1. Jesus felt the wrath of God for every sin every human had and would ever commit. God had to essentially turn His back on His Son as the sins of all humankind were upon Him on that agonizing day of crucifixion. However, Jesus was calling to mind the remainder of the Psalm, which includes a sense of victory in verse 21-31.
- **What victory is being won?**
 - o Answer: First, Jesus knows that He is defeating the power of sin and death. Second, He knows that His Father will not ultimately leave or abandon Him. He knows He will be raised in victory.

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- **What is significant about Matthew saying that Jesus “gave up His spirit”?**

- o Answer: It shows that Jesus voluntarily gave up His life. He wasn't forced to go to the cross. He could have hung up there as long as He wanted to. But He knew what He had come to do and He did it willingly.

THEN, read or have a student read Matthew 27:51-61. Ask something like:

- **What was significant about the curtain of the temple being torn in two?**

- o Answer: Now people could have direct access to the Father. There was no more need for a high priest to enter the holy of holies on anyone's behalf. The perfect high priest had offered Himself as a sacrifice and given us access to the Father.

- **The soldiers had an awakening about Jesus. How does Jesus' crucifixion affect you?**

- o Answers will vary.

- **What do you think was going through the minds of people like Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary?**

- o Answer: They were likely in shock and very sad. It would have been bad enough if this were just a family member or friend that died this way. This was a teacher that they had been following. They had believed something more was coming, that Jesus was going to be the Messiah they had hope for. And now all of it seemed like it was for nothing.

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 27:62-66. Ask something like:

- **What were they so concerned about now that Jesus was dead?**

- o Answer: Their main concern had been to squash any uprising or rebellion that could have come from Jesus and His followers. They were worried some of Jesus' followers would try and steal His body and claim that He had been raised.

- **In the back of their minds do you think they were a little worried that Jesus might actually be able to be raised from the dead?**

- o Answer: Probably so. They had seen Him do some amazing things. They knew this wasn't over just yet.

NOW, explain to the students that you all are going to look at the crucifixion from the perspective of another gospel writer. Read or have a student read John 19:31-42 and ask something like:

- **What's the significance of verse 34 telling us that blood and water spilled out of Jesus' body when it was pierced?**

- o Answer: It more affirmation that Jesus was fully human and died a very painful, physical death.

- **Both Matthew and John cited a number of things that happened during Jesus' crucifixion that were fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy? What's important about these references? Why do the gospel writers choose to write about them?**

- o Answer: It shows the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. What was happening to Jesus wasn't happening to just some random person. They were events that had been prophesied about long ago and were now coming true.

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and look where you see the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

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FIRST Ask students to turn to Hebrews 12:1-2. While they're finding it, you can use some of the information from the Bible Background to provide some context. Read or have a student read Hebrews 12:1-2 and ask something like:

- **Who is this huge cloud of witnesses talked about in verse 1?**
 - o Answer: Reference Hebrews 11 and mention that there is a long legacy of people that followed God from which students can gain inspiration and encouragement.
- **What are some "weights" that slow you down when it comes to being obedient to God?**
 - o Answer will vary.
- **How is a life of obedience to Christ like a long race?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **What are some distractions that cause your eyes to look for fulfillment in something other than Jesus?**
 - o Answers will vary.

THEN, merge the The Story and the The Thread by asking something like:

- **Verse two reminds us about what Jesus went through in the crucifixion. What are the details you remember most from The Story?**
 - o Answers will vary.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **You know the end of the story. Jesus didn't stay dead. He arose as promised after three days defeating death so you can have life in Him! He suffered. He died. He did it for your sins so that you could be saved!**

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the "Wrapping Up" section.

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To get students to consider what it means to endure for their faith in their current life situations.
- **Set-Up:** None.

FIRST, lead a discussion with the students about what it looks like for them to endure for the faith in their specific context. Ask a series of questions that go something like this:

- **What kind of leader willingly chooses to suffer the atrocities Jesus suffered without complaining one single time?**
 - o Answers will vary. Explain how Jesus willingly chose to suffer unimaginably before giving His life for even those who persecuted Him. He knew that enduring boldly to the end of this sacrificial mission would ultimately give every person who lived and would ever live the opportunity to be delivered from death and Hell. That's leadership. That's real and unconditional love. That's being fixed on the things of God and letting nothing get in the way of pursuing His purpose!

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- **How does Jesus' approach to death on the cross give you confidence in following Him?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What are some things you, as a student, may have to endure because of your faith? Explain.**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Do you approach those areas with boldness and confidence or with nervousness and fear? Why?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What are some ways you can become more confident in those areas?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **It is easy to forget that the message of what Jesus did for you through the cross—His torture, His death, His burial, and His promised resurrection—is intended for you. It is as personal a message as one can get. He gave His life for you for your salvation! His example shows you that you can endure anything life throws at you joyfully. Jesus paid your sin debt. We respond by giving Him our lives.**

Close your Bible study in prayer, perhaps including thanksgiving for what God has promised followers of Jesus about eternity.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 38 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.