

The Cross: From Skeptic to Believer

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

1. Share an event, a story, or a quote that changed your perspective on something.
2. What was one act of love that deeply moved you? How did it affect you?

WORD

We are now at the third week of our series, “The Cross.” And what it means for fallen humanity

Matthew 27:50-54 (NIV)

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split 52 and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. 54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

Centurion - centurio (Latin). A military unit originally consisting of 100 legionnaires. Now, a legionnaire - was a citizen soldier of the Roman army. These soldiers would conquer and defend the territories of Ancient Rome during the late Republic and Principate eras alongside auxiliary and cavalry detachments. At its height, Roman Legionnaires were viewed as the foremost fighting force in the Roman world.

Centurion is a commander of 100 of this legionnaires. A centurion was also expected to become a strict commander of his subordinate and to lead his troops by example.

Centurions were held personally responsible for the training and discipline of the legionaries under their command, and they had a reputation for dealing out harsh punishment. They are responsible to torment criminals or victims on crucifixion.

It was very easy and not hard for this centurion for being skeptical of change because of their trainings, position, upbringing or even their atmosphere perhaps.

The story of the centurion and those with him shifted and radically changed after Jesus cried out again in a loud voice. They saw what?

1. Darkness came over all the land for 3 hours. *Matthew 27:45 "From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land."*
2. The curtain in the temple torn in two from top to bottom. *Matthew 27:51a 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom...*
3. The earth shook, the rocks split. *Matthew 27:51b...The earth shook, the rocks split*
4. The tombs broke open. *Matthew 27:52b-35*

The eyewitnesses recognized that this was no ordinary death and this was no ordinary man. The things Jesus said were true, and He was who He claimed to be. It is remarkable that the centurion recognized Jesus' true identity and that he did so when Jesus died. Some refused to recognize Jesus was the Son of God even after He was raised from the dead. This centurion and those who were working with him recognized because of what Jesus said and what they saw that "truly this was the Son of God."

DISCUSSION

How do you see God in your life? How did you acknowledge Him and continue to grow in your relationship with Him?

WORD

The Witness of the Cross

- The centurion saw something extraordinary at the cross that led him to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God.
- The centurion had likely witnessed many crucifixions, but Jesus' death was different.
- Signs of God's power were evident: the darkness, the curtain, earthquake, tombs were open, and the manner of Jesus' death (*Matthew 27:45-51*).
- Application: The cross reveals God's love, justice, and power. Do we recognize its significance in our lives?

2. The Transformation of a Sinner (executioner to worshiper)

- The centurion, a Gentile and likely a hardened Roman soldier, was moved to confess Jesus' divine identity. Luke 23:47 (NIV).
"The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." Despite being part of the execution team, he experienced a spiritual awakening. His confession, "Truly this was the Son of God," is a profound moment of faith, breaking cultural and religious barriers.

Application: No one is beyond the reach of God's grace. Even the hardest heart can be transformed by the truth of the Gospel.

3. The Call to Respond (sinner to follower)

The centurion responded to the revelation of Jesus with a confession of faith. How will we respond?

- The centurion acknowledged Jesus after witnessing His sacrifice and the signs surrounding His death.
- His confession stands as an invitation for others to recognize Jesus as the Son of God.

DISCUSSION

Do you have a story of transformation from mockery to praise? How has experiencing Jesus' love and witnessing Jesus' power transformed you?

LIFE APPLICATION

The centurion's confession reminds us that the cross is a place of revelation, transformation, and decision. The power of the cross revealed Jesus' identity that transform lives, and invite a response of faith.

Take time to thank God for a specific way He's shown His love to you. Reflect on how you acknowledge Jesus in your everyday life. Pray about one area in your life where you feel you need transformation.

DISCUSSION

What's one thing that stood out in this week's message? How can you apply it to your everyday lives?

VERSE TO MEDITATE

Psalm 119:60 (NLT)

I will hurry, with our delay to obey your commands

PRAYER

Share your prayer request and answered prayer. Pray for one another and throughout this week



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