



**JOHN - SMALL GROUP SERIES
LESSON 2**

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Lesson 2

Bible: John 18-19

Topics: Jesus is arrested and crucified.

Notes for Youth Leader

- *This lesson contains graphic content. It is not included for shock value. It is included to help students understand the seriousness of the suffering that Jesus went through for us. Use your discretion with your group on whether to share it “as-is” or to modify it.*
- *The notes on the crucifixion are shared from a book we highly recommend regarding the Gospels: [The Chronological Life of Christ](#), by Mark E. Moore. Available in [print form from College Press here](#) or in [digital form from Logos here](#).*

Read John 18:1-8:

1 After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. **2** Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. **3** The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

4 Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. “Who are you looking for?” he asked.

5 “Jesus the Nazarene,” they replied.

“I Am he,” Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.)

6 As Jesus said, “I Am he,” they all drew back and fell to the ground! **7** Once more he asked them, “Who are you looking for?”

And again, they replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

8 “I told you that I Am he,” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.”

Say: There had been plenty of opportunities to confront Jesus in public and in the daytime.

Because so much of what is about to happen is not normal or legal, it happens at night.

A fully armed contingent comes with Judas, including both Roman soldiers and temple guards.

It is believed the disciples would have been outnumbered somewhere in the neighborhood of 60 to 1.

At this point, after much prayer, (see **Luke 22:39-46**) Jesus has accepted what is about to happen and both bravely and calmly allows Himself to be arrested.

Jesus endured a total of six different trials throughout the night and the early morning hours.

The first three trials were Jewish; the second three were civil.

And although you can look at His arrest and trials and find many breaches of justice, it is important to remember that this didn't happen to Jesus as some series of unfortunate events that could have been avoided.

This was Jesus humbly taking the punishment for every person's sins.

Discussion Questions

1. Interestingly, Judas knew where to find Jesus because "Jesus had gone there often with his disciples." Now this place of prayer becomes a place where His acceptance of the punishment for our sins begins. If you had been there with the disciples, what thoughts and emotions might you have experienced in those moments?
2. Read **Luke 22:39-46**. John doesn't include this in his Gospel, but these are the events that happened just moments before Jesus' arrest. Based on how He was praying and contrasting that to how Jesus interacts with the crowd that has arrived, what can you learn about and from Jesus?
3. Jesus once again points out both His deity and humanity here in His response to their questions. "I AM" points to Him being fully God. This is a throwback to how God answered Moses in **Exodus 3:14**. And Jesus "the Nazarene" points to geographically where He was from. Jesus reminds Himself and others of His true identity. How might this have been a teachable moment for the disciples, even in the middle of the arrest?

Read John 19:1-3:

1 Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. **2** The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. **3** “Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

Say: John doesn't go into much detail here, but in one sentence, Jesus suffered so much for us.

Keep in mind that John wouldn't have had to describe this for his original audience, as they would have known these horrific details.

Here are notes from Pastor Mark Moore on what happened:

- *Flogging was such a horrible punishment that it was illegal to flog Roman citizens without a direct edict from Caesar.*
- *The victim was tied to a post or hung from a wall.*
- *Either method drew the muscles taut across the victim's back.*
- *The soldier would then use a flagellum, also called a “cat of nine tails.”*
- *It was a short wooden stick with (often) nine thong strands attached to it.*
- *At the end of each strand was tied something sharp (e.g., bone, metal, glass), or metal balls.*
- *The purpose was not to lash out quickly to inflict welts.*
- *Rather, the soldier would attempt to rake the victim's back with sharp objects, literally shredding the muscles of the back, buttocks, and legs.*
- *The Jews limited the lashes to thirty-nine.*
- *The Romans, however, were hindered only by their animosity and endurance.*
- *So much muscle was left shredded and hanging that the victim's vertebrae were exposed and sometimes even his intestines.*
- *Often the “tails” would whip around the victim's face, gouging out his eyes.*
- *It is not surprising then, that flogging alone was lethal about six out of ten times.*

- *Those that survived were usually carried out on a stretcher with permanent mutilation.*

Source: Moore, M. E. (2011). *The Chronological Life of Christ* (pp. 631–632). Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company.

Discussion Questions

1. Did you realize how severe this flogging was? Did you have in mind a painful whipping, but not like this?
2. Jesus knew this flogging was so often part of the crucifixion process. And He faced it anyway because of our sin. What does that teach you about Him? How does that affect your thoughts and feelings about Jesus' sacrifice for your sins?
3. The soldiers mocked Jesus in His horrible state in verses 2-3. Jesus said that His followers would be treated in the same way that He was (**Matthew 24:9**). How do some Christians today in the world face similar abuse and torture like what Jesus was experiencing on this day? (If your students have no idea, you might want to introduce them to *Voice of the Martyrs* <https://www.persecution.com>)

Read John 19:16-20:

16 *Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.*

So, they took Jesus away.

17 *Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha).*

18 *There they nailed Him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them.*

19 *And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."*

20 *The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek so that many people could read it.*

Say: Again, John doesn't describe much about the crucifixion because it would have been known to his original audience as one of the worst forms of torture and execution available from the Romans.

We turn once again to Pastor Mark Moore for more details to help us understand what Jesus went through for our sins:

- *Like most victims of crucifixion, Jesus is forced to carry the patibulum, the horizontal beam of the cross (perhaps reminiscent of **Genesis 22:6**).*
- *Estimates vary, but it weighed a minimum of about seventy-five pounds.*
- *A raw beam of this size would cause excruciating pain on Jesus' open wounds, especially as he staggers and gets jostled along the Via Dolorosa ("the Way of Suffering").*
- *The centurion in charge of the execution marches ahead of the victim. An "assistant" marches next to him, carrying a placard which states the crimes of the victim (called a titulus).*
- *The sign, which would later be nailed to the cross above Jesus' head, simply reads, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"; no charge, no crime, simply a statement of fact.*
- *First Jesus is laid out across the horizontal cross beam (patibulum) and his hands nailed with square iron spikes.*
- *The word "hand" includes most of the forearm.*
- *Hence, the nail could go through the complex of wrist bones or more likely, between the radius and ulna of the forearm just behind the wrist.*
- *Such a position of the nail would provide ample support for the body especially since the feet were also nailed and often the cross was equipped with a peg or small block of wood on which the victim could "sit."*
- *But of equal importance to the Romans, a nail through the "wrist" would sever the median nerve, sending searing pain through the arms and shoulders of the victim.*
- *Next, the patibulum was attached to the stipes (the vertical beam of the cross), and the victim's feet affixed.*
- *(It is likely) that both feet were held side by side with a one-inch-thick board and then nailed with the toes pointing to the side of the cross.*
- *This would send a shock of pain up through the pelvic area which matched that of the upper torso.*
- *The cross is now lifted to display its spectacle.*

- *The victims hang helplessly, welcoming death to deliver them from this agony.*
- *(From medical research into Jesus' crucifixion, we believe that) Jesus died of shock resulting from multiple abuses which ultimately led to coronary failure.*

Source: Moore, M. E. (2011). The Chronological Life of Christ (pp. 636–637, 640-641,). Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company.

Discussion Questions

1. Sometimes we talk or sing about Jesus dying on the cross and the words are so familiar that we don't really let the horrible truth of what He went through for us sink in. How does this detailed description today make you feel or what thoughts does it bring to mind?
2. As horrible as all this was, on multiple occasions Jesus spoke about how He was going to face suffering. (see **Matthew 16:21; 26:39; Mark 8:31; Luke 12:50; 22:15; John 18:11**) This once again points to the fact that what happened to Jesus was no accident. How does this help you understand how much He loved and still loves you?
3. When Jesus dies it is around 3 pm on Friday. The disciples won't find out that He has been raised from the dead until Sunday morning. What thoughts might have gone through their minds Friday night and all day Saturday? (Keep in mind that only John was noted as being at the crucifixion.)

Read John 19:38-42:

38 *Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away.*

39 *With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes.*

40 *Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth.*

41 *The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before.*

42 And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Say: This is the first we hear of this man named Joseph—a common name at the time.

He was a member of the Sanhedrin, a powerful Jewish ruling council.

He would have either voted against decisions related to Jesus or might not have been invited to join in the council's votes if they realized he was positive towards Jesus.

Either way, he decided to no longer be a “secret disciple,” and he boldly asks Pilate to be able to bury Jesus' body.

And then we have Nicodemus, whom we talked about last week.

This man, who had originally visited at night Jesus to ask questions, now, in the middle of the afternoon, publicly joins Joseph in preparing Jesus' body for burial.

The Jewish Sabbath and Passover would begin at sundown, around 6 pm that day.

They bury the body and then prepare for a day of rest and worship, with most people having no idea what is about to happen on the morning of the third day.

Discussion Questions

1. Joseph goes from being a secret disciple to being a public and bold disciple in this move to take down and bury Jesus' body. What kinds of situations today might help move someone your age from being a “secret disciple” or “secret Christian” to being public with their faith? Would anything make them bold in addition to being public?
2. Nicodemus is a bit different here than when we first met him in **John 3**. (*Review that for those who weren't here or ask students who were here to review.*) Nicodemus had been the one that Jesus shared the famous words with from **John 3:16**. Here Nicodemus has a part in those words coming true. When Nicodemus thought back to that conversation and later about burying Jesus' body, how differently would he now think about what God had done?
3. Both Joseph and Nicodemus are people who probably seemed like very unlikely disciples to anyone in Jesus' day based on their description as influential leaders in the Jewish faith. Who else was an influential Jew who became a bold follower of Jesus? (*Name rhymes with Saul...*) How should

this make you pause when you look at someone—someone you know or someone famous you know of—and think they'll never become a disciple of Jesus?

4. For the disciples, and all the other followers of Jesus, this might have seemed like the end of the story. But we know John's book has two more chapters left and there is much more to the story. In our lives, sometimes we think something like a pandemic or other smaller disappointment or frustration is the "end of the story" for us. How should knowing this is not the end in John's book help encourage us? What examples can you think of where you have thought "the story is over" in your life . . . but more was being written?