

Matthew 27:27-44

Small Group Leader Notes

Context

This passage is rich with fulfilment from both the Old Testament and Matthew's gospel. Psalm 22:6-18 finds its fulfilment in the dividing of Jesus' clothes (27:35), the mocking shake of the head (27:39) and mocking words (27:43.) The mocking offer of a bitter drink (27:34) is a fulfilment of Psalm 69:19-21. There numerous fulfilment from the passages in Isaiah that speak of the suffering servant (see Isaiah 50:6, 53:3-9.) It is also important to see that these events fulfil Jesus' own words in Matthew 16:21.

It is also important to see this passage in the context of the rest of the New Testament. 1 Peter 2:20-25 shows us that the way Jesus suffered is to be an example to us. Similarly we need to see that Jesus practised what he preached in the sermon on the mount (see Matthew 5:11-12, 5:38-48.)

Big Idea

Matthew emphasises Jesus' kingship (v37-31, v37, v40, v42) and the mockery that he receives (v31, v34, v39, v41, v44.) Through allusions to the Old Testament we see not only Jesus' sovereign control but also the salvation that his suffering is winning for us. Putting this together we can say that Jesus is the mocked king that we need.

Applications

We could draw out a number of applications from this passage but I suggest keeping the focus to just a few.

Firstly, there is great comfort for believers in knowing that King Jesus was still in total control even as he was mocked and crucified. Even though what was happening was terrible it was all going according to plan. We might not want a king who is mocked and suffers but his sovereignty even as he suffers gives us hope and comfort in suffering even if it doesn't provide us with all the answers we might want.

Secondly, 1 Peter 2 shows us that these events provide us with an example to follow when we suffer unjustly at the hands of others. Jesus didn't retaliate or threaten those who mocked and crucified him, instead he entrusted himself to his Father. Jesus not only calls us to imitate him by not retaliating, he also shows us that the key to doing this is to entrust ourselves to our Heavenly Father. The more confident I am in God's love for me and his concern for justice the more I will be able to leave room for his justice rather than seeking to take matters into my own hands.

Questions

Starter - Can you think of a time when someone said or did something to you that left you wanting to get revenge?

We're driving towards the application that comes from 1 Peter 2 where we're told that Christ has set us an example of not retaliating but instead entrusting ourselves to God. To get us going in the right direction we need to start by talking about times when we have been wronged. Be prepared to share an example where you were hurt or wronged if the conversation is slow to get started.

1. Divide your group into smaller groups and look at the following passage; Psalm 22:6-18, Psalm 69:19-21, Isaiah 50:6, Isaiah 53:3-9 and Matthew 16:21.

- **How are these passages fulfilled in the crucifixion?**
- **What do they teach us about Jesus?**

Give each little sub-group one or two passages to look at and then get them to report back what they have seen and learnt.

2. The precise fulfilment of the Old Testament shows us that Jesus is in complete control even as he is being mocked and crucified.

- **How can this comfort and encourage us when we are suffering or going through tough times?**
- **Who do you know who could be encouraged by this? How will you share this with them?**

As Christians we do not have all the answers in every incidence of suffering but we do have great hope and comfort because of the cross. Because Jesus suffered we have a King who is not cold and distant. He is sympathetic, he knows the pain of this world and so he is close to us in our suffering. There may be specific difficult situations that members of the group are going through right now. This will require care and sensitivity from you and the rest of the group. Similarly there may be others who are suffering who need the hope and encouragement that this passage can bring. Let's not keep the comfort and hope of the cross to ourselves, let's think practically about how we can share the comfort we have received with others (2 Corinthians 1.)

3. Read 1 Peter 2:20-25. What is our calling as Christians?

- **What example did Jesus set for us?**

We often love to talk about our calling as Christians but we don't normally think of our calling being to suffer unjustly. Through his suffering and crucifixion Jesus calls us to follow him by enduring unjust mockery, insults and suffering. He has set us an example and teaches us that we are not to retaliate when we suffer unjustly but instead we're to entrust ourselves to God.

4. Think back to the situation you thought of at the beginning. What would it have meant for you to entrust yourself to God?

- **What would it have looked like to bless and love that person? (Luke 6:28.)**

Let's not let the application simply hang in the air. Use these questions to 'land' the application in real life examples. To help honest discussion you might want to split into pairs.