

**The Gospel of John**  
**Week Twenty-Eight**  
**John 19:17-42**

**Day One**

<sup>17</sup> Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). <sup>18</sup> Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. <sup>19</sup> Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>20</sup> Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

v. 17 – Jesus had to carry His own cross, except for the last short distance when they forced someone else to carry it due to Jesus’ fatigue. God will give you grace, but you will have to carry your own cross as well. **How well are you carrying it these days? Are you carrying it with grace and joy, or with grief and public displays designed to obtain self-pity and attention?**

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

While we must carry our own cross, that doesn’t mean we can’t voluntarily help others bear theirs. **What can you do today to help someone carry his or her cross, while not neglecting your own? Perhaps that is your cross – helping others bear theirs?**

Today you can go to a place in Jerusalem where the hillside looks like a skull with its ridges and gullies. It is the only evangelical site in Jerusalem and there is a Garden Tomb in the Garden with the tomb cut out of the side of the hill, just like the one in which Jesus would have been laid. It is one of the most moving places to visit in the Holy Land.

v. 18 – John is much more matter-of-fact about the crucifixion than the other writers. Since the other gospels provide the details, John didn’t have to do so. You can read any of the other gospels at this point if you would like to do more reading or research on the crucifixion.

v. 19 – Pilate had a sign prepared and placed on the cross above Jesus’ head. My sense is that Pilate was mocking the Jews, indicating that their king was humiliated and dying by their own choice. Yet Pilate made a prophetic statement in doing this, for Jesus was truly the King of the Jews as He hung on the cross. What a sad commentary on the sinfulness of man, that we could hang our King and free our fellow rebel. Don’t judge the Jews who did this, however, for they did it as representatives of sinful man. You and I were there that day, for we would also choose rebellion over submission to God. Jesus death on the cross, while caused by sinful men, was the means by which sinful man could escape his dilemma.

v. 20 – Jesus was hung publicly where many people who passed by would behold the gruesome scene. What’s more, they would all be confronted with the fact that Jesus was the King of the Jews as proclaimed by the Roman government! To make sure that everyone could read it, Pilate had it written in three languages, for Jesus was and is not only King of the Jews but King of all the nations and people groups.

### Day Two

<sup>21</sup> The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." <sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." <sup>23</sup> When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

v. 21 – The leaders protested what Pilate had posted on Jesus’ cross. They also probably interpreted it as a mockery of their leadership and nation. They wanted a more specific notice that Jesus *claimed* to be King, not that He was King. It would be humiliating that Rome had hung their King, especially at the Jew’s instigation and insistence! So the Jews tried to rewrite what Pilate had written, but to no avail.

v. 22 – Pilate refused to relent and kept the sign posted on Jesus’ cross for all to see. Once again, we see that God was using all the “players” in this drama to achieve His purposes. What Pilate did, while with malicious intent, was to proclaim the truth that the King of the Jews was indeed hanging on that cross. The Jews had “cornered” Pilate into hanging Jesus, so he was not about to let them control what he had written.

v. 23 – Most depictions of Jesus on the cross show Him wearing a loincloth. This probably was not the case. Jesus, the Son of God, hung on the cross naked for all to see – friends, family and foes alike. He was naked, humiliated and in agony and there was nowhere to hide. He was helpless, except for His faith in the Father.

Jesus had told His disciples that He could call a legion of angels who would come and help Him, but He chose not to do so. He chose to die on the cross; He was not forced to do so. We are reminded here of what Paul had written about Jesus to the Philippians:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature<sup>[a]</sup> God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5-8).

**Do you have the same attitude that Jesus had? Where are you willingly submitting to humiliation where you could escape?**

The soldiers were in control of this situation and the clothes of their victims provided a little extra personal income. We learn that there were four soldiers who divided what

little there was. Jesus undergarment was one-piece and seamless, which made it of some value.

So not only did Jesus die naked, but He died with nothing of value to His name. The One who owned it all had it all taken away from Him temporarily. So when He told His followers how to respond such indignities, He was willing to practice what He preached.

“You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matthew 5:38-42).

**Are you willing to do what Jesus told you to do when faced with those who mistreat you?**

### Day Three

<sup>24</sup> "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did. <sup>25</sup> Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup> and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

v. 24 – The Roman soldiers gambled at the foot of the cross while the Son of God hung dying above their heads. Fallen man is spiritually dead. They had someone and something of far more value right next to them, but they put higher value on underwear than God. The Jews put more value on their prestige and nation. God works to reveal the priorities of every person and those who don't know Him or put Him first are shown to be shallow.

The verse in Psalm 22:8 stated that Jesus' garments would be taken and distributed by lottery. The entire psalm is a description of the humiliation and then exaltation of the Messiah. Once again, John helped us understand nothing that happened in this ugly scene was outside of God's intention or purpose. All this to say that if the suffering was predicted and accurate, then the exaltation and glory predicted are accurate as well. God is in control of the entire process.

v. 25 – John reported that three women were nearby to witness this gruesome scene. The three Mary's, including Jesus' mother, stood and watched helplessly as Jesus died. It must have been excruciatingly painful for all of them, especially Jesus' mother. Yet this too was predicted:

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:34-35).

vs. 26&27 – While on the cross, Jesus also revealed His magnificence. He ministered to the thief hanging next to him, as reported in Luke, and He also took steps to care for His mother. It is one thing to be kind and gracious when things are going well, but for Jesus to do these things while He was dying is something special. This verse reveals not only Jesus' love for his mother but also indicates that He had a disciple whom He especially loved. Without a doubt, Jesus was indicating that the beloved disciple should care for His mother. Both Mary and the disciple understood exactly what Jesus was directing them to do, since Mary moved in with the disciple from that point forward.

It is interesting that Mary did not go to live with Jesus' natural brothers and sisters from that time. This indicates perhaps that Mary was a believer and that she and the disciple knew that life would never be the same from this point forward. We also know that at this point none of Jesus' family believed in Him, so perhaps they were humiliated by His suffering and death. Thus Mary would have found more comfort and fellowship with the disciple's family than with her own.

#### Day Four

<sup>28</sup> Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." <sup>29</sup> A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. <sup>30</sup> When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. <sup>31</sup> Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

v. 28 – It seems that fulfilling Scripture was of paramount importance in this whole story in Jesus' mind. John told us in John 13 that "Jesus knew" and in this verse He knew as well that His mission was nearing an end. It helps if you "know" what season or time it is in your life. Then you can act accordingly. What's more, God wants you to know. **So where are you going and do you now what time it is?** Here is an example of what I mean:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the **race**, I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).

Paul knew his purpose and the work God had given him to do. He could say with confidence that he had finished it. If Paul knew and Jesus knew, you and I can know, too.

v. 29 – Jesus had said he was thirsty and in some small show of compassion, He was given a drink of vinegar. I am not sure that is what I would want to drink in that situation, and it was interesting that they had wine vinegar nearby. Jesus had begun His earthly ministry by changing water to wine and ended the first phase by drinking wine that had soured and gone to vinegar. Jesus drank the cup of suffering that the Father had served and He did it with no shortcuts or easy steps. Having thirsted for God’s righteousness, He was now given wine vinegar to satisfy His human thirst.

v. 30 – Jesus took the drink, the final act in this whole sad but necessary drama. He had received the best that man could give Him at that point – wine vinegar – and then it was time to expire. Jesus bowed His head and died, or rather it says that He gave up his spirit. It was not taken from him; He gave it up. This reminds me of what Jesus said elsewhere:

“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father” (John 10:18).

**Are you willingly laying down your life to the will of the Father?** This is to be just as Jesus said: You must pick up your cross and follow Him, dying daily to self and the desires of the flesh.

v. 31 – Jesus died on a Friday, the day the Jews prepared the Passover, and a special Sabbath was at hand the next day. The Jews wanted to clean up the road in preparation for the Sabbath celebration, so they asked Pilate to hasten the death of those crucified by breaking their legs. A crucified person could last for days on the cross, dying an agonizing death and drowning in his own bodily fluids that would fill the lungs. When their legs were broken, those crucified could not lift themselves up to breathe, using the foot stand to which their feet were nailed. So the Jews wanted them to die faster than it would take without any such intervention.

This again reveals the hypocrisy of the Jews, who wanted Jesus hung but then wanted any evidence of the hanging gone so they could celebrate their Passover and Sabbath. There is a bit of the Jew in me, for I also want to maintain my religious façade while doing evil deeds, without feeling the slightest pangs of conscience. Help me, Lord!

### Day Five

<sup>32</sup> The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. <sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup> Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. <sup>35</sup> The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

v. 32 – **Can you imagine someone taking a sledgehammer and breaking your leg?** That is what the soldiers did to those crucified and I am sure that the shock of that alone

could have killed those so treated. The soldiers did this to the two crucified with Jesus. They would be dead in minutes.

vs. 33&34 – Jesus was already dead, and the soldiers took notice. They chose not to break His legs, but instead pierced Jesus' side with a spear to see if He was truly dead. A flow of blood and water came forth from Jesus' wound. This indicated

1. That Jesus was truly human. He had real blood.
2. Jesus' body was traumatized from the crucifixion. There was a build up of water around Jesus heart that would indicate He literally died from a broken heart.
3. John probably included this incident in his gospel account because there were many rumors that Jesus did not really die. Some even came to teach that it wasn't really Jesus on the cross, that God had removed the essence of Jesus, so to speak, before the body died.

v. 35 – The beloved disciple was the one who saw this incident and was the one who reported it in his written account. It is a matter of historical fact at this point in time for no one can refute the account based on being an eyewitness. John reported this for one reason: so that the reader may believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

**What are you doing to share your testimony of what you see and know about Jesus? How are you doing that? What is your purpose in sharing it? Is it so that others may know and put their trust in Jesus?**

There is more than one way to produce a testimony. It can be spoken for sure, but you can also write and record what God is doing in your life. You may ask, "Who would read or watch that?" My answer is always the same: If you don't write or record, no one will ever read or watch! If you do, then you give God something to work with and He can take and use it for His purpose and glory.

Many Christians do not realize how valuable what God has done for them can be in someone else's life. You perhaps underestimate it as well. Yet you have many things that God has done in and through you that can help someone else. Take those things seriously and prayerfully consider what the Lord would have you do with those testimonies. Don't be falsely humble, just keep your focus and trust in Him.

### Day Six

<sup>36</sup> These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," <sup>37</sup> and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." <sup>38</sup> Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.

vs. 36&37 – John interpreted, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, that this act fulfilled the verse found in Psalm 34:20:

“He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.”

Then John referred to another Old Testament verse that was fulfilled when they pierced Jesus’ side rather than break His legs:

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son” (Zechariah 12:10).

The Scriptures are united and connected. Having been written over the course of centuries, there is only One who could do such a work and that is the Holy Spirit. Scripture explains Scripture and it also is a collection of writings that exalt and explain the magnificence and majesty of Jesus.

**Do you hold a “high view” of Scripture or do you believe much of the modern propaganda that the gospels and other books were fabrications, written much later than the first century to try and make a case of a Jesus that the church wanted the world to believe existed?** I hold the high view as you can tell from these studies. I believe the Word to be God’s inspired, inerrant Word without exception. Note what Peter said about the Word:

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21).

v. 38 – As soon as Jesus was dead, positive things began to happen. Joseph of Arimathea had been a secret disciple but then he came forward to ask Pilate for Jesus’ body. He was not a secret disciple any longer! He identified with the crucified Christ and would soon make the transition to worship the resurrected One.

Joseph had been afraid of the Jews – such was the power that the synagogue and culture had on the Jews. This shows the truth of what the wisdom writer once penned:

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe (Proverbs 29:25).

Joseph did not have much time and he risked being unclean for the Sabbath and the Passover by being in contact with a dead body. He had some wealth, however, and perhaps had servants who could handle this matter. He also had quick access to Pilate and could receive a quick reply to his request. **Are you bold for Jesus or are you a secret disciple?** Remember what Jesus said:

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

### Day Seven

<sup>39</sup> He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. <sup>40</sup> Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. <sup>41</sup> At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup> Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

v. 39 – Not only did Joseph go public, but also Nicodemus accompanied him. We know from another gospel that Joseph owned the tomb, so then Nicodemus provided the spices with which to anoint Jesus. Since they could not perform a proper burial because time was short, they at least left something behind that would make the task when they came back a little more aromatic. Notice that identifying with Jesus cost each man something. One was prepared to give up a hand carved tomb, chiseled from the rock of a Palestine hillside, and the other a large stash of aromatic spices. **What is identifying with Jesus costing you? What price are you paying to identify with the Son?**

But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that **costs** me nothing" (1 Samuel 21:24).

v. 40 – The two men wrapped Jesus' body in accordance with their burial customs. Each culture has had different customs but one custom for the Jews was part of their Law: they could not handle dead things and remain ceremonially clean. These men must have felt that touching Jesus would not have made them ceremonially unclean, which means they had already begun to come out of Judaism and into faith. Jesus' death had allowed these men to continue their spiritual journey, which is why I wrote that good things began to happen immediately upon Jesus' death. As tragic as Jesus' death was, it was the gateway to man's freedom in Christ.

v. 41 – It is interesting that there was a garden where Jesus was crucified. There is a garden *in* His crucifixion as well. The spices and the flowers in the garden would have given off a pleasant fragrance, not of death, but of life! Jesus' death gave and gives life. Jesus was also laid in a new tomb. Death would never be the same for any believer from this point on. Jesus was not laid in some old tomb, in which those who were under the Law had been laid. No, the Father chose a new grave for Him because He would not be there long. You and I will not be in our tombs long, either.

v. 42 – Joseph and Nicodemus had to make temporary arrangements, with the full intention of coming back after the Sabbath to do everything properly and in order. The good news is that there would be no need. A temporary tomb was all that Jesus required. These men were working in the understanding that they had, and God would soon expand it so that they would see a whole lot more.

**Are you functioning consistently with what you know and believe?** These men were and John's gospel honors their memory by recording their story. The Lord leaves no good deed done unto Him unnoticed or unrewarded. **What can you do to honor God today?**