

MAKING

SOUTHERN AFRICA CHURCHES OF CHRIST

DISCIPLES

STUDY GUIDE
2012 EDITION



MAKING DISCIPLES

Study Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	02
The Word of God	06
Jesus	08
Discipleship	10
Sin	12
Repentance	14
The Cross	16
Salvation	18
The Church	20
Lordship (Counting the Costs)	22
Appendix A: Sin Definitions	24
Appendix B: Medical Account	26

INTRODUCTION

It is an incredible honour to live as a follower of Jesus in the Kingdom of God. We are blessed. We have received an opportunity that many in the world are waiting for; hope, love, forgiveness, and salvation!

God worked powerfully through another person (or group of people) to help you become a Christian. He taught you through Bible studies but he also worked mightily through the relationships you built. You were loved and shown how to live as a follower of Christ. God designed the gospel this way, to be shared one person to another. When Jesus was on the earth, he chose twelve men that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach (Mark 3:14). He pulled them into his life and modelled how they should live. At the end of his time on earth, he charged them to love as he loved them (John 13:34) and to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matt 28:19).

Each person that you reach out to has an eternal soul. Take care of them as you were taken care of. It is important to share the scriptures with your friends but they equally need to see Jesus Christ living in you. Love as Jesus loved.

We remain on earth as Christ's ambassadors. We are to reflect him! We are to be his spokespeople. We are to spread the good news about his death, burial, and resurrection. We are to warn of the coming judgment and teach others to long for his return.

Some of us are young Christians and have never studied the Bible with someone. Others of us have been making disciples for twenty years or more. The truth is, we all need practice to become more and more effective in sharing our faith. (Acts 14:1)

HELPFUL THINGS

1 Thessalonians 2:8

- » Have them into your home
 - Helps them know your life as a disciple
 - Time with your family or room-mates
- » Get time in their home
 - Learn about their family & living arrangements
- » Atmosphere
- » It is not always possible to meet in a home
 - Make sure you choose a place where you are able to really talk
- » Give them a Bible
 - If they do not have a Bible, it is a great gift
- » It can help to suggest Bible readings they can do on their own
- » If appropriate, share about your life & conversion
- » Serve them
 - Look for ways to show your love for them
 - Rides to church, help at home, etc.

- » Invite them to a worship service
- » Introduce them around the fellowship
- » Have other people join the studies
 - They need many relationships
- » Make sure communication is two ways, let them talk
 - Heart connection is critical, not just passing information on to them
- » Teach them to pray
 - Open/close your Bible studies with prayer if possible (have them pray also)

WHAT'S IMPORTANT AS YOU TEACH?

Correctly handle the Word (2 Tim 2:15)

- » Know the key convictions you are trying to teach
- » Understand the passages in context

Understand timing and process (Mark 4:33)

- » People learn at different paces

Focus on what matters (Titus 3:9)

- » Answer questions, but also stay focused (avoid strong emotion)

Teach them to obey (Matt 7:24-27)

- » Before moving to another study, make sure they are putting into practice what they have learned

WHERE TO START (MAKE A TIME LINE)

Find out what their background and beliefs are (conversationally, not making it an interrogation):

- Q: What faith or religion, if any, were they raised in?
- Q: Did they go to church growing up? Which one?
- Q: What do they believe about the Bible?
- Q: What do they believe about God?
- Q: What do they believe about Jesus?
- Q: Do they go to church now? If so, where?
- Q: Do they see themselves as a Christian?
- Q: Do they see themselves as a disciple?
- Q: If they died today, do they think they would go to heaven/hell?
- Q: Do you believe that your sins are forgiven?
- Q: If so, how did they get them forgiven?
- Q: Were they ever baptised? If so, when? What did it mean?

Ask them how they feel about studying these things out in the scriptures.

SALVATION MATTERS

You may ask “How should I use this study series to reach out to my neighbour?” “Do I need to do the studies in a set order?” “Do I need to teach all these studies to a person before they get baptised?” Each person we study with is different and comes from a different religious background, so you need to tailor the studies to meet their needs. These Bible studies are tools to bring a person to the foot of the cross.

In the 1st century, studies on food sacrificed to idols, circumcision, idol and emperor worship etc. were no doubt needed. Today our challenges are different. Which denominations of Christianity are teaching the Bible accurately? How do we deal with internet pornography, self-control in traffic, living together before getting married, and drug abuse? All of these need to be addressed with the eternal principles of righteousness found in the scriptures.

WHAT IS CRITICAL?

The following core convictions are the spiritual traits that we are striving to instil.

CORE CONVICTIONS

Humility

Matthew 18:2-3, James 1:21

Bible studies where this is taught: **The Word, Jesus**

Faith

Romans 10:9-13, Ephesians 2:8-10

Bible studies where this is taught: **The Word, Jesus, Cross**

Lordship

Acts 2:36, Romans 10:9

Bible studies where this is taught: **Discipleship, Lordship**

Repentance

Acts 2:38-41, 2 Corinthians 7:10

Bible study where this is taught: **Sin & Repentance**

Baptism

Acts 2:38-41, 1 Peter 3:20-22

Bible study where this is taught: **Salvation**

It is important to note that these are not independent from each other. They are very directly connected. For example, we do not repent of one or two specific sins and then get baptised. Repentance is a life change. We used to follow the ways of the world and now we follow Jesus Christ as our Lord, the commander of our whole new life (Romans 6:1-4).

TEACH, DO NOT JUDGE

Our role as disciples of Jesus is to teach and model the gospel to mankind. It is important to remember that we are not to judge them.¹ God will. He will judge each person as he sees fit.

Analogy:

In any society, there are the laws of the land, policemen, and judges. The policemen uphold the law and remind citizens when they are breaking the law. The judge decides whether to enforce the letter of the law or to grant amnesty.

STUDIES BEFORE BAPTISM²

- » The Word of God
- » Discipleship
- » Repentance
- » Salvation
- » Lordship
- » Jesus
- » Sin
- » The Cross
- » The Church

It is important that all of these Bible studies be thoroughly covered to help someone understand the Core Convictions stated above. Obviously, if someone is on their deathbed, make decisions accordingly with input. In most cases, these studies cover the Core Convictions needed to become a disciple.

There are times that you will need to cover additional material to answer questions or deepen someone's convictions. The following Bible studies are available to meet some of those needs. The studies below that are not used to help someone make a disciple's decision should be done as follow-up studies after they have been baptised. These topics are all very important to help strengthen them and help them have the tools they need to share their faith as they make disciples.

STUDIES AFTER BAPTISM (OR BEFORE IF NEEDED)

- » The Coming of the Kingdom
- » Sound & False Doctrine
- » Feelings & False Prophets
- » Holy Spirit False Doctrines
- » The Grace of God
- » Persecution & Opposition

¹ Matthew 7:1-2

² Use the conversion Bible studies provided by your church or get "Making Disciples" from www.GetGroundedForLife.com or IPLbooks.com

THE WORD OF GOD

Purpose

Establish the scriptures as the standard for our lives

Some Facts About The Bible

- » Greatest selling book in history
- » 66 books (39 in Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament)
- » Written over period of about 1500 years
- » Written by 40+ authors with various backgrounds (shepherd, fisherman, king, doctor, theologian, tax collector, etc.)
- » Contains dozens of prophecies that have been fulfilled
- » Historically accurate

2 Timothy 3:14-17

- » **Wise for salvation** - The Bible teaches us how to find salvation.
- » **God-breathed** - The Bible is from God himself, communicated through chosen men (Paul, John, Luke, etc.).
- » **Equipped for every good work** - Scripture should be used to teach, correct, rebuke and train us in every aspect of our life: marriage, parenting, righteousness, decision-making, relationships, etc.

Hebrews 4:12-13

- » **Alive and active** – The Bible applies to our lives today as it did when written.
- » **It judges** - The Word reveals our heart, our motivations, and our attitudes.
- » **Uncovered and laid bare** - God can see everything in our hearts.

Matthew 15:1-9

- » **Rules taught by men** - Many grow up learning and practicing religious tradition, some which contradict scripture (they are “in vain”).
- » **Scripture first** - Following scripture is more important than honouring tradition.
- » **Hearts are far from me** - God wants our hearts, not just lip service. Insisting on following traditions that break God’s commands show that our hearts are far from him.

Acts 17:10-11

- Q: What qualities listed here made the Bereans noble?
- **Eagerness** - They were eager to hear God’s word.
 - **Examined daily** - they looked thoroughly at scripture daily.
 - **Pursuit of truth** - They did not just accept what the religious leaders were saying; they checked the scriptures themselves.

Take the “Berean Challenge” and imitate these three characteristics:

- Be eager to learn
- Examine God’s Word daily
- Search for truth

John 1:14, 8:31-32

- » **The Word became flesh** - Jesus was the living Word of God in the flesh.
- » **Hold to Jesus’ teachings** - We are expect to “abide” in Jesus teachings.
- » **Truth will set you free** - Jesus’ teachings are a source of truth and freedom.

John 12:47-50

- » **I did not come to judge the world** - Jesus came to bring hope, grace, and God’s word to a lost world.
- » **There is a judge for the one who does not accept my words** - We are allowed to make our decisions now. Judgment will come at the last day. Jesus’ words will be the standard.
- » **The Father commanded me to say** - Jesus’ words are God’s words. They speak in unison.
- » **His command leads to eternal life** - The hope in following God’s word is salvation.

Are you willing to:

- Q: Accept the Bible as the standard for your life?
- Q: Humbly let the Bible expose your heart and make necessary changes?
- Q: Eagerly study God’s word everyday?

CHALLENGE

Start reading the gospel of Mark.

FURTHER STUDY (CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK)

- 2 Samuel 22:31 The Word of God is flawless.
- Psalms 119:97-104 The Bible gives us tremendous wisdom.
- Isaiah 66:1-2 The Bible is worthy of deep respect.
- Matthew 7:24-27 Obedience to the Word is our solid foundation.
- Romans 10:17 Faith is developed by reading the Word of God.
- 1 Peter 1:22-25 We are born again through the Word of God.

JESUS

Purpose

To understand the character of Jesus Christ

Jesus was the most extraordinary man to walk the face of the earth. In this study, we will see Jesus' divinity and humanity, his power and compassion, his love for people and his indignation with stubborn self-righteous people. We will also see his priorities... to seek and save those who are lost.

Even non-Christians that study his life stand in awe of him...

"A man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act."

– Mahatma Gandhi

Jesus was the perfect Son of God who came to save us from our sins!

Hebrews 1:1-4

- » **God initiates** - God has spoken in many ways through history but now speaks through his Son.
- » **Perfect representation** - The Son is the exact representation of God himself.
- » **Purification for sin** - The Son of God made purification for sin and was then elevated above the angels and seated at the right hand of God in heaven.

Q: The natural question after studying this passage, "Who is God's son?"

Mark 1:9-13

- » **Jesus was God's son** - When Jesus was baptised, the skies opened and God spoke, claiming that Jesus was his son. God was pleased with Jesus.
- » **Jesus' humanity** - Jesus grew up in a small, isolated agricultural town named in Galilee (in modern day Israel). He worked as a carpenter ([Mark 6:3](#)) until he was about 30 years old ([Luke 3:23](#)). He faced temptation just like we do ([Heb 2:18](#)).

Mark 1:21-28

- » **Jesus was Jewish** - Jesus grew up Jewish and started his teaching in the synagogues.
- » **Jesus was different** - Jesus did not resemble the religious leaders of the day.

Q: Why?

- » **Jesus was powerful** - Jesus' teaching had authority and he had power to heal and cast out evil spirits.
 - People were amazed and drawn to Jesus.

Mark 1:29-34

- » **Jesus was relational** - His ministry was about people.
- » **Jesus was compassionate**¹ - He healed physical and spiritual illnesses.
- » **Jesus was approachable** - The whole town came to him!

¹ Another great story to demonstrate Jesus' compassion is [John 8:1-11](#), the woman caught in adultery.

Mark 1:35

- » **Very early in the morning** - Jesus spent time with God before the busyness of the day.
- » **Jesus went to a solitary place where he prayed**² - Jesus found a place to pray where he could be alone to be with God.

Mark 2:13-17

- » **Jesus called followers** - Jesus called individuals to follow his life and teachings.
- » **Jesus associated with the non-religious** - Jesus was criticized for the people he associated with.

Q: What was his response? He came for those that needed him!

Mark 3:1-6

- » **Jesus was bold** - He knew he was being criticised and confronted his accusers directly
- » **Jesus was righteous** - He was more concerned about doing the right thing that following religious rules

Mark 3:20-21

- » **Jesus was a servant** - He constantly served people. In this story, he was helping so many people that he didn't have time to eat.
- » **Jesus' family thought he was crazy** - They came to force-ably remove him

Q: How would Jesus respond to his family's concerns?

Mark 3:31-34

- » **Jesus prioritised the Kingdom over his family** - He clearly stated that those willing to do God's will were his priority

Mark 10:32-34

- » **Jesus came to die** - Jesus came to bring purification for sin ([Heb 1](#) above). He knew that he needed to be killed at the hands of men and courageously led his disciples to Jerusalem to face his fate.

Q: How has this study changed your understanding of Jesus?

CHALLENGE

- » This study helped us to see Jesus and his character clearly.
- » Before we meet again, please read the Sermon on the Mount. ([Matthew 5-7](#))
- » It will help you to understand Jesus' teaching.

² [Hebrews 5:7](#) is a great description of how Jesus prayed.

DISCIPLESHIP

Purpose

Establish the standard of following Jesus

Introduction

Q: How many times do you think the word *Christian* is used in the Bible? 3 times

Q: How many times is the word *disciple* used in the Bible? Nearly 300 times

Acts 11:25-26

- » **The disciples were called Christians** - The people of Antioch identified the disciples of Jesus with a new term, "Christian" or Christ's disciples.

In the Bible, being a Christian and being a disciple are the same thing. Jesus never used the word "Christian."

Mark 1:16-18 | CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS

- » **Come follow me** - Jesus called them to be his disciples. In the ancient world, being someone's disciple was an intimate relationship, not just learning facts but imitating conduct and character.

definition of disciple = pupil or learner, apprentice

- » **I will send you out to fish** - Jesus gave purpose to these men as he called them. His disciples were to have the same purpose that he had.

Q: How would you describe their response?

Q: Is this the purpose of your life?

Matthew 22:35-38 | CALLED TO LOVE GOD

- » **Which is the greatest commandment** - If we get this right, everything will follow.
- » **Love the Lord your God...with all of your being** - As disciples of Jesus, our life's priority is loving God emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually.

Luke 9:23-26 | CALLED TO CARRY A CROSS

- » **If anyone** - The call of discipleship is the same for all of us.
- » **Deny themselves** - Disciples live a life of absolute self-denial.
- » **Take up their cross** - Being a disciple is incredibly challenging but worth it!
- » **Follow me** - We learn how to live by imitation of Jesus.
- » **Whoever loses their life for me will save it** - The only way to gain salvation is to give up our lives to God while we are on earth. This is the great paradox!

Q: What will you need to deny to become a disciple of Jesus?

Luke 14:25-27 | CALLED TO PUT JESUS FIRST

- » **If anyone comes to me and does not hate** - Jesus comes before everything; our family, friends, careers, and personal ambitions. In order to be his disciple, Jesus must be first.

Luke 14:28-30 | CALLED TO COUNT THE COSTS

- » **Won't you first sit down and estimate** - Soberly consider the costs of following Jesus.
- » Being a disciple is difficult and life-long (a marathon, not a sprint).

Luke 14:31-33 | CALLED TO SURRENDER

- » **Suppose a king is about to go to war** - We are not in a position to bargain with God. He created us. We cannot get to heaven without his intercession.
- » **Ask for terms of peace** - God sets the terms of peace. We surrender to his will.

Q: What would you need to give up to be a disciple of Jesus?

John 13:34-35 | CALLED TO LOVE AS JESUS LOVED

- » **A new command I give you** - This is the night before Jesus died...he had spent about three years with his disciples already.
- » **As I have loved you, you must love one another** - Jesus calls his disciples to model their relationships after how he loved them.

Q: How did Jesus love these men over those three years?

- » **By this all men will know that you are my disciples** - the defining characteristic of Jesus' followers would be this type of relationship with each other.
 - Genuine, involved, and self-sacrificing love is a distinguishing trait of a true follower of Jesus!

Matthew 28:18-20 | CALLED TO MAKE OTHER DISCIPLES

- » **Go and make disciples** - After we become disciples of Jesus, we make others.
- » **Baptise them** - Disciples of Jesus are candidates for baptism.
- » **Teach them to obey everything** - We need to continue to be trained.

QUESTIONS

Q: Are you a true disciple of Jesus?

Q: Would you like to become one?

Q: Would you be willing to come to a church that believes in making disciples?

FURTHER STUDY (CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK)

Matthew 7:21-23 We must do the will of God to go to heaven.

Luke 5:1-11 Simon Peter being called to be a disciple.

Luke 11:1-4 We learn how to live our spiritual life from imitating Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:1 We imitate Christ-like characteristics in other disciples around us.

1 John 2:3-6 We must walk as Jesus did.

SIN

Purpose

Understand how sin separates us from God

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4)

Genesis 6:5–6

- » **The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race**¹ - God sees our sin. He sees the damage our sin does to ourselves, others, and our relationship with him.
- » **He regretted that he had made human beings on the earth** - Our sin deeply troubles God and separates our relationship with him. God’s wrath and judgment is a direct result of our sin.

James 5:16

- » **Confess your sins to each other**² - We need to talk with other spiritual people about what is going on in our lives.³

Galatians 5:19-21

- » **The acts of the flesh are obvious** - When we are living according to our sinful nature, the symptoms show in our lives as in this list of behaviours.
- » **Those who live like this will not inherit eternal life** - We cannot go to heaven if we live according to our sinful nature.

SIN DEFINED

- » See a list of sin definitions in **Appendix A** if needed.
- » Talk through each sin in [Galatians 5:19-21](#), explaining it and sharing from your own life.
- » There are additional lists of sins that may be very useful depending on background.⁴

[2 Timothy 3:1-5](#)

Helpful for religious backgrounds and teens that grow up in the church. Deals with heart issues.

[Colossians 3:5-10](#)

Similar to [Galatians 5](#) but includes lying, greed, swearing, and anger.

¹ [Ecclesiastes 7:20](#) There is no one on earth who is righteous.

² [Proverbs 28:13](#) The one who confesses and renounces finds mercy.

³ For those with Roman Catholic backgrounds, note that confession is not restricted to priests.

⁴ For additional passages about specific sins see [Ephesians 5:1-7](#), [Revelation 21:8](#)

THE EFFECTS OF SIN

- Q: How has your sin hurt your own life?
- Q: How has your sin hurt others?
- Q: How has your sin hurt God?
- Q: How has other people’s sin hurt you?

Mark 7:20-23

- » **What comes out of a person defiles him** - We are responsible for our behaviour.
- » **Out of a person’s heart come** - All of these sins described come from our heart.
 - We cannot blame our surroundings or circumstances for our sin

James 4:17

- » **If anyone knows the good they ought to do** - Our consciences often let us know when we are not living as we should.
- » **And doesn’t do it, it is sin** - Sinning is not just acting out in bad ways...it is also failing to do what we should do.

Q: In what ways have you sinned in this way?

CHALLENGE

Spend some time reviewing all of the following passages about sin.

[Galatians 5:19-21](#)

[Colossians 3:5-10](#)

[Ephesians 5:1-7](#)

[Mark 7:20-22](#)

[2 Timothy 3:1-5](#)

[1 Corinthians 6:7-10](#)

Think through your life and what other things you may need talk about next time we meet.

It is important to get together again soon to talk through spiritual resolution!

The next Bible study is **REPENTANCE** to help them deal with their sin. In most cases it will help them to process the SIN study for a day or two and then study out **REPENTANCE**. In some cases, if they are very broken and eager, you may do the **REPENTANCE** study immediately.

REPENTANCE

Purpose

To help produce godly sorrow and transformation from a life of sin.

Introduction

In our last study, we looked at what our life looks like when we are living according to our sinful nature. Let's recap [Galatians 5](#) and read further to see the life that God calls us to. Repentance is a life transformation. We stop living according to our sinful nature and start living for God.

Galatians 5:19-26

- » **But the fruit of the Spirit is** - The contrast to living according to the flesh is living by the Spirit.

Luke 15:3-7

- » **Rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents** - God is ecstatic about us repenting and reconciling our relationship with him.

MOTIVATIONS TO REPENT

Mark 9:42-48 | MOTIVATED TO AVOID HELL

- » **If your hand causes you to sin...cut it off** - Jesus is radical about us dealing with sin.
- » **Better to have one eye than to be thrown into hell** - If we do not deal with our sin, we will be thrown into hell.

Acts 3:19 | MOTIVATED TO BE PERSONALLY REFRESHED

- » **Repent and turn to God that your sins might be wiped out** - God provides a solution for our sin when we repent...the Cross. We will study this out next time we meet together.
- » **Times of refreshing may come from the Lord** - When we deal with our sin the way that God teaches us, we will be refreshed.

Titus 2:11-14 | MOTIVATED BY THE CROSS

- » **For the grace of God has appeared** - Studying what happened at the cross helps us to recognise how much God loves us and what he has done for us.
- » **Say "No" to ungodliness and live godly lives** - It motivates us to reject evil and serve God.
- » **Jesus Christ gave himself for us to redeem us** - Jesus' choice to die for us provides the sacrifice needed to give us a new life.

2 Peter 3:8-14 | MOTIVATED TO PLEASE GOD

- » **The Lord wants everyone to come to repentance** - God desires to restore his relationship with all of us as we repent of the things that have separated us from him.

- » **You ought to live holy and godly lives** - Repentance is a complete transformation. We stop living for ourselves and we live a life that pleases God.
- » **Make every effort to be found spotless** - We do whatever it takes to be right with God.

WHAT REPENTANCE LOOKS LIKE

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

- » **Godly sorrow brings repentance** - Genuine sorrow leads to transformation.
- » **Worldly sorrow brings death** - If we only "feel bad" but do not repent, it leads to the same destruction that we read about in [Mark 9](#).
- » **See what this godly sorrow has produced in you...**
 - **Earnestness:** Strong determination to get right with God.
 - **Eagerness to clear yourself:** Desire to be open and confess sin.
 - **Indignation:** Righteous anger directed at Satan and sin.
 - **Alarm:** Urgent fear of the danger that sin creates.
 - **Longing:** Deep craving for reconciliation with God and a pure heart.
 - **Concern:** For those whom sin hurts, including God.
 - **Readiness to see justice done:** Taking responsibility for sin. Willing to own the consequences and implications of actions.

Q: With the sin you have shared, what will repentance look like for you?

Acts 26:20

- » **Repent and turn to God** - Godly sorrow requires that we keep our eyes on God.
- » **Demonstrate their repentance by their deeds** - Repentance can be seen! The people around you should see a change in your behaviour as you repent.

FURTHER STUDY (CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Acts 17:30-31 | God commands everyone to repent. |
| 2 Timothy 3:1-5 | Remove ourselves from those who live in sin. |
| Romans 2:1-11 | God's kindness should lead us to repentance. |
| 1 John 1:5-10 | Live a life of openness. |

THE CROSS

Purpose

To understand God's love and sacrifice for us

THE EMOTIONAL SUFFERING OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 26:36-46 Jesus' friends failed him when he needed them.

Matthew 26:47-56 Jesus was betrayed by his close friend Judas.

Matthew 26:57-68 Jesus was falsely accused by his enemies.

Matthew 26:69-75 Jesus was denied by his close friend Peter.

THE PHYSICAL SUFFERING OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 27:26-44

» Jesus was flogged, mocked, and crucified.

THE SPIRITUAL SUFFERING OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 27:45-50

» Jesus cried out to God, "Why have you forsaken me?"

» Jesus felt separated from God.

WHY DID JESUS DO ALL OF THIS FOR US?

Isaiah 53:4-6 | TO BEAR OUR SINS

» Surely he took up our pain - Jesus suffered in our place.

» He was pierced for our transgressions - Jesus died on the cross for our sin.

» By his wounds we are healed - His death provides healing for our wounds.

Romans 8:31-35 | TO CONVINC US OF GOD'S LOVE

» God gave him up for us all - God's sacrifice is for everyone.

» Jesus is at the right hand of God interceding for us - still today!

» Who shall separate us from the love of Christ - God's love is powerful.

Q: How do you feel about what Jesus went through?

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 | TO COMPEL US TO LOVE OTHERS

» Christ's love compels us - When we understand all that God has done for us, it should compel us to be different!

» Those who live should no longer live for themselves - Our lives should not be lived to serve others.

HOMEWORK

READ: Medical Account of Jesus' Suffering

See **Appendix B** or download from web site at www.sa-icoc.org

FURTHER STUDY (CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK)

John 1:1-2, 14

Jesus was fully human. He experienced what we do.

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The cross demonstrates God's power through us.

1 Corinthians 15:1-6

The cross is of first importance to our faith.

Galatians 6:14-15

Through the cross the world has been crucified to us.

Hebrews 2:9-11

Jesus suffered death to bring us into God's glory.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Jesus endured the cross for the joy of being with God.

1 Peter 2:21-25

Jesus was faultless even while suffering on the cross.

SALVATION

Purpose

To Understand God's Plan of Salvation

Q: When were your sins forgiven? Baptised? Saved? Receive the Holy Spirit?

1 Peter 2:9-10

Only two places exist spiritually (no grey area, middle ground, no purgatory).

LIGHT	DARKNESS
People of God	Not a people of God
Received mercy (Forgiveness)	Not received mercy (No forgiveness)
Royal priesthood	
Holy nation ¹	

Q: Do you believe you are in the light or darkness?

John 3:1-7

- » No one can see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again - Because of our sin, we need a new birth...a second chance.
- » Born of water and the Spirit - This new birth happens with water and the Spirit.

Q: Why born of water?

Q: Where does this new birth happen?

Hebrews 9:22

- » Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness - Our transgressions can only be removed with blood being shed.²

Matthew 26:27-28

- » This is my blood of the covenant - Jesus shed his blood on the cross. This sacrifice allows us to enter a covenant relationship with God.
- » Is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins - Jesus' blood CAN forgive our sin.

Q: According to this passage, is everyone's sin forgiven?

The important question: How do we receive the forgiveness offered by Jesus' blood?

¹ God's vision for his people in Exodus 19:5-6 was for them to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.
² In the Old Testament, this is why animals were sacrificed.

Romans 6:1-7

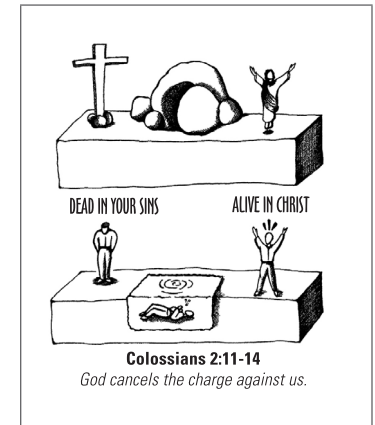
- » We were buried with him through baptism into death - We bury our old life in the waters of baptism.
- » Just as Christ was raised from the dead we too may live a new life - We resurrect to a new life just as Jesus was raised from the dead.

Colossians 2:11-14

- » Raised through your faith - This has to be our personal decision. (See diagram)

Acts 2:36-41

- » What are they told to do?
 - Repent
 - Be baptised
- » Why are we baptised?
 - Forgiveness of sin
 - Receive the Holy Spirit
 - The Greek word βαπτίζω (baptizo) means to dip, plunge, immerse.
 - Let's return to our questions from John 3.



Q: Why are we to be born of water?

Q: Where does our new birth happen?

Q: And what gift are we given as our sins are being washed away?

1 Peter 3:18-22

- » This water (the flood) symbolizes baptism - God saved Noah through the flood-waters.
- » Baptism now saves you also - We are saved through the waters of baptism.
- » Pledge of a clear conscience toward God - When we get baptised, we are pledging a clear conscience to God. We need to have dealt with our sin before we get baptised!

Titus 3:4-6

- » He saved us because of his mercy - Our salvation is a gift from God.
- » He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit - This passage summarizes where we began...to be saved we need to be reborn through water and the Holy Spirit.

WHEN WE GET BAPTISED

1. We are pledging a clear conscience to God.
2. Our sins are washed away (forgiven).
3. We receive the Holy Spirit.
4. Our old, sinful life is buried and we resurrect to a new life.
5. We enter the kingdom of God.

THE CHURCH

Purpose

To understand God's one church and the role we play in it.

THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BODY

Colossians 1:15-18

- » The Son is the image of the invisible God - Jesus is the visible creator.
- » In him all things hold together - Jesus holds the universe together.
- » And he is the head of the body, the church - Jesus = head. Church=body.

The Greek word for **church** is "ekklesia," which means a "calling out" or "assembly." In the scriptures, **church** does not refer to a building but to the people of God.

Ephesians 2:19-22

- » You are no longer foreigners - Before we were in Christ, we were foreigners.
- » You are...fellow citizens with God's people - We are brought into the body of Christ and are welcomed into the Kingdom of God. Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 2:20).
- » Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone - Jesus is the primary building block, the pioneer, the model of the church. Each of us are to follow and imitate him.

THE CHURCH SHOULD BE UNITED

Ephesians 4:4-6

- » There is one body - Jesus' one church is the collective assembly of faithful Christians around the world.
 - In our fellowship, we strive to be part of that one church. We recognise that other fellowships of faithful Christians following sound doctrine and a godly life that are part of that one church.
 - Our goal as a family of churches is to always follow God's Word. As we learn about our failings and shortcomings, we strive to change to follow Biblical truth.

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

- » I appeal to you that there be no divisions among you - God's church worldwide should be united.
- » One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos" - Following personalities creates division. Following man-made doctrines or creeds creates division.
- » Is Christ divided? The answer is, "No!" By following Jesus, not people, we can be united.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

- » For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine¹ - The Bible teaches that people will fade in their conviction of sound doctrinal teachings.
- » They will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear - What leads us to loose or false doctrine? Comfort!

¹ See also 1 Timothy 4:1-3 and Colossians 2:8

- » They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths - Even though the truth is always in the Bible, people choose to believe easier teachings and myths.

Q: What challenging teachings have you learned that you believe people avoid today?

YOUR ROLE IN THE CHURCH

Ephesians 4:11-16

- » Christ himself gave {biblical leaders} to equip his people for works of service - The leadership of the church is in place to teach and empower the Christians for works of service.
- » We will no longer be blown here and there by every wind of teaching - The goal of our being together is unity, maturity and the protection from false doctrines.
- » The whole body grows as each part does its work - We each have a responsibility to the body. We need to do our part to build unity, maturity, and protect from false doctrines.

Q: In what way can you use your talents to serve in the church?

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- » God has placed the parts in the body just as he wanted them to be - God has chosen to have you part of his church at this time for his reasons, just as he wanted it.
- » There are many parts, but one body - Even though we are all different in personality, talent, culture and language, we function together as one body.
- » The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" - Every member of the body is significant and serves a purpose. We need the body of Christ!

Q: What are some ways that you believe you can serve the body of Christ?

Hebrews 10:24-25

- » Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess - The convictions that you have developed as we have studied the Bible are precious. Hold onto them with passion!
- » Let us consider how we may spur one another on - We all have the responsibility of making plans to help our brothers and sisters spiritually.
- » Let us not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing - Being together with the body of Christ is an important commitment to the rest of the body.

Q: What are some ways that you could come to encourage at the next meeting of the body?

FURTHER STUDY (CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK)

Matthew 28:18-20 The mission of the church is to make disciples of all nations.

Acts 2:42-47 A great example of the devotions to the body being lived out.

Hebrews 3:12-13 Encouraging others in the body keeps our hearts from getting hard.

Hebrews 13:17 Follow the church leaders to make their work a joy.

LORDSHIP (COUNTING THE COSTS)

Purpose

To understand what it means and takes to make Jesus Lord of your life.

- » In the gospels, following Jesus is called **discipleship**.
- » In the epistles, following Jesus is called **Lordship**.

When we become disciples of Jesus, he becomes Lord of every aspect of our lives.

Colossians 2:6-7

- » **Continue to live your lives in him** - Being a disciple is a life-long journey.
- » **Rooted and built up in him** - We have to continue to grow in our faith and convictions.
- » **Strengthened in what you were taught** - It is critical to stay grounded in the basics!

JESUS IS LORD OF OUR CHARACTER & ATTITUDE

Colossians 3:1-4

- » **Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things** - We learn to process the world differently as Christ's followers. We have a different perspective.
- » **You died and your life is now hidden with Christ** - We must strive to think of heavenly and spiritual things. This is why we need daily prayer, Bible study, meditation, and fellowship.

Q: How do we set our minds on things above on a daily basis?

Colossians 3:5-10 (reflect back to sin study)

- » **Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature** - no more anger and rage. No more slander and gossip. No more lies. No more selfish ambition. No more lust and impurity.
- » **Put on the new self, which is being renewed** - being a follower of Jesus requires constant renewal.

Q: Are you committed to dying to your sinful nature daily?

Q: What do you believe your greatest challenges will be?

JESUS IS LORD OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Colossians 3:12-17

- » **Clothe yourselves with...** We are to live in imitation of Christ in our relationships.

Q: Which of these characteristics are the most difficult for you to "put on?"

- » **Forgive as the Lord forgave you** - God's forgiveness is our standard.

Q: How would you describe the forgiveness you will receive in baptism?

Q: Are you ready to forgive those that have sinned against you?

Q: Is there any particular person that you are struggling to forgive?

Colossians 3:18-25

- » **Wives, husbands, children, fathers** - God cares deeply about our family life.

Q: What changes do you need to make to fulfil the family role that God has given you?

- » **Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord** - When we are at work, we are serving the Lord.

Q: What do you need to change at work/school to be a model Christian employee/student?

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

- » **Do not be yoked together with unbelievers** - Do not get harnessed in intimate relationships with unbelievers.

Q: What kind of relationships do you think the Bible is describing here?

- » **Come out from them and be separate** - When our purpose and passion is to serve God, it changes our closest and most intimate relationships.

Q: What relationships do you have that could pull you away from God?

JESUS IS LORD OF OUR FINANCES

Matthew 6:19-24

- » **Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth** - As a follower of Jesus, we are told to not invest financially in the things that the world invests in.

Q: How will this change your financial focus as a disciple?

- » **Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven** - Jesus shares this in contrast to storing up treasures on earth. We do this instead of working for financial gain.

Q: What do you think it means to store up treasure in heaven?

- » **You cannot serve both God and money** - Why? What happens?

1 Corinthians 15:58-16:2

- » **Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord** - We are to give everything to God's purposes; time, energy, and money.
- » **Set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income** - Paul communicates that our giving to the church should be regular and proportional to what we make.

Q: Are you committed to regularly financially giving to the work of the Lord?

CONCLUSION

Acts 2:42-47

- » **They devoted themselves** - Immediately following the 3000 baptisms at Pentecost, we see these new converts devoted to each other, a spiritual focus, and the work of the Lord.

Q: How did they put into practice the three attitudes we studied today? What was the result?

Q: Are you willing to make Jesus Lord of every area of your life?

Q: Do you think it is worth the cost?

APPENDIX A: SIN DEFINITIONS¹

From Galatians 5:19-21

SEXUAL IMMORALITY (porneía) To commit sexual intercourse or any sexual sin outside of marriage.

IMPURITY (akatharsía) Uncleanliness or filth in a natural or physical sense; moral uncleanness, lewdness, any unnatural pollution, whether acted out by oneself (masturbation), or with another (petting, oral sex).

DEBAUCHERY (asélgeia) Lack of self-control which involves one's behaviour (over-indulgence; food, sleep, etc.)

IDOLATRY (eidololatreía) Worshipping anything other than God (career, school, pleasure, sports).

WITCHCRAFT (pharmakeía) The occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs.

HATRED (échthra) Being hostile. Animosity towards others.

DISCORD (éris) Rivalry or a lack of harmony between people.

JEALOUSY (zelos) Grief and desire because you do not have what someone else has.

FITS OF RAGE (thumós) A state of intense displeasure, anger, wrath, rage, indignation.

SELFISH AMBITION (eritheía) Strife and rivalry because of selfish motives.

DISSENSION (dichostasía) A separate faction; division between people.

FACTIONS (haíresis) Creating a separation between people because of a different opinion.

ENVY (phthónos) Pain and bitterness felt at the sight of another's excellence or happiness.

DRUNKENNESS (méthe) Excess intake of alcohol.

ORGIES (komos) - Living without restraint. Partying.

Additional sins in Colossians 3:5-10

GREED (pleonexía) Excessive desire for what one does not have, especially wealth or possessions.

MALICE (kakía) The desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another.

SLANDER (blasphemía) Verbal abuse against someone. Wounding someone's reputation.

FILTHY LANGUAGE (aischrología) Speech of a kind that is generally considered in poor taste or swearing.

LYING (pseúdomai) To speak falsely or deceitfully.

Additional sins from Mark 7:20-22

THEFT (klope) The act of stealing.

MURDER (phónos) Killing a human being.

ADULTERY (moicheía) Sex where at least one person is married.

¹ Definitions were derived from the following Greek word dictionaries:

Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

DECEIT (dólos) Concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading others; fraud.

LEWDNESS (asélgeia) Absence of restraint; obscene or indecent.

ARROGANCE (huperephanía) An offensive display of self-importance.

FOLLY (aphrosúnee) Lack of prudence or good judgment; foolishness; lack of sense.

Additional sins from Ephesians 5:1-7

OBSCENITY (aischrótes) Behavior that is socially or morally inappropriate or indecent.

COARSE JOKING (eutrapelía) Offensive or distasteful joking.

Additional sins from 2 Timothy 3:1-5

LOVERS OF YOURSELF (phílautos) Loving oneself, selfish.

LOVERS OF MONEY (philárguros) Fond of money, covetous.

BOASTFUL (alazon) Bragging.

PRIDE (huperephanos) See arrogance above in [Mark 7:20-22](#). Same Greek word.

ABUSIVE (blásphemos) Harsh or insulting language; mistreating, especially physically.

DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS (apeithes) Unwillingness to follow your parents' instruction.

UNGRATEFUL (acháristos) Unthankful. Unappreciative. Not acknowledging or demonstrating gratitude.

UNHOLY (anósios) Being in opposition to God or what is sacred.

WITHOUT LOVE (ástorgos) Hard-hearted; unfeeling; without regard for others.

UNFORGIVING (áspondos) Unwilling to show mercy; irreconcilable.

WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL (akrates) Unable to govern one's desires, lacking in moderation.

BRUTAL (anemeros) Savage.

NOT LOVERS OF THE GOOD (aphilágathos) Unfriendly, hostile. Showing no compassion.

TREACHEROUS (prodótes) Traitor, betrayer.

RASH (propetes) Reckless, thoughtless. Acting before thinking or getting advice and perspective.

CONCEITED (tuphóo) To swell or inflate with pride. Puffed up.

LOVERS OF PLEASURE (philedonos) Loving pleasure.

Additional sin from 1 Corinthians 6:7-10

CHEATING (adikéo) To defraud, swindle; to take from others in a dishonest way.

HOMOSEXUALITY (arsenokoítes) Intimate or sexual relation with the same gender.

STEALING (kléptes) To take something that does not belong to you.

SWINDLING (hárpax) To cheat a person or business out of money or other assets; to obtain by fraud or deceit.

APPENDIX B: MEDICAL ACCOUNT

THE MEDICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CROSS

MEDICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CRUCIFIXION

C. Truman Davis, M.D. M.S.

In this article, I shall discuss some of the physical aspects of the passion, or suffering, of Jesus Christ. We shall follow Him from Gethsemane, through His trial, His scourging, His path along the Via Dolorosa, to His last dying hours on the cross...This led me first to a study of the practice of crucifixion itself~ that is, the torture and execution of a person by fixation to a cross.

Many painters and most of the sculptors of crucifixes today show the nails through the palms. Roman historical accounts and experimental work have shown that the nails were driven between the small bones of the wrists and not through the palms. Nails driven through the palms will strip out between the fingers when they support the weight of a human body.

The physical passion of the Christ begins in Gethsemane. Of the many aspects of his initial suffering, I shall only discuss the one of physiological interest; the body sweat. It is interesting that the physician of the group St. Luke, is the only one to mention this. He says, "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44)

Every attempt imaginable has been used by modern scholars to explain away this phrase, apparently under the mistaken impression that this just doesn't happen. A great deal of effort could be saved by consulting the medical literature. Though very rare, the phenomenon of Hemadrosis or bloody sweat, is well documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest; it is here that the first physical trauma was inflicted. A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards then blindfolded Him and mockingly taunted Him to identify them as they each passed by, spat on Him, and struck Him in the face.

In the morning, Jesus, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, is taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia, the seat of government of the Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. You are, of course, familiar with Pilate's action in attempting to pass responsibility to Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Judea. Jesus apparently suffered no physical mistreatment at the hands of Herod and was returned to Pilate.

It was then, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Barabbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion. There is much disagreement among authorities about scourging as a prelude to crucifixion. Most Roman writers from this period do not associate the two. Many scholars believe that Pilate originally ordered Jesus scourged as his full punishment and

that the death sentence by crucifixion came only in response to the taunt by the mob that the Procurator was not properly defending Caesar against this pretender who claimed to be the King of the Jews.

Preparations for the scourging are carried out. The prisoner is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. It is doubtful whether the Romans made any attempt to follow the Jewish law in this matter of scourging. The Jews had an ancient law prohibiting more than forty lashes. The Pharisees, always making sure that the law was strictly kept, insisted that only thirty-nine lashes be given. (In case of a miscount, they were sure of remaining within the law.) The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum (or flagellum) in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead or bone attached near the ends of each.

The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back and legs. At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. The small balls of lead or bones first produce large, deep bruises, which are broken open by subsequent blows. Finally the skin of the back hangs in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognisable mass of torn bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. They still need a crown to make their travesty complete. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns (commonly used for firewood) are plaited into the shape of a crown and this is pressed into His scalp. Again there are copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body). After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, they tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from His back. This had already become adherent to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, causes excruciating pain...Almost as though He were again being whipped - and the wounds again begin to bleed.

In deference to Jewish custom, the Romans return His garments. The heavy patibulum of the cross is tied across His shoulders and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves and the execution detail of the Roman soldiers, headed by a centurion, begins its slow journey along the Via Dolorosa. In spite of His efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden cross together with the shock produced by copious blood loss is too much. He stumbles and falls.

The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance. The centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, elects a stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross. Jesus follows; still bleeding and sweating the cold clammy sweat of shock. The 650-yard journey from the fortress Antonia to Golgotha is finally completed. The prisoner is again stripped of His clothes - except for a loin cloth, which is allowed the Jews.

The crucifixion begins, Jesus is offered wine mixed with myrrh; a mild analgesic mixture. He refuses to drink. Simon is ordered to place the cross on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the, wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wound. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexibility and movement. The patibulum is then lifted in place at the top of the stipes and the title is reading "This is Jesus, The King of the Jews" ([Matthew 27:37](#)), is nailed in place.

The left foot is pressed against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the ankles of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain - the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

At this point, another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralysed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. It was undoubtedly during these periods that He uttered the seven short sentences, which are recorded: The first looking down at the Roman soldiers throwing dice for His seamless garment, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" ([Luke 23:34](#)) The second, to the penitent thief, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" ([Luke 23:43](#)) The third, looking down at the terrified, grief stricken adolescent John (the beloved Apostle), He said, "There is your mother," and looking to Mary his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son" ([John 19:26-27](#)) The fourth cry is from the the 22nd Psalm, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ([Matthew 27:46](#))

Hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

Let us remember again the 22nd Psalm, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me" ([Ps 22:14](#)). It is now almost over - the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level - the compresses heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick sluggish blood into the tissues - the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to grasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their fluid of stimuli to the brain.

Jesus gasps His fifth cry, "I am thirsty" ([John 19:28](#))

Let us remember another verse of the prophetic 22nd Psalm: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death" ([Psalm 22:15](#))

A sponge soaked in Posca, the cheap, sour wine that is the staple drink of the Roman legionnaires, is lifted to His lips. He apparently does not take any of the liquid. The body of Jesus is now in extremes, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. The realisation brings out the sixth words, "It is finished" ([John 19:30](#)). His mission of atonement has been completed. Finally He can allow his body to die.

With one last surge of strength, he once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and final cry, "Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit" ([Luke 23:46](#)).

The rest you know. In order that the Sabbath not be profaned, the Jews asked that the condemned men be dispatched and removed from the crosses. The common method of ending a crucifixion was by crucifraction, the breaking of the bones of the legs. This prevents the victim from pushing himself upward; the tension could not be relieved from the muscles of the chest, and rapid suffocation occurred. The legs of the two thieves were broken, but when they came to Jesus they saw that this was unnecessary.

Apparently to make double sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs upward through the pericardium and into the heart. [John 19:34](#) records "...one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing forth a sudden flow of blood and water." Thus there was an escape of watery fluid from the sac surrounding the heart and blood from the interior of the heart. We, therefore, have rather conclusive post-mortem evidence that Our Lord died, not to the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

Thus we have seen a glimpse of the epitome of evil which man can exhibit toward man - and toward God. This is not a pretty sight and is apt to leave us despondent and depressed. How grateful we can be that we have a sequel: A glimpse of the infinite mercy of God toward man - the miracle of the atonement and the expectation of Easter morning.

