

The Mission

Week 2: The Son's Sacrifice

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal.

CONNECT

- What was an enjoyable part of Christmastime for you?
- How did God work in your life during the week of prayer and fasting?
- Are you a new-year's resolution person? Why or why not?

INTRODUCTION

In this series we're looking at the mission—what God is up to in the world and what's our part to play in it. God's mission is to fill the earth with his glory (Numbers 14:22), and at the center of how he plans to do that is the death of Jesus on the cross. Jesus's crucifixion looked like defeat but was actually victory. It looked like the ultimate loss but was actually the ultimate gain. Not only does the "life-through-death" pattern of Jesus's crucifixion help us understand God's ultimate mission, it also becomes a pattern for the life of discipleship. In our passage today, Jesus helps the disciples understand what it means to walk the life-through-death path.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: John 12:20-32

Discuss:

Historian Tom Holland writes, "No death was more excruciating, more contemptible, than crucifixion."¹ Yet Jesus describes his death as the hour he will be glorified. In what ways has Jesus's death made the cross something glorious?

How does the illustration of grain and wheat in verse 24 help you understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus?

In verses 31 and 32, Jesus describes what the effects of his death will be. Explain these effects in your own words.

APPLICATION

- To hate your life in this world is a hyperbolic contrast that means disciples must love Jesus more than anything. What practices have helped you strengthen and deepen your love for Jesus over time?
- Jesus tells the disciples that the Father will honor them. This explains that what will tempt us to love our lives in this world—seeking honor and validation from the world rather than from the Father. What worldly honor do you have to guard against? What does it look like to receive honor from the Father in that area?
- It is the moment that Jesus was lifted up that draws people to him. How is the thought of Jesus on the cross impacting your heart right now?

PRAYER

- Spend time glorifying Jesus for his willingness to go to the cross.
- Ask God for the willingness to serve Jesus sacrificially.
- Thank God for the honor he gives us.

¹ Tom Holland, *Dominion*