

LESSON AIM: To understand why Jesus had to die, and how he willingly paid the price for our sins.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Mark 14:34-36.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- 1) What happened in last week's story? Why was Jesus tested?
- 2) How did Jesus answer Satan?
- 3) Why do we memorize scripture?
- 4) Review last week's verse; have students explain it in their own words.

INTRODUCTION:

- No one is perfect ...except Jesus. Even though He was tempted, but He **NEVER** sinned.
- Jesus spent His entire life doing good, yet He was executed like a criminal.
- Back then, His disciples didn't understand why Jesus had to die, and today a lot of people don't understand why Jesus had to die.

LESSON:

So why *did* Jesus have to die? And why did he have to die such a painful and horrible death? The death that Jesus suffered at the age of thirty three years old was no surprise to Him. In fact, the Bible says that He willingly laid down His life. He had told His disciples on a number of different occasions that He must die. But His disciples never seemed to understand. They thought he was the Messiah, which to them meant that He was going to kick out all of the Romans (the Romans were the latest people to conquer the world and were their masters at the time) and establish His Kingdom on earth NOW, like a real King! But that was not God's plan. This was a King that was born to die as a sacrifice for everyone, even those of us who weren't even born yet!

The night before Jesus dies He was with His disciples for a last supper together. During that last supper in the upper room He told His disciples many important things. The Apostle John wrote down many of these things in the 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17th chapters of his gospel. After the dinner, Jesus and His disciples walked to a garden near the Mount of Olives called Gethsemane.

There in the garden Jesus began to earnestly pray. The crucifixion was just hours away. Jesus knew what it would be like. He knew that the pain would be agonizing. A Roman execution was especially cruel. The victim was stretched out on two wooden beams fashioned together like a cross. Then large spike-like nails were driven into his hands and feet. The cross was then lifted upright and the base of it dropped into a hole in the ground. The victim would painfully hang there on the cross until he finally died.

But the pain wasn't the worst thing. The worst thing was that Jesus, who had never sinned and knew no sin, would become sin. The sin of all humanity would be put on Him and He would bear the awful judgment of His heavenly Father. He would even cry out, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?*" Even His heavenly Father would turn His back on Jesus. Jesus would bear our sins alone.

Have the students read aloud *Mark 14:34-36*. In the garden Jesus poured out His heart to the Father. What was the cup that Jesus asked His Father to take from Him? The cup was the cross and all the suffering that the cross entailed. Jesus was asking that if there was any other way to save us from our sins other than His going to the cross, would the Father please show Him? But there was and is no other way. Jesus had to die—even the most virtuous man or woman who ever lived could not save himself. Only Jesus could save us. But to save us, He would have to die in our place. He would have to become that Passover Lamb that was killed.

Later that evening the corrupt religious leaders had Jesus arrested in the garden. After an unfair (and illegal) trial where Jesus was falsely accused and falsely convicted, Jesus was taken to the palace of the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate with the demand that the Romans crucify Him. Pilate could find no fault in Jesus; he knew that He was not guilty of any crime or wrong doing, but because everybody was watching him and yelling for Jesus to be crucified, he finally gave in to the demands of the people. Jesus was first brutally beaten by a Roman soldier who delivered 39 'stripes' to Jesus' back with a leather whip that had pieces of metal and glass in it. Then Jesus was led to a hill just outside of the city called Golgotha (*place of the skull*) where He was nailed to a cross and crucified.

Jesus was on that cross for six hours. Maybe enough time to see all of our faces flash before His eyes. Even on the cross the crowd was laughing and mocking Him. Do you think He could have called down angels and destroyed everyone there? Of course! Is that what He did? Let's read what He said.

Read Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”

Even in the worst agony imaginable, Jesus was able to forgive those who were hurting him. Next to him were 2 other men being crucified because they had broken Roman law and were being punished for their sin. One of them even as He was dying, confessed that Jesus was God and Jesus told him that he would be with Him in paradise. It is never too late to turn to Jesus!

Who was responsible for Jesus' death? Was it the Jews? After all, they arrested Jesus and demanded that He be crucified. Or was it the Romans? They were the ones actually executing Him in such a horribly cruel way. The real answer to this question is that you are responsible and I am responsible. We put Jesus on the cross because Jesus came to die for our sins. He knew there was no other way for us to be saved, and so for the joy set before Him, He endured cross.

Let's bow our heads and have some silent time thinking about what Jesus did for us. All that pain that He endured because He loved you so much! Jesus died for us; can we now live for Him and tell others of this gift of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins? Let's pray and thank Jesus for what He did.

MEMORY VERSE:

(Even year):

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us...” II Corinthians 5:21 NIV

(Odd year):

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

