

Discussion Guide: The Passion of Christ

But what does it matter?

*The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true,
Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.*

Philippians 1:18 (NIV)

February 29, 2004: Pastor Kimber took a break from the Proverbs series to deliver a message on the "Passion of the Christ". This message is in conjunction with the release of the Mel Gibson film that came out this week. The following study guide will help your flock group work through and discuss the Scriptures that were referenced in this compelling and centering message.

1. Pastor clearly desired to silence the critics of this film. He did not want to ignore the criticism as much as he wanted to enhance the extremely beneficial aspects of this film. For those who have seen the film, how has the film benefited you personally in your understanding of Christ's suffering and death?
2. Though some people have made some points about potential ill-motives behind the making and production of the film, what should our (Christian) perspective and voice be about the film? (xref. Phil. 1:12-18) Regardless of motives, what are some good effects this film is having on people in our contemporary culture?
3. With so much conversation revolving around the "Passion of the Christ" it is crucial that we as Christians be prepared to "give an answer for the hope that is in us." (1 Pt. 3) Why was it necessary for Christ to embrace suffering and die? (xref. Acts 17:1-3) What is the significance of His suffering in relation to our personal lives? (xref. 1 Tim. 1:15, 1 Co. 15:1-4)
4. The movie starts out in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus is agonizing so badly that He thinks he could die. Throughout His ministry, though, Jesus announced that He would have to suffer and die. (xref. Mk. 8:31) Why then was Jesus so distraught when the time finally came? (Pastor gave 2 primary reasons from the following verses, 2Co. 5:21, Isa. 53:6)
5. It's stated that when we receive Christ by faith, we are washed, cleansed, made clean from the stains of our guilt. Have you personally had a cleansing experience by accepting Jesus' substitutionary atonement for your sin? Does this happen on a recurring basis in your life? Describe that to the group.
6. Read John 10:11-18. What are some promises from this passage that reassure you of God's love for you? When are you most tempted to doubt His love for you? How can you renew your mind or fill up what is lacking in your faith so as to overcome these doubts or fears?