

Discussion Guide: The Glory of the Cross

*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died **for** the ungodly. For one will scarcely die **for** a righteous person-though perhaps **for** a good person one would even dare to die-but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died **for** us. Romans 5:6-8(ESV)*

March 7, 2004: “The Glory of the Cross” by Joe Bartemus, Pastor of Adult Ministries at College Park Church. Pastor Joe delivered a stirring message focusing on the glory of the cross with special emphasis on the study of the word “**for**” as found in Romans 5:6-8. While there are many definitions found in the dictionary for the word “for”, the Scriptural focus is in the meaning “in place of”, as in Christ died “in place of” (for) us. We as the body of Christ, His church, should glory in the “for”, realizing that we deserve to die for our sins, but instead Christ died “for” us. The following questions, guided by Joe’s outline, are designed to help your flock group to practically apply the truth of the gospel.

I. **The Why For:** Why did Christ need to die for us? Romans 5:6-10

- **Q:** These verses should evoke strong feelings of wonder and awe in our hearts as to the incredible sacrifice given for us. *What are some ways that you can renew your sense of wonder at how much you have been forgiven?*
- **Q:** For many of us, the visual experience of the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, has profoundly affected our lives, increased our faith, given us boldness and courage to spread the gospel, and deepened our commitment to Christ. It is clearly being used by God to also reach the lost. *Why do you think it took this visual media experience to bring about this change? How did the glory of the cross affect you before seeing this movie (in other words, what if the movie had never been made?)*
- **Q:** Review the descriptions of sin given below (taken from the book by C. Plantenga, Jr.):
 - **Corruption** – the multiplying power of sin
 - **Perversion** – destroys the purpose of things
 - **Pollution** – bringing together what ought to be apart
 - **Disintegration** – division, tearing apart
 - **Degenerative** – victims victimize
 - **Parasite** – suck the life out of others
 - **Addiction** – longing bent in the wrong direction

Which of these descriptions can you identify with? How does marveling in the glory of the cross affect your sins? How can we help each other to overcome sin and glory in the cross?

II. **The Who For:** Who died for us? Jesus Christ – the glory of God manifested in flesh on the cross (**Savior** – vs. 6; **Reconciler** – vs. 10; **Redeemer** – vs. 8; **Lover** – vs. 8)

- **Q:** *Can you describe a time(s) in your life when faith became real because you knew there was no other option (times when you were weak and helpless and needed a Savior)?*

- **Q:** *What aspects of the gospel (the good news of the cross) do you need to meditate on? How can “preaching” this gospel to yourself daily help you to glory in the “for”?*

III. **The What For:** What possible good can come from Christ’s death for us? (**Satisfaction of God’s wrath** – vs. 9; **Defeat of Death** – vs. 10a, **Saved through his life** – vs. 10b)

- **Q:** *God’s wrath was his unwillingness to compromise His holiness. **What weapons do you need to combat the enemy and to be unwilling to compromise in your struggle for holiness?***
- **Q:** *Death defeated death! **As a group, make a list of all the good that has come from Christ dying for you (ex: we are reconciled to God, we are made the righteousness of God in Him, etc). Revel in the awesome benefits and implications of this list.***
- **Q:** *Then consider that even as awesome and incredible is our justification and reconciliation, there is **much more** to the story. “For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” (v10). The question is, **saved for what? What is it that God desires of us? What does he want us to be, and to do with our lives? And, in whose strength are we to pursue what it is he wants us to be, and to do?***
- **Q:** *Remember the illustration of the ticking clock? **What are you doing with the resource of time that God has given you? What would you like to begin doing differently? Write it down on a 3x5 card and remind yourself daily to follow through, and do what you said you would like to do. And if appropriate, contact someone in your group in the next couple of days and ask them to pray with you, and help you follow through.***

Close: Pray together and renew the wonder of the glory of the cross. Sincerely thank Him and glory in the “for”. Consider using communion as a means to worship God during your group time.

Note: If you missed it, below is the excerpt from the book, *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be*, used by Joe in his message:

“At the center of the Christian Bible, four Gospels describe the pains God has taken to defeat sin and its wages. The very shape of these Gospels tells us how much the pains matter: the Gospels are shaped, as Martin Kahler famously put it, as passion narratives with long introductions. Accordingly, Christians have always measured sin, in part, by the suffering needed to atone for it. The ripping and writhing of a body on a cross, the bizarre metaphysical maneuver of using death to defeat death, the urgency of the summons to human beings to ally themselves with the events of Christ and with the person of these events, and then to make that person and those events the center of their lives – these things tell us that the main human trouble is desperately difficult to fix, even for God, and that sin is the longest-running of human emergencies.”