



# The Gospel of John: Behold the Man

John 19:17-37 – Part 1

Pastor Brad Wood

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In this week's study in John 19:17-37, we examine the crucifixion of Jesus Christ: *the most pivotal event in human history*.

We're reminded that the cross wasn't a tragic end, but God's very plan from the beginning. The message challenges us to see beyond the horror of crucifixion to the profound love and grace of God that it represents. We're encouraged to continually return to the cross—not as elementary knowledge—but as the very heart of our faith.

The parallel drawn between the seemingly foolish battle plan for Jericho and the 'foolishness' of the cross beautifully illustrates how God's wisdom surpasses human understanding. This message invites us to embrace the humility required to fully appreciate God's love and sacrifice, urging us to find our identity and hope in Christ crucified.

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# 5-Day Devotional and Small Group Guide

## Day 1: The Wisdom of the Cross

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*Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25*

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Devotional: The cross of Christ stands as a paradox to the world - a symbol of defeat that became the ultimate victory. As we reflect on Paul's words, consider how God's wisdom often appears foolish to human understanding. The crucifixion—a brutal and shameful death—became the means of our salvation. How has God worked in seemingly foolish ways in your life to demonstrate His wisdom and power? Can you think of a situation (or situations) when His wisdom defied your logic? Take time to thank Him for His unconventional methods that bring about profound transformation. Ask God to help you embrace His wisdom...even when it challenges your natural inclinations or worldly logic.

## Day 2: The Love that Endures

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*Reading: Romans 5:6-11*

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Devotional: The extent of God's love is powerfully demonstrated through Christ's willingness to endure the humiliation and brutality of the cross. Reflect on the magnitude of this love: in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. How does this sacrificial love challenge and change your perspective on your own worthiness and value? Consider areas in your life where you struggle to accept or extend love. Are you waiting for yourself or others to change before that love can be received or given? Ask God to deepen your understanding of His enduring love and to empower you to love others sacrificially, even in difficult circumstances.

## Day 3: Grace Through Faith

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*Reading: Ephesians 2:4-10*

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Devotional: Salvation by grace through faith is the heart of the Gospel message. This unmerited favor from God stands in stark contrast to human efforts at self-justification. Reflect on the freeing truth that your salvation is a gift! It's not something that you earned. It's not payment for a life well lived. How does this impact your daily walk with God? Are there areas where you still try to earn God's favor rather than resting in His grace? In other words, are you still using some sort of measuring stick on yourself—your attitudes, words or behavior—that keeps you captive to works rather than grace? Take time to express gratitude for God's gracious gift and ask Him to help you live from a place of free acceptance rather than striving.

## Day 4: Hope in Suffering

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*Reading: Romans 8:18-30*

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Devotional: Christ's suffering on the cross gives meaning and hope to our own struggles. As you read this passage, consider how present sufferings are put into perspective by the promise of future glory. How does the hope of redemption and restoration impact your ability to endure current hardships? Reflect on a difficult situation you're facing and ask God to fill you with hope that transcends your circumstances. Pray for the strength to persevere, knowing that God is working all things for good, including His highest good for us: conforming us into the image of His Son.

## Day 5: God's Presence in Our Darkest Moments

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*Reading: Psalm 22*

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Devotional: This psalm, quoted by Jesus on the cross, expresses both the anguish of feeling forsaken and the assurance of God's faithfulness. As you read, reflect on times when you've felt abandoned by God. How does Jesus' experience on the cross speak to those moments? Consider how—even in His darkest hour—Jesus ultimately trusted in the Father's plan. Ask God to increase your faith in His constant presence, especially during times of doubt or despair. Ask Him also to increase your faithfulness to Him as you choose to keep your eyes fixed on Him rather than your situation. Thank Him for His faithfulness to you that endures beyond your feelings or circumstances.

# Small Group Guide: The King on the Cross

## Key Takeaways:

1. The crucifixion of Jesus is *the most significant event in human history*, offering salvation through grace to everyone.
2. We should never lose reverence for or “grow” beyond the message of the cross.
3. Crucifixion was an extremely brutal and humiliating form of execution.
4. God chose the "foolishness" of the cross to demonstrate His wisdom and power.
5. Jesus willingly endured crucifixion out of His great love for humanity.

## Discussion Questions:

- How does understanding the historical brutality of crucifixion deepen our appreciation for Christ's sacrifice, and in what ways might this knowledge impact our daily walk with God?
- Pastor Brad mentioned that we should never 'grow beyond the cross.' What does this mean to you personally, and how can we keep the cross central in our life?
- Pause to consider that Paul—after giving a tremendous sermon on Mars Hill with negligible results—determined then “not to know anything...but Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). How does that affect the heart you should have when sharing the gospel?
- How does the concept that Jesus chose the 'foolishness' of the cross challenge our human notions of power, wisdom, and success?

- In what ways does the new covenant of grace transform our relationship with God as compared to the old covenant of the law?
- How might reflecting on Jesus' words *from the cross*, 'Father, forgive them,' shape our attitudes towards those who wrong us?
- Pastor Brad drew parallels between the Israelites at Jericho and believers today. How can we cultivate trust in God's methods when they seem foolish or ineffective to the world?
- How does the reality of Christ's physical and spiritual suffering on the cross shape our understanding of God's love and the seriousness of sin?
- In what ways might the simplicity of salvation through confession and belief be both a stumbling block and a beautiful truth for different people?
- Pastor Brad emphasized that we should return to the cross regularly. What practical steps can we take to make this a meaningful part of our spiritual disciplines?

## Practical Applications:

1. **Prayer:** Spend time in prayer, asking God to deepen your appreciation for the cross and to help you live in light of its reality every day.
2. **Reflection:** Identify an area where you might be relying on your own wisdom or strength rather than God's. Chose to surrender that area to Him this week.
3. **Scripture Study:** Take time this week to read through all four Gospel accounts of the crucifixion, paying attention to details you may have overlooked before.
4. **Accountability:** Talk with someone else about what it means to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
5. **Thankfulness:** Write a letter to Jesus expressing your gratitude for His sacrifice on the cross. Be specific about how His death and resurrection have impacted your life.
6. **Service:** Share the message of the cross with someone who may see it as foolishness. Practice explaining why it's so significant to you.

## Further Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think it's important for Christians to regularly revisit and reflect on the crucifixion, even if we're familiar with the account?
- Pastor Brad mentioned that crucifixion was seen as foolishness to Greeks and was a stumbling block to Jews (1 Cor. 1:23). How do you see similar attitudes towards the cross in our modern culture?
- How does understanding the brutality of crucifixion impact your view of Jesus' sacrifice?
- Pastor Brad emphasized that we can never "grow beyond the cross." What do you think this means practically in a Christian's life?
- Discuss the concept of God using what seems foolish to the world to demonstrate His wisdom and power. Where else in Scripture or your own life have you seen this principle?
- How does the willingness of Jesus to endure crucifixion demonstrate God's love? How should this shape our response to Him?
- The sermon touched on God's grace and forgiveness. How can we balance accepting God's forgiveness with striving to live holy lives?

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