



## Introduction

Prior to Jesus' death and resurrection, the cross was feared by all as a political symbol of the ultimate power that Rome was able to exercise over others. In essence, Rome said, "We are in charge and this (the cross) is what happens to those who get in our way." In our day, the cross has come to be viewed as a religious symbol indicating Jesus' power over death. In the kingdom of Rome, the cross could be nothing more than an instrument of death. Ironically, in God's kingdom, it became the instrument of life.

## Observation/Interpretation

- Hundreds of years before this event occurred, Isaiah prophesied Jesus's response before his accusers. Read Isaiah 53:7 and compare it to Mark 15:1-5. How does Jesus respond to his accusers?
- Why do you think the crowd demanded that the authorities release Barabbas (a life taking revolutionary) instead of Jesus (a life giving revolutionary)?

## Application

- How does the thought of Jesus standing alone before a representative of the power of Rome (i.e., Pilate) and being condemned to death by crucifixion affect you?
- How is the exchange of Jesus' life instead of Barabbas' a good picture of the great exchange of our life for Jesus'?
- How has Jesus set you free?
- How can we receive this passage as a gift of grace rather than the bad feeling of guilt?

## Prayer

Ask God to help you appreciate and love what Jesus did for you.

### Community Group Discussion

- Read the passage together out loud.
- Involve your group by asking/answering the study questions, taking the time to share.
- Ask for prayer requests and be sure to pray together.

### Family Discussion

- Have your child/children read the passage aloud, if old enough otherwise you read it aloud.
- Involve them by asking questions.
- Ask for prayer requests and invite them to pray together as a family.

A great way to use of these notes is to start/join a Community Group

These notes can be used for personal bible study, yet, another way would be to invite some people together. We call these intentional gatherings, 'Community Groups'.

What is a Community Group?

Community Groups are small gatherings of believers (non-believers welcomed too!) that meet regularly for accountability, friendship, study of the Bible and prayer. Community Groups are an essential part of the mission of Calvary SLO Church as they are a place where we wrestle with the truths of the Bible and encourage one another toward the life God intends. Each community group is unique and molded by the people who attend it. Most community groups gather weekly and involve food, dialog, prayer, discussion for applying the Bible to practical living, and loving service to one-another. They're meant to be an organic and authentic expression of the church, actively living like the body of Jesus.

Why should I join/start a Community Group?

God is a Trinitarian God who is revealed as one in three persons: Father, Son and Spirit. We've been made to image God, which means we're designed for community & friendship. We often suffer when we're not in community, due to the brokenness of life, complexity of this world and the temptation to isolate ourselves. We encourage you to gather with a small group of friends, family or roommates on a weekly basis and use these discussion notes to press deeper into God.

How do I join the Calvary SLO Community Group eco-system?

We're enthusiastic about all forms of biblical community, however there are definite benefits to joining with the Calvary SLO Community Group (CG) eco-system. In short, the benefits are:

- **Training:** We have trainings intent on equipping leaders.
- **Support:** Each CG leader is assigned a coach to provide assistance and ongoing support.
- **Visibility:** CG's are promoted via the bulletin, website & given access to The City (our online social network).

To join all you have to do is sign up for the next upcoming training! Info: pastor James: james@calvaryslo.com.