

Jesus' Final Hours
Chosen Death-Signs of Triumph
John 19:28-42
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Christians have always insisted on the cross—a gruesome instrument of degradation and torture—as their central symbol. To understand why we need to look closely at the teaching of the apostles in the New Testament. Notice three things in John's account of Jesus' death: (1) It really happened; (2) Jesus chose when to die; (3) Jesus' death had a purpose.

I) Jesus really did die

vv. 33-35: When the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead...He who saw it has borne witness

Why the insistence?

A) To answer the charge that he appeared later because he had not really died

B) Because the death was central to his mission

Gandhi: The teaching, not the history, is what matters

Islam: The real Jesus did not die—only a look-alike

II) Jesus chose when to die

A) Significance of the description

...he gave up his spirit/breath

...he bowed his head

Chose not to die until a certain moment

B) Jesus' death and ours

III) Jesus' death was purposeful

A) The language of fulfillment

It is finished

B) Upturn in Jesus' fortunes

- Sour wine
- Unbroken legs
- Joseph
- Nicodemus

Why?

C) When were your sins forgiven?

Take Away:

Give Jesus whatever you have

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) The Mormons have chosen to remove, or reduce the presence of the cross from their literature and architecture—citing it as too negative and depressing. What do you think of this decision?
- 2) Read John 19:33-35. What is John insisting on? Why? What might John say to the following statement by Gandhi: “It does not matter to me if Jesus of Nazareth ever lived. The Sermon on the Mount is still real for me.”
- 3) Crucified people die by suffocation. It takes so long and is so painful because they keep cycling through shortness of breath, which they try to deal with by pulling and pushing against the spikes in their hands and feet, action causing such terrible pain that they fall forward again into the posture of suffocation. In the light of this, what is significant about the language used to describe Jesus’ death in vs. 30 and the action of the soldiers toward the other criminals at the end of the day?
- 4) Reflect on the following: “If Jesus chose to die at a certain point, this must mean that he also chose to stay alive up to that point. He chose in other words not to shorten his agony until he knew the time was right—until, as he put it, “it was finished.”
- 5) Take note of the ways in which Jesus’ fortunes began to change, starting with the drink of sour wine. Who are the people who chose to offer him wine, who chose not to break his legs, and who brought spices and provided a tomb for his body? Why these people in particular?
- 6) Read verses 36 and 37 alongside Numbers 9:12 and Zechariah 12:10-13:1. Why does John call attention to these Old Testament texts?
- 7) When were your sins forgiven, according to John 19:30?
- 8) Reflect on the fact that God accepted the service of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus—despite their cowardice. What comfort does this bring to you?