

# week 3

## the creed:

### i believe he suffered, was crucified and buried



- Welcome (5-10 minutes)

The climate, the economy, starvation, drought, rapid spread of disease, gang culture; the list of current social and physical world problems could go on and on ... From today's news, debate who could be to blame for the subject of the headlines. (don't blame the news reader or journalist!!)

- Worship (10-15 minutes)



**pray**

*We may not know, we cannot tell,  
what pains he had to bear,  
but we believe it was for us  
he hung and suffered there.*

- Word (50 minutes)

The circumstances around Jesus' death have been debated in this way for centuries. Who was to blame? The finger has been pointed at Herod, Pilate, the Jewish leaders and the Romans! His death is a major part of Christian history and features heavily in why we believe in Jesus' saving love.

Read the Apostles' Creed together.

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our  
Lord.*

*He was conceived by the power of the  
Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

***He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.***

***He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.***

*He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the  
Father...*

*...He will come again to judge the living  
and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting*

- Read the passage:

### Pilate Questions Jesus

(Matthew 27.1,2,11-14; Mark 15.1-5; John 18.28-38)

1Everyone in the council got up and led Jesus off to Pilate. 2They started accusing him and said, "We caught this man trying to get our people to riot and to stop paying taxes to the Emperor. He also claims that he is the Messiah, our king." 3Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Those are your words," Jesus answered. 4Pilate told the chief priests and the crowd, "I don't find him guilty of anything." 5But they all kept on saying, "He has been teaching and causing trouble all over Judea. He started in Galilee and has now come all the way here."

### Jesus Is Brought before Herod

6When Pilate heard this, he asked, "Is this man from Galilee?" 7After Pilate learned that Jesus came from the region ruled by Herod, he sent him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time. 8For a long time Herod had wanted to see Jesus and was very happy because he finally had this chance. He had heard many things about Jesus and hoped to see him work a miracle. 9Herod asked him a lot of questions, but Jesus did not answer. 10Then the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses stood up and accused him of all kinds of bad things. 11Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus and insulted him. They put a fine robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. 12That same day Herod and Pilate became friends, even though they had been enemies before this.

### The Death Sentence

(Matthew 27.15-26; Mark 15.6-15; John 18.39--19.16)

13Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people. 14He told them, "You brought Jesus to me and said he was a troublemaker. But I have questioned him here in front of you, and I have not found him guilty of anything that you say he has done. 15Herod didn't find him guilty either and sent him back. This man doesn't deserve to be put to death! 16-17I will just have him beaten with a whip and set free." 18But the whole crowd shouted, "Kill Jesus! Give us Barabbas!" 19Now Barabbas was in jail because he had started a riot in the city and had murdered someone. 20Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, so he spoke again to the crowds. 21But they kept shouting, "Nail him to a cross! Nail him to a cross!" 22Pilate spoke to them a third time, "But what crime has he done? I have not found him guilty of anything for which he should be put to death. I will have him beaten with a whip and set free." 23The people kept on shouting as loud as they could for Jesus to be put to death. 24Finally, Pilate gave in. 25He freed the man who was in jail for rioting and murder, because he was the one the crowd wanted to be set free. Then Pilate handed Jesus over for them to do what they wanted with him. **Luke 23 (Contemporary English Version)**

**What leads to suffering? There is much suffering wherever we look today. A world of imperfection is rife with disease & sickness, hatred & death. It was into this world that Jesus was born and lived. In this passage, we see weakness and some self-serving decisions made by the major players. In the first and third sections, we see Pilate pronounce Jesus' innocence and then, rather than releasing him, he passes over the decision-making to another party: Herod and then the crowd.**



- What would you like to say to Pilate? How do you imagine him to respond to you?

**Herod wishes to see Jesus 'perform' some miracle or spectacle. When he refuses, Herod loses interest. Although Herod too pronounces Jesus 'innocent', he does not free him either.**

- Why do you think Jesus won't 'perform' for Herod? Where else in the New Testament does Jesus refuse to 'show what he can do'?

a.

b.

c.



- In your opinion, would more people follow Jesus if there were more miracles seen today? Talk about why Jesus isn't 'flashy' with God's power ...

pray

- Look again at the passage and underline the parts that show Jesus to be suffering. Talk about how this could have been easier or harder to bear than the beatings that he would later receive prior to his execution.

- What causes leaders of political parties and of countries to make decisions which lead to suffering?

pray

### Read the passage:

#### Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross *(Matthew 27.31-44; Mark 15.21-32; John 19.17-27)*

26As Jesus was being led away, some soldiers grabbed hold of a man from Cyrene named Simon. He was coming in from the fields, but they put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27A large crowd was following Jesus, and in the crowd a lot of women were crying and weeping for him. 28Jesus turned to the women and said: Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me! Cry for yourselves and for your children. 29Someday people will say, "Women who never had children are really fortunate!" 30At that time everyone will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" They will say to the hills, "Hide us!" 31If this can happen when the wood is green, what do you think will happen when it is dry? 32Two criminals were led out to be put to death with Jesus. 33When the soldiers came to the place called "The Skull," they nailed Jesus to a cross. They also nailed the two criminals to crosses, one on each side of Jesus. 34-35Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people! They don't know what they're doing." While the crowd stood there watching Jesus, the soldiers gambled for his clothes. The leaders insulted him by saying, "He saved others. Now he should save himself, if he really is God's chosen Messiah!" 36The soldiers made fun of Jesus and brought him some wine. 37They said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!" 38Above him was a sign that said, "This is the King of the Jews." 39One of the criminals hanging there also insulted Jesus by saying, "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and save us!" 40But the other criminal told the first one off, "Don't you fear God? Aren't you getting the same punishment as this man? 41We got what was coming to us, but he didn't do anything wrong." 42Then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into power!" 43Jesus replied, "I promise that today you will be with me in paradise."

#### The Death of Jesus *(Matthew 27.45-56; Mark 15.33-41; John 19.28-30)*

44Around noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until the middle of the afternoon. 45The sun stopped shining, and the curtain in the temple split down the middle. 46Jesus shouted, "Father, I put myself in your hands!" Then he died. 47When the Roman officer saw what had happened, he praised God and said, "Jesus must really have been a good man!" 48A crowd had gathered to see the terrible sight. Then after they had seen it, they felt broken-hearted and went home. 49All of Jesus' close friends and the women who had come with him from Galilee stood at a distance and watched. **Luke 23 (CEV)**

- Do you read this passage at times other than the Easter season? What are the most memorable points for you?

pray

## 4

- How does the crucifixion make a difference to what you believe about Jesus?
  - He died for me ...
  - 
  - 
  -

Jesus dies a bodily death, breaking the hearts of those who loved him. Yet his death is central to the Christian faith. It is after his death that Jesus' fame spreads far and wide as his followers are persecuted and scattered abroad. We believe that he died and was buried. Without this, there can be no resurrection and forgiveness of sins!

- Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

Read the passage:

**Jesus Is Buried** (Matthew 27.57-61; Mark 15.42-47; John 19.38-42)

50-51 There was a man named Joseph, who was from Arimathea in Judea. Joseph was a good and honest man, and he was eager for God's kingdom to come. He was also a member of the council, but he did not agree with what they had decided. 52 Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 53 He took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in fine cloth. Then he put it in a tomb that had been cut out of solid rock and had never been used. 54 It was Friday, and the Sabbath was about to begin. 55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and watched how Jesus' body was placed in the tomb. 56 Then they went to prepare some sweet-smelling spices for his burial. But on the Sabbath they rested, as the Law of Moses commands. **Luke 23 (CEV)**

- Look at how Joseph is described. He is eager to do what he can for Jesus. Compare him with Herod and Pilate.

Joseph was a man who 'didn't vote with the council'.

- Talk about how, when your voice is not heard, you can still work to make a difference for good.

**Pray**

- Time for refreshments, you've earned them!



### Bibliography

John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, IVP, 1986  
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Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Luke*, BST, IVP, 1979