

INTRO

- If you could live in any fictional universe (from books, movies, etc.), where would you choose to live?
- Did you have a favorite book or story as a child? What was it?

READ

Mark 15:6-16 & 15:42-47

REFLECT

We spent two weeks looking at who Jesus was. Now we will turn to what Jesus did and what he is still to do. These weeks will help us understand Jesus' mission on earth and give us hope for his future work.

Qu: What do you think Jesus' mission was while on earth? Why would God come to live with us?

Today we will focus on the following line of the Apostle's Creed: *He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.* Let's see why it matters and what it means.

1. It matters because it happened

Contrary to the other stories about gods and goddesses around the ancient world, the story about Jesus Christ really happened in our history! That means that we can't reduce Christianity to a collection of morals or rules. Instead, it is a description of what our Universe is like: a Universe where its Creator comes to dwell with his creation.

Qu: Why is it so important to stress the fact that Christianity claims to be the truth? Why not just a "way of life"?

Qu: If Jesus' story is our story, what part do we have in it?

2. It matters because he rose again

This line of the Creed also sets up the reality of Christ's resurrection. Because he really died, his appearances after the third day were of someone who defeated death! This should cause us to take his words more seriously. Next week we will dive deeper into the importance of his resurrection.

3. It means God knows suffering

At the end of the day, we can't comprehend all reasons God might have to allow suffering to exist. However, God is not distant from us. Rather, he joined us in our suffering and experienced it as we do. He knew pain, anguish, abandonment and loss. Our Creator does know what we go through when we hurt.

Qu: Does God's own suffering in the person of Jesus Christ change the way we relate to him? How?

4. It means we are forgiven

Read Isaiah 53:3-6.

Christ's suffering accomplished what we could never earn ourselves: the forgiveness of our sins and our reconciliation with God. This is good news indeed!

Qu: How can we respond to that good news? How does life change once we come to accept that we have been redeemed by Jesus Christ?

RESPOND & PRAY

- What encouraged/challenged you the most from this discussion?
- Spend time praying for one another and those you know who struggle with reconciling their faith with how we understand Creation.