

Passion

Week 7

This week in summary

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Day 1

Sacrifice and Glory of Jesus

A summary of Matthew 26-28

Jesus provoked the powerful in his society. Jesus orchestrated the political climate that would murder him. During his trials he was silent about his defense. He only spoke when it would propel him towards his execution. He wanted this death to occur. Why?

Why do you think Jesus wanted to be crucified?

How is Jesus' death different than John the Baptist, Julius Caesar, Abraham Lincoln or anyone else that died for their cause?

There are at least 12 different appearances of Christ in the resurrection accounts, beginning with Mary and ending with Paul. They were physically tangible experiences with Christ eating, speaking and allowing himself to be touched. Jesus' resurrected body was different from his physical body. It was no longer subject to the same laws of nature. He could transcend locked doors, and yet he could still be touched and he could eat. The stone was not rolled away from the tomb so Jesus could get out. He was able to walk through walls in his resurrected body. The stone was rolled away so that everyone could see that he had risen.

How does Jesus' resurrection affect you?

Reading Today: Matthew 26

10-15 minutes

Day 2

Abundant life

Why do so many people who acquire great wealth say their life is empty? Why do people surrounded by fame turn to drugs to escape their life? We spend so much time chasing bigger and better because we so quickly bore of the same.

There's a common phenomenon that happens to people who have a near death experience. The priorities of life change. Some describe it as having a new lease on life. They become more interested in the things that really matter and they spend less time chasing trivial activities that don't matter to them. They have changed their idea of what better life means to them.

Exposure to Jesus causes a similar phenomenon. People who spend time with Jesus have a **near-life-experience**. Life becomes better but more importantly we change what we want in life. Our idea of a better life changes in the presence of Jesus. Jesus offers a life more significant, satisfying, purposeful, fitting, full of struggles that strengthen and work that fills. Life with Jesus is better.

Jesus is a master of living life and giving life. He teaches us how to truly live. We rearrange our priorities choose people over things and genuine expressions of love over social pleasantries or obligations. Jesus offers us a life of significance, a life that satisfies. Life becomes richer, deeper and truer as we step more in line with the God who designed us.

"I've come so that you may have life, and abundant life"

-Jesus

Reading Today: Matthew 27

10-15 minutes

Day 3

Eternal Life

Jesus offers eternal life. The life he offers isn't just better but there's more of it. Even after we die, life continues it just changes into life after death. It goes on and on forever. That's hard to imagine because there is literally nothing in human experience that is infinite. So Jesus' offer of eternal life is so big there is nothing we can compare with it.

Even looking out into the vastness of space the most powerful telescopes can see all the way to "the observable edge of the universe" where there is nothing but background radiation from the beginning of time. But that still isn't eternal.

To imagine eternity picture all the days of your life from birth until now, and from now until death. Imagine all those days maybe 70+ years are the thickness of a hair. Not length, thickness of a hair. That is your entire life all the days you have had and will have on earth. Now image 5 hairs laying side by side no gaps between them, all together not even a 1/8 of an inch. That's roughly 350 years taking you back to the time before electricity, before America to a time of colonial exploration.

Now picture ten hairs laying side by side: a total length of 1/2 mm. That's roughly 700 years or before the Europe had the printing press.

How many life time-hairs would be needed to cross your desk? Go ahead and look at your desk and a hair right now. How many life time hairs would to cover the distance from you to the door of the room you are in. Or from you to exit the building you are in? We are well beyond the scale of years we can imagine but we are nowhere near eternity. So

take your chain of life-time-hairs and imagine traveling south by land all the way to the ocean, one lifetime hair at a time. Now continue across the ocean floating on the surface until you reach the next continent. Continue across land and sea one life time hair at a time traveling south until there is no more south to go. You have reached the southern pole. Take a moment to look out a window facing south and imagine all the life times it would take to reach the south end of the world?

But we're still not to eternity. Now to get to eternity, just turn to your right. Instead of going south go west and continue traveling around the earth forever. One lifetime-hair at a time. That is the length of eternity.

Like anything God offers to humanity, the significance of what he gives is so far beyond what it costs us to acquire, that nothing short of lunacy would reject such a gainful offer. Only a fool would ask for a discount when the profit is unimaginably beyond the asking price?

"Whoever believes in me, will have eternal life." -Jesus

Reading Today: Matthew 28

10-15 minutes

Day 4

Knowing my Co-Workers

This week get to know your co-workers. Remember God loves them as his children. As children of the King of the universe they are VIPs, but then again so are you.

You can be a bridge between your co-workers and God. They may be indifferent to God, hostile towards Him or they may be living in step with God. No matter where they are on life's journey, there is room for growth and greater trust in God. There is a reason God put them in your life and they may be a source of growth for your faith.

Action step:

Remember your co-workers include people from other teams and other departments that may work near you. Time to get better acquainted. Try learning about their family or interests. If you need some ice breaker suggestions try the following:

- Prepare an interesting story
- Tell a joke or two
- Ask a mix of casual and interested questions
- Remember It's ok to be a little odd
- Don't bet the farm on a single meeting
- Use your best judgment as you get to know your co-workers.

Reading Today: Matthew 26-28

10-15 minutes

Day 5

My Gifts 1

And he[God] gave **apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers**,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians 4

What is the purpose and the mission of these gifts?

Purpose (verse 12):

Mission (verse 13):

Apostles step out take risks to get things done. They are self-starter entrepreneurs or commissioned officers with authority and a mission.

Prophets have insightful perspective that comes from God

Evangelists tell it like it is. God offers something good and you've got to believe it. Similar to sales and marketing, evangelists get the message out and invite people to buy in.

Pastors dedicate themselves to meeting the needs of the people around them. Often characterized by tender hearts and a compulsion toward peace and harmony.

Teachers build people up. They help people grow and develop. Teachers have an ability to make difficult concepts easily accessible.

Do you recognize yourself in the description of any of the 5 gifts?

If so which one(s)?

Reading Today: 1 Corinthians 15

10-15 minutes