

# PURE PASSION

AN ATHLETE STUDY

## RIPPING THROUGH

If you've seen Olympic runners race, you know how exciting it can be. No matter how long the race, it all boils down to the final sprint. As a fan, I love the anticipation and build up to the moment when the winning runner flies across the finish line and the ribbon is ripped apart!

Today we'll look at Jesus' final moments on the cross. He endured a marathon ministry, and suffered an excruciating day. At the end though, he does not tear through a ribbon, he tears through a veil. After his death, the veil covering the Holy of Holies in the temple was torn in two (Luke 23:45), symbolizing our new access to God. Although we don't have space to examine this event in detail, Jesus finally accomplished his mission on earth—a perfect sacrifice for reconciliation between God and man!

MATTHEW

27:35–56

MARK

15:25–41

LUKE

23:33–43,  
46–47

JOHN

19:18–30

LUKE 23:33–43, 46–47

<sup>33</sup> And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup> And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. <sup>35</sup> And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup> and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup> There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" <sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

<sup>46</sup> Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. <sup>47</sup> Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There's no doubt that what Jesus suffered was immense. You've probably heard people say that he did that for you and me. You've probably sung about it at church, especially around Easter. But have you ever stopped to wonder *why* Jesus had to die?

Many reasons and a lot of Old Testament scripture could be given for that answer. Scan the QR code for a very brief response to such a large question.



## DISCUSSION

Describe a time when you had trouble finishing what you started. What were you trying to do and why did you stop?

ICEBREAKER

1. Describe the mistreatment of the onlookers, soldiers, and criminal toward Christ. (35-39)

2. What was Jesus' response to this mistreatment? (34)

OBSERVATION

3. What was the response of the centurion after all that he had witnessed? (47, see also Matthew 27:54)

4. How might the reaction of those who mistreated Jesus be different if they really understood who he was? (40-41)

INTERPRETATION

5. In light of who Christ is, what do you think the Lord might be calling you to do to finish strong in an area of your life?

APPLICATION

Hopefully today you've stopped to consider the suffering of Christ in a new way. Considering all that he did for you, does your life reflect an appropriate response? If you answer "no," consider talking to your coach today.

# PURE PASSION

WEEK 10

AN ATHLETE STUDY

## STUDY NOTES

### THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Running is hard! If you've ever trained to run, you may have heard of "hitting the wall." It's that point when it just doesn't seem like you can take another step—you're exhausted physically and mentally. It just doesn't seem like you can keep going. Jesus had endured a sleepless night, accusations, betrayal, abuse, scourging, and he had even carried his cross (probably weighing in excess of 100 lbs) **to the place that is called The Skull** (a.k.a. Golgotha), **there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.** Here he was stripped naked, and nailed to the cross he carried. In all likelihood, he hit a wall like we can't even imagine!

Jesus' cross likely held him with ropes complemented by seven-inch nails driven into his wrists (considered part of the "hand") and feet. His toes barely touched a small block strategically attached to the vertical post. As Jesus hung, pressure on his wrists, arms, and shoulders caused ligaments to pull out of their sockets. Sensitive nerves burned like fire rubbing against iron at every movement.

As bad as all of this was, death by crucifixion was caused by asphyxiation, not blood loss. In order to breathe, the victim had to push up with his legs on the nail through his feet, toes barely touching the wooden block. Eventually, this strain on the legs caused the victim to return weight to their upper body. The torturous result—a slow agonizing suffocation, like breathing through a straw that slowly gets pinched closed—execution by crucifixion sometimes lasted for days.

### GODLY PASSION ENDURES SUFFERING

Every gasp of air was precious as Jesus hung, suffocating. Despite this, Jesus used every ounce of energy and air to speak while hanging on the cross. Even while dying, Jesus' ministry continued until his very last breath. While men **cast lots to divide his garments** (a direct fulfillment of Psalm 22:18), Jesus gasped a prayer, **"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."**

We've seen repeatedly how those that should have known better, the religious elites, misunderstood Jesus' identity, his plan, and his purpose. Here again, we see **the rulers scoffed at him, soldiers also mocked him**, and even Pilate offered one last jab at both Jesus and the Jews requiring the sign above Jesus' head to read, **"This is the King of the**

**Jews."** The sign placed on the cross told onlookers why this person has been crucified. Pilate intended to mock the Jews and Jesus, but instead declared a truth that he himself did not understand.

Not only did the men on the ground revile Jesus, but **one of the criminals who were hanged** beside Jesus **railed at him** saying, **"Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"** Keep in mind that this was not an actual request by someone who believed he had the power to do so. No, this man, gasping for breath, used his precious oxygen to hurl an insult at Jesus. Shocked and appalled, **the other** crucified criminal **rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."**

Finally, someone got it! This criminal, after rebuking the other, said to the crucified Christ, **"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."** Rewarding this man's faith, Jesus **said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."** This criminal experienced Jesus' teaching—eternal life doesn't result from a prayer or ritual. God grants eternal life because we know him (John 17:3). This lowly thief performed no good work. He didn't help an old lady, give money, walk forward, or get baptized. He only believed in Jesus and cried out to him in surrender. That was enough. Thankfully for us, it still is.

### GODLY PASSION GOES ALL THE WAY

Since the tender age of twelve, Jesus publicly stated that his life's mission was doing his Father's will (Luke 2:48-49). Now, after completing his redemptive mission, Jesus went all the way. In one final act of submission, **calling out with a loud voice, Jesus said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"** just as David prophesied (Psalm 31:5).

After personally witnessing Christ's passion all the way to his death, a Roman **centurion and those with him...saw the earthquake and what took place, and how he died** (Mark 15:39) **they were extremely terrified.** The **centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God saying, "Certainly this man was innocent! Truly this one was God's son"** (Matthew 27:54). The centurion probably mocked Jesus along with the others, but now expressed faith in the Savior. After hitting "the wall," Jesus continued to change lives until his dying breath—now that's going all the way!