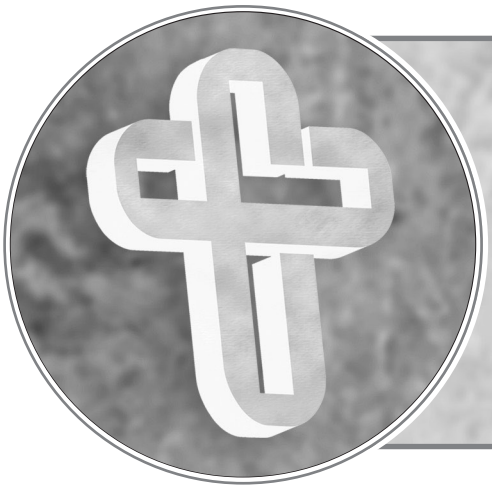


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
NOVEMBER 22 2025

Christwise

Scripture Story: Matthew 27:31-53; Mark 15:20-38; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:16-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 78, 79.
Key Text: Luke 23:44-46.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Ellen White tells us: "The cross of Calvary appeals in power, affording a reason why we should love Christ now, and why we should consider Him first, and best, and last, in everything. We should take our fitting place in humble penitence at the foot of the cross. We may learn the lessons of meekness and lowliness of mind as we go up to Mount Calvary, and, looking upon the cross, see our Savior in agony, the Son of God dying, the Just for the unjust. Behold Him who could summon legions of angels to His assistance with one word, a subject of jest and merriment, of reviling and hatred. He gives Himself a sacrifice for sin. When reviled, He threatened not; when falsely accused, He opened not His mouth. He prays on the cross for His murderers. He is dying for them. He is paying an infinite price for every one of them. . . . Look, O look upon the cross of Calvary; behold the royal victim suffering on your account" (Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him*, p. 65).

This lesson affords the ideal opportunity to "Look, O look upon the cross." Never underestimate the power of gazing upon the cross! The Bible reminds us that by beholding we become changed (2 Corinthians 3:18). To this end, challenge your students to focus daily on Christ's sacrifice on the cross with the prayer to live as Jesus died. For it is from the bloody tree at Calvary that Jesus calls us to live lives of sacrifice, forgiveness, perseverance, selflessness, and grace.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Be informed of the sacrifice that Jesus made for humankind at Calvary. *(Know)*
- Sense the need to accept Jesus' sacrifice. *(Feel)*
- Have an opportunity to live in the shadow of the cross. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 24: "There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and, began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ

and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Lev. 16; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Heb. 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7, 12; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Or use this as an alternate activity:

Bring the elements used in a traditional Communion service. Divide the class into three small groups and ask each group to search the Bible and find texts that tie their specific element into the story of the cross. (If your class is small, do activity as a group.) For example, the first group will have a basin and towel. They are then to find all the passages in Scripture that inform about the practice of foot washing and service. The second group will do the same using the bread. The third group will do the same with the grape juice. After they have searched and discussed their element in the small group, have them share highlights of their discussion with the group at large.

Illustration

Begin with a question that a lot of Seventh-day Adventist youth struggle with:

Ever wonder if you're good enough to be saved?

Oh, you're working at it all right. You volunteer at the soup kitchen. You go to Sabbath School. You don't drink or swear or chew or date those who do. But in your honest moments maybe you wonder if you'll ever be good enough. Perhaps you have no real assurance of salvation.

If this describes you, take heart. God does not want you to be fuzzy about being saved. The apostle Paul explains: "Just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people" (Romans 5:18, NIV).

In other words, because of what Jesus did on the cross, if you accept Him as your Savior, you are saved. *Period*. Calvary is complete and you are saved!

How, then, do works fit into the equation? Consider this: When the Golden Gate Bridge was built, initially there was no safety net constructed under the bridge. During the first phase of the construction, 23 men fell to their death. Finally, some bright engineer suggested that they suspend a net beneath the bridge. For the modest price of only $100,000 the net was installed.

During the second half of the construction, 10 men fell. All of them were saved in the net. But what's amazing is that production increased 25 percent during the second half! Why? Because once people knew that they could work without fear of death, they were more productive. They did better work.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Use the following discussion to follow up the story of the Golden Gate Bridge:

Your heavenly Father does not want you to live with the fear of falling. He wants you to know that there is a net in the shape of a cross anchored beneath you, securing you in your salvation. And in that assurance you can do better work.

Out of the Story *for Teachers*

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- After reading Matthew 27:31-53, what immediately strikes you, stops you cold, stands out?
- Is there anything in the account that you have never noticed before? If so, what?
- For what crime was Jesus crucified?
- Why do you think the accusers insulted Jesus in the way that they did?
- Had Jesus come down from the cross, do you think people would have believed in Him then? Why or why not?

- If Jesus came today, who would crucify Him? Under what charge(s)?
- What is the significance of Jesus' cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).
- Why are the supernatural events surrounding the death of Christ significant? According to the centurion, how dramatic were these events?
- What do you imagine the women present at the cross were thinking?
- How do the Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion differ? What details do all of the Gospel writers include?
- Explain Ellen White's commentary on the story: "When the loud cry, 'It is finished,' came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain. . . . All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open" (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 756, 757).

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information from en.wikipedia .org/wiki/Crucifixion and www.thenazareneway.com /details_history_of_crucifixion.htm to shed more light on crucifixions in the ancient world. Share it in your own words.

Crucifixion is an ancient method of execution whereby the condemned person is tied or nailed to a large wooden cross (made in various shapes) and left to hang until dead. It was in use particularly among the Persians, Seleucids, Carthaginians, and Romans from about the sixth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., when in the year 337 Emperor Constantine I abolished it in his empire, out of veneration for Jesus Christ.

Details of Crucifixion. Crucifixion was never performed for symbolic purposes; usually, its purpose was only to provide a painful, gruesome, and public death, using whatever means were readily available toward that end. In fact, crucifixion is only a subset of a much wider continuous spectrum of slow and painful execution methods, which include varied forms ofimpalement, hanging from hooks, burning at the stake, and exposure to wild beasts.

Thus, the details of any crucifixion varied considerably with location and epoch, and even from case to case; therefore, very little can be said about the practice in general.

Cross Shape. The horizontal beam of the cross, or transom, could be fixed at the very top of the vertical piece, the upright, to form a T called a tau cross. The horizontal beam could also be affixed at some distance below the top, often in a mortise, to form a T-shape called a Latin cross, most often depicted in Christian imagery. Alternatively, the cross could consist of two diagonal beams to form an X. A single vertical wooden stake with no transom at all has also been cited.

Location of the Nails. For the sake of expediency,

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Environment and Learning

Research shows that the physical environment of a room impacts learning. In light of the serious nature of this lesson, it might serve you well to give extra forethought to the learning environment you will use to share the sobering story of Calvary. Perhaps you'll want to set up a table in the shape of a cross and use candle lighting. Maybe you could have class in the chapel of a local hospital or funeral home. By changing the setting you can immediately signal to the students that this lesson will be different.

the victim was probably affixed to the cross by ropes, nails, or some combination of the two. In popular depictions of crucifixion, possibly derived from a literal reading of the description in the Gospel of John, of Jesus' wounds being "in the hands," the victim is shown supported only by nails driven straight through the feet and the palms of the hands. However, the flesh of the hands cannot support a person's body weight, so some other means must have been used to support most of the weight, such as tying the wrists to the crossbeam.

Cause of Death. Death could come in hours or days, depending on exact methods, the health of the victim, and environmental circumstances. A theory attributed to Pierre Barbet holds that the typical cause of death was asphyxiation. He conjectured that when the whole body weight was supported by the stretched arms, the victim would have severe difficulty exhaling, due to hyperexpansion of the lungs. If death did not come from asphyxiation, it could result from a number of other causes, including physical shock, dehydration, and exhaustion.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Remind the students that because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross we can be forgiven and freed from all of our sins. One way to illustrate this in closing is to have a cross in the room. Play a song about the cross and invite students to write their struggle(s) on a piece of paper. Have them come to the cross and hammer the paper on the cross. There is something powerful about hearing the hammer pounding sin into the cross. Assure the students that their papers will be destroyed (you may wish to do that as part of this activity) and nobody will read them. Underscore one more time that because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross they can have full assurance of salvation.

Summary

Read the following statement about the decisive role of the cross:

"Satan did not then exult as he had done. He had hoped to break up the plan of salvation; but it was laid too deep. And now by the death of Christ he knew that he himself must finally die, and his kingdom be given to Jesus. He held a council with his angels. He had prevailed nothing against the Son of God, and now they must increase their efforts and with their power and cunning turn to His followers. They must prevent all whom they could from receiving the salvation purchased for them by Jesus. By so doing Satan could still work against the government of God. Also it would be for his own interest to keep from Jesus as many as possible. For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will at last be rolled back upon the originator of sin, and he must bear their punishment, while those who do not accept salvation through Jesus will suffer the penalty of their own sins" (Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 178).



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages (*or *Humble Hero*), chapters 78, 79.

Humble Hero is book 3 in a special adaptation of the Conflict of the Ages series, created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Read more about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

STUDENT LESSON

NOVEMBER222025

Scripture Story: Matthew 27:31-53; Mark 15:20-38; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:16-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 78; 79.

Christwise



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keytext

"It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last."

(Luke 23:44-46, NIV)

flashlight

"The Saviour made no murmur of complaint. His face remained calm and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon His brow. There was no pitying hand to wipe the death dew from His face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay His human heart. While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 744).

what do you think?

Review how well you remember the details surrounding the cross by taking the following quiz:

1. What was written on the cross of Jesus?
   a. Jesus is Lord
   b. Jesus is the Son of God
   c. Jesus saves
   d. This is Jesus, the King of the Jews
2. In fulfillment of another prophecy, which awful punishment was not inflicted on Jesus during His last 24 hours:
   a. Body scourged
   b. Purple robe draped over His cut and bleeding back
   c. Legs broken on the cross
   d. Side pierced with a spear
3. Simon, the man who carried the cross for Jesus, was from:
   a. Cyrene
   b. Jerusalem
   c. Rome
   d. Alexandria
4. When the centurion in charge of Jesus' crucifixion heard what Jesus said from the cross and saw Him breathe His last, what did he conclude?
   a. "Truly, this was the Son of God."
   b. "Truly, this was a good man."
   c. "Truly, this man was not like the other criminals who were crucified today."
   d. "Truly, God will avenge these murderers."

Answers: 1. d; 2. c; 3. a; 4. a.

INTO THE STORY

"As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means 'the place of the skull'). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

"Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!' In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God."' In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

"From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?'* (which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?').

"When some of those standing there heard this, they said, 'He's calling Elijah.'

"Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him.'

"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

"At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people."

(Matthew 27:32-53, NIV)

did you know?

Some Bible scholars say that Golgotha ("skull") gets its name from its appearance. Golgotha could have been a place for regular executions. It was easily accessible, just outside the city. In this way government leaders believed that executions held there would serve as a deterrent to crime.

OUT OF THE STORY

Why did darkness fall over the countryside and the city for three hours?

_____
_____
_____

What did Jesus die from?

_____
_____
_____

Why didn't Jesus come down from the cross?

_____
_____
_____

What is the significance of the curtain in the Temple being torn in two?

_____
_____
_____

If you were the editor of the Jerusalem *Herald*, write the headline you would use to announce the story of the Crucifixion:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Imagine it is the day following Jesus' death. Write an obituary for Him:

_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" **(Titus 2:11-14, NIV).**

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" **(Isaiah 53:5, NIV).**

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole'" **(Galatians 3:13, NIV).**

further insight

"With amazement the angels beheld the infinite love of Jesus, who, suffering the most intense agony of mind and body, thought only of others, and encouraged the penitent soul to believe."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 752

Sabbath

Read Matthew 27:32-53; Mark 15:20-38; Luke 23:26-49; and John 19:16-37.

Ellen White says, "It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83). How well do you know the story of the Crucifixion?

How can my thinking about the closing scenes of Christ's life help me to love Him more and to be filled with His spirit?

_____
_____
_____

How can imagining Christ's life and death help me to overcome temptation?

_____
_____
_____

Sunday

Read Galatians 3:13.

After reviewing the *Into the Story* section, react to the observation of John Stott in *The Cross of Christ:*

"I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I turn to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken darkness.

"That is the God for me. He set aside His immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death."[1]

How does the cross affect your belief in God? Could God have redeemed the human race without pain or suffering? Explain. What does the cross tell us about Jesus' love?

_____
_____
_____

Monday

Read Luke 23:44-46.

Consider the *Key Text* in the context of Mel Gibson's comments about his film *The Passion of the Christ:*

"It's time to get back to a basic message, the message that was given. . . . Christ spoke of faith, hope, love, and forgiveness. And these are things I think we need to be reminded of again. He forgave as He was tortured and killed. And we could do with a little of that behavior."[2]

Tuesday

Read Hebrews 12:1, 2.

Read the *Flashlight* section and ask yourself these questions:

- How could Jesus remain calm on the cross? Was this human strength, divine strength, or a combination of both? Do we have access to this same power to be calm in dire circumstances?

_____
_____
_____

- If you could have offered Jesus "words of sympathy" while He hung on the cross, what would you have said to Him?

_____
_____
_____

- What "enemy" is God calling you to pray for?

_____
_____
_____

Wednesday

Read Isaiah 53 and Leviticus 16:1-34.

What parallels do you notice between Jesus as our sacrifice and the ancient practice of sacrificing a lamb?

_____
_____
_____

Thursday

Read Titus 2:11-14.

This passage found in this week's *Punch Lines.* Give three examples of what your life would look like if you were to live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life in this present age? Be as specific as possible.

_____
_____
_____

Friday

Read Isaiah 53:5.

Keeping in mind what happened at the cross, how can I live under the influence of Christ today?

_____
_____
_____

[1] Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992), as quoted in Bible Illustrator, Parsons Technology.

[2] Mel Gibson, interviewed on *The O'Reilly Factor*, Jan. 16, 2003.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or (*Humble Hero*), chapters 78; 79.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.