

The Nails & Spear



The call to trust

*"This man....put..to death by nailing him to a cross" Acts 2:23
"..one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water" Jn. 19:34*

In considering the nails and spear we look at the "piercing instruments"..the nails to immobilise someone who was dangerous to have on the loose..the spear to kill. They are instruments of offence. They draw blood. They inflict brutal wounds. They are used by men to get what they want. God, on the other hand, bears the pain and the wounding and does not thrust back. He calls us to be peacemakers who put our trust in him and he conquers by a stronger weapon, which is love.

PREPARATIONS - LENT 2

The nails and the Spear

Day 1

Read: Isaiah 41:7*

Isaiah ridicules the man-made idols as doubtful, precarious things, likely to fall over. They have to be nailed into place so that they can stand firm and be worshipped. Jesus is nailed to a cross by men who want to prevent him being worshipped. The idol is useless because it has no life. Jesus is eternal life so even nails can't hold him down.

Ponder: What are the insecure things in which I am tempted to put my faith?

Pray: Lord Jesus release me from all that holds me down from being your true disciple.

Day 2

Read: John 19:33-34

The spear thrust into Jesus' side was an attempt on the part of the soldiers and Jewish authorities to make sure that Jesus was really dead: finished forever! Instead it released the two great symbols of his life, water and blood. In that living stream ever since, Christians have been baptised and found communion. God turned the instruments of death into things that brought fresh life.

Ponder: If I take a fresh look at the thrusts and pains in my own life, what opportunities do I see that God can use?

Pray: Wash me pure from sin and give me the life-giving transfusion of the blood of Jesus.

Day 3

Read: 1 Samuel 17:45 & 47

It is the way of much of the world to try and beat down opposition by force of arms. David's greatness here lies in his realisation that all power is in God's hands. Without him there can be no victory: with him there can be no ultimate defeat. Jesus too put his absolute trust in his heavenly Father when the world came against him with spear and crucifixion nails. Both David and he were triumphant because of that trust.

Ponder: When evil and powerful things seem to be mustered against me do I resort first to the weapons the world uses, or do I first put my trust in God?

Pray: Increase my faith Lord, and strengthen me from within to withstand all in your name alone.

Day 4

Read: John 20:25

Thomas wanted proof that Jesus was risen from the dead. The wounds of nail and spear would be evidence enough for him. In the end it was the sheer living, breathing presence of his Lord which convinced him and made him exclaim "My Lord and my God" and which brought peace to his doubting mind.

Ponder: Most of us spend part of our lives agonisingly looking for some kind of proof for God's existence. Then, one day we meet him and the "proof" is unnecessary. Have I yet met my risen Saviour Jesus Christ?

Pray: Lord, grant to me the vision of yourself and not simply the things which point to you.

Day 5

Read: 1 Samuel 19:10 and Acts 2:23-24

Just as Saul, the ruler of Israel, tried to pin David down with a spear, so, later, the rulers in Jerusalem tried to pin Jesus down with nails. David escaped to become King over Israel in Saul's place. Jesus did not try to escape, instead he obediently went ahead to bear the punishment for the sin of all mankind and by going through the pain came to resurrection and ascension to be King over all. The nails and spear could not stop God from bringing our salvation to us.

Ponder: There are parts of my life in which I want my own way, not the Lord's. What needs to be nailed to the cross with Jesus, so that I may not escape his will for me?

Pray: Lord, help me to bring all of my life honestly before you, even if it hurts to do so.

Day 6

Read: Micah 4:1-4 and Colossians 3:15

Long before Jesus' time on earth the prophet Micah could see that God's way was different from what man had got into the habit of doing. His words would later find expression in those of Jesus, "Blessed are the peacemakers" [Matt 5:9] He calls us to abandon the ways of war and trust in the power that nails could not hold down.

Ponder: Have I accepted that the power of the Lord is greater than all the might of men? In what ways am I actively a peacemaker?

Pray: Lord make me an instrument of your peace.

Your
Notes



SHARING WITH OTHERS

Focus: The call from faith in this world's power to trust in the power of Jesus. - Session 2



Welcome and introductions

Opening Prayer

O Lord our Saviour, whom nails could not hold on the cross, grant that we, who meet now in your name, may have an unshakeable faith in your resurrection and, trusting in you alone, be equipped to bear the wounds of faith in ministry within your Church and in service to your world. Amen.



Getting started

Share and discuss with the other members of your group any question, problem or observation that has come out of the daily readings for you.



Read the Scripture passage.

1 Samuel 17:37-51

Questions for reflection

1. If you had to describe David's action in one word which of the following would it be?

FOOLHARDY FAITHFUL BRAVE
CRAZY BELIEVING AWESOME
STUBBORN ARROGANT CONFIDENT
PRESUMPTUOUS

Circle only one and explain why.

2. Look at David's words in verses 45 and 47. In what ways do they describe what Jesus has done?



From the wood to the weave

3. (i) List some ways in which David in this story is like Jesus.
- (ii) List some ways in which he is different.
- (iii) Share your lists in the group with your own explanation for each item.

4. Goliath is huge, well-armed and causes the Israelites to fear. Share what in your own life could be called your "Goliath", and how you face up to it.

or

David defeated Goliath with one small stone, expertly slung. [See also Judges 20:16].

- (i) What do you have at hand to throw at your "Goliath"?
- (ii) What do you use as a "sling"?
- (iii) In what ways do you become an expert "slinger"?



Discussion highlights

Share anything important that has happened for you in this session.

Closing prayer

(Allow time and opportunity for group prayer, finish with this set prayer if you so desire).

Holy and eternal God, your love is poured out on us so that we may give love to others. Give to us the courage and power to love both our enemies and our friends in such a way that they too may come to know the wonderful love of Jesus who did not hit back at those who nailed him to a cross. In his name we pray this. Amen.



Fellowship and a Cuppa



Something to do

Put an ordinary nail into your pocket and carry it about with you this week. Every time you touch it [or prick your finger on it] be reminded of the wounds of Jesus, and give thanks.



From the wood to the weave