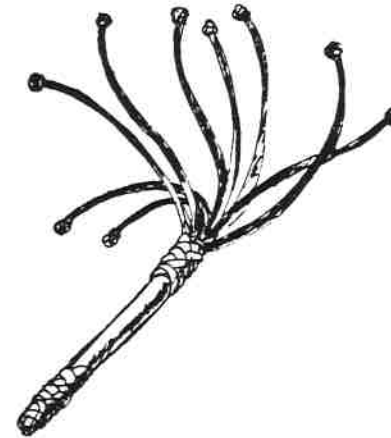


The Whip or Flail



The call to mission.

He (Pilate) had Jesus flogged again and again they struck him on the head with a staff... Mk 15: 15,19.

The whip with which Jesus was beaten leads us into thoughts of punishment, harvest, healing and cleansing. Men were flogged for wrongdoing. Animals and people were also beaten to make them work harder. The harvest was sometimes threshed out using rods or flails. Jesus cleansed the Temple with a whip and S. Peter sees in the bruises inflicted upon Jesus the wounds which heal.

PREPARATIONS - LENT 4

The Whip or Flail.

Day 1

Read: Matthew 27:26-31

Jesus did not escape the violence that is in mankind. Quite simply he was repeatedly beaten up; with hands [Matt 26:67] by his own people; with a stick to his head by the soldiers and he suffered a Roman flogging with a whip. Jesus took it all and in doing so put himself alongside the millions in our world who suffer such brutality.

Ponder: Aggression is a part of human nature. In what ways does it tend to run into violence in me, and against whom?

Pray: Lord Jesus give me hands of kindness and a heart of love...especially when I have to discipline others.

Day 2

Read: John 2:15

Jesus cleansed the Temple, driving out the animals with a switch made from "cords". The Greek word used suggests that they were small and made from rushes or grasses. This is not the leather Roman Flaggellum, used to flog offenders. Nevertheless he is determined to drive out that which is not fitting in his Father's house. When we come to Jesus we shall find that he will want to drive out of us that which is sinful. He will be firm but he will do it more gently than any other person would.

Ponder: My body is the Temple of the living God. What is there for Jesus to drive out of me?

Pray: Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord.

Day 3

Read: Isaiah 28:23-29 and Isaiah 17:6*

Threshing of some crops was done by beating them on a threshing floor with a flail or sticks. Olives were [& still are] harvested by beating the trees with wooden rods. When Jesus was beaten he was not simply taking punishment for us. God was using this beating to bring about some kind of harvest.

Ponder: When I feel beaten and bruised one thing I can do is prayerfully offer it to God and ask him to use it to bring about some positive good.

Pray: Do with me Lord whatever will bring me to bear the fruits of your Spirit.

Day 4

Read: I Corinthians 15:20-23*

What was being threshed out when Jesus was whipped was God's new harvest. Jesus himself was the "first fruits" of something new. Just as the Hebrews brought the firstfruits as a freewill offering to God when they entered the promised land [see Deut 26:1-4], so Jesus offers himself as first in the harvesting of his people safely into his kingdom. Because Jesus has taken the punishment we can enter heaven.

Ponder: Jesus has gone ahead of me into heaven. He has gone to prepare a place for me [Jn 14:3]. What am I doing in order to be prepared to take that place?

Pray: "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom"

Day 5

Read: 1 Peter 2:24 and Matthew 8:16-17

Jesus was a healer. As part of the salvation which he suffered and died to bring about there comes the extension of his healing to all believers. In prayer we can claim another of the fruits that was harvested through Jesus; the fruit of healing, which is sometimes physical and always spiritual.

Ponder: Are there things that Jesus wants to heal in me? Am I using every means provided to let him bring it about; proper medical care, prayer, laying on of hands, anointing..?

Pray: Lord bless me with your healing. Make me whole in body, mind and spirit.

Day 6

Read: Deuteronomy 25:3 and 2 Corinthians 11:23-25

When the followers of Jesus went out to tell others about him they offered their own lives in service. They were to bring in the new harvest of men and women. They became fishers of men. They too suffered the same beatings and whippings which their Lord had endured. In some way the harvest is always being threshed out in the lives of Christians.

Ponder: In what ways is the Lord using me in his harvest? What is he calling me to do next?

Pray: Lord, send forth labourers into your harvest and equip me to be one of them.

Your
Notes



SHARING WITH OTHERS

Focus: Healing and Harvest - Session 4



Welcome and introductions

Opening Prayer



Lord, who bound small cords together and with them cleansed the Temple, bind us together more closely with the cords of your love and cleanse all our thoughts and words that we may know your will, and knowing it, may have strength to do it. In Jesus' name. 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.

Luke 10:1-12 & 16-17

Questions for reflection

1. What do you think the Lord had in mind when he sent out his chosen ones? Why did he send them two by two?

2. As a disciple of Jesus, what do you mainly feel when you read the words of Jesus in verse 16?

Choose only one and say why.

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| a. Overawed | b. Scared | c. Strong |
| d. Protected | e. Accepted | f. Humbled |
| g. Supported | h. Proud | i. Honoured |
| j. Isolated | k. Secure | l. Joyful |
| | m. Other..... | |

From the wood to the weave

3. In what practical ways can you do the three things Jesus told his disciples to do in verses 8 and 9?

4. In what difficult tasks completed for the Lord have you found great joy? [See verse 17]

5. "Don't stop to greet anyone on the road", reflects the fact that middle eastern greetings take a lot of time. Why is the task that Jesus gives the 72 so urgent?

6. In what ways has Jesus begun the harvest and healing of the world?



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).

Lord Jesus, you have told us that the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few, we pray that many may hear the call to go out into all the world in mission, and may we be among them. Give us wisdom and discernment that we may effectively witness to your greatness and hasten the time when your harvest is complete and all are brought home to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.



Fellowship and a Cuppa



Something to do

This week talk about your experience with Jesus to one person you know. Encourage them to join the Church family where you worship or elsewhere.

And/Or [if you can't do that], Make a donation to one of the mission agencies so that they can.



From the wood to the weave