

The Passion of Jesus Christ

A Bible study from FocusOnTheFamily.com

Lesson four: Dying was Jesus' reason for living

Read aloud:

Today we're going to discover why dying was Jesus' reason for living on earth.

First, let's open the Bible together and read John 1:29. What was Jesus called? [The Lamb of God] As the Lamb of God, what did Jesus come to do? [He came to take away the sin of the world.]

Let's also read Romans 3:23. How many people have sinned? [Everyone] Is that a big problem? [Yes]

Let's now read Romans 6:23. What is the penalty for sin? [Death] This is the worst problem imaginable. If someone is guilty of sin, who is supposed to die? [He is.]

In Bible times – many years ago – God allowed someone to substitute the life of a perfect little lamb in place of his or her own life. That seems pretty strange to us, doesn't it?

Do you think the lambs were guilty of sin against God? Did the lambs deserve to die? [No]

The innocent lambs were killed as substitutes for the guilty men, women and children. God didn't want to kill the people he loved, so he allowed them to offer the blood of a lamb as a payment for their sin.

Let's read Genesis 22:1-14 out loud so we can hear the story of how God tested a godly man's faith by asking him to sacrifice his only son.

Let's also read Exodus 12:1-13, 21-32. These verses describe an important Jewish holiday called Passover. Why was a lamb used to help protect the Hebrews or Jewish people from death? [Because a perfect lamb's blood, offered in faith in accordance with God's requirements, saved the life of the firstborn in each family. The angel of death would then pass over each house that had blood on its doorposts.]

Now are you beginning to see why Jesus was called the Lamb of God?

It's like the saying "If you want something done right, do it yourself." God knew that human beings could never figure out a way to live their lives free from sin. So rather than making us continue to sacrifice innocent animals, God the Father sent God the Son to earth to live a perfect life – and then die. Jesus died as a substitute sacrifice to pay for the sin of every person who has ever lived.

Talk about it:

1. Does God want people to sacrifice lambs today? Why or why not?

2. Jesus sacrificed his life for whose sins?

Define these words:

Lamb – until A.D. 70, the Jewish people sacrificed lambs and other “clean” animals as an acknowledgement of their sins

Blood – according to the Bible, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22b)

Sacrifice – every Jewish sacrifice foreshadowed the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus Christ made, shedding his own blood and dying on a cross

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