

BIBLE STUDY: LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

- This Bible study has been designed for the youth-adult age range.
- A script is provided for the leader to use as a guide, though the leader is certainly free to use their own wording and modify as they feel led.
- Approximate time estimates are provided for each section, though it is understood that depending on the response from participants, some sections may require a bit less time and others, more.
- The study should keep to a total of 1 hr for each session in order to honor the participant's time commitment.

PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION FOR BIBLE STUDY

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY

“LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS”

This four week study is designed to facilitate Bible study from an unusual perspective – thinking about the experiences of prisoners in the Bible. Each one hour session will focus on a different prisoner to see what might be learned from their story – then and now:

- Week 1: Joseph – Does God abandon us in times of trouble?
Genesis 37: 12-28, Genesis 39:1-23
- Week 2: The unmerciful servant - Can we forgive?
Matthew 18: 23-35
- Week 3: Paul & Silas – Our church leaders are in jail!
Acts 16: 16-34
- Week 4: Jesus – Jesus on Death Row
Luke 22:47-23:25

All are welcome - come join in this intriguing study!

BIBLE STUDY: LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 1 – DOES GOD ABANDON US IN TIMES OF TROUBLE?

- Materials Needed: Laptop, projector, screen or blank light colored wall, pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room.
- Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate. Set up laptop and projector with link to Song for this week: *More than you think I am*, by Danny Gokey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea-TRh5RYCY>

After test, leave laptop on, but projector light off until use.

- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatroom and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~10 min)

Welcome to the first week of our bible study to see what we might learn from prisoners in the Bible.

(Go around room and invite each each person to briefly say their name and why they have chosen to attend the study and/or what they hope to get out of it. Take notes as needed so that issues can be addressed or referenced as appropriate)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Have any of you studied prisoners in the Bible before?

Have any of you thought about the fact that prisoners are mentioned in the Bible?

Each of these 4 weeks, we will look at the experiences of different prisoners and see what their story has to say to us. This may not be the typical way we

approach the bible, but my hope is that it will provide a different perspective, which may give some new insights that can be helpful to us all.

If any of you are still not too sure about learning from prisoners, or are having trouble relating to that scenario, I'd suggest that many of us have felt imprisoned – or trapped - at some point – by our life circumstances, and/or our feelings – like anger and hatred – so with that in mind, this study may turn out to be more helpful than expected

Prayer: Dear God, we give you thanks for this opportunity and for each of these fellow adventurers who have gathered together to study your word, through the experiences of those who have been imprisoned. Help us to hear what you would say to us today through this study, and help us to apply it in our daily lives and share it with others. Thank you God. Amen.

Intro: (~ 10 min)

We will begin this week by looking at the story of Joseph – he led a rather interesting life.

(Pass out Handout for Today's Session)

Do any of you recall any parts of his story? (help group to piece this together)

(favored son /son of old age, long robe with sleeves
coat of many colors-from Greek and latin
Exact meaning unclear, but was distinctive clothing that announced the father's special treatment)

(Sold into slavery by jealous brothers)

(purchased in Egypt by Potiphar, the captain of the guard

(wrongfully accused by Potiphar's wife and imprisoned – Joseph couldn't violate Potiphar's trust)

(interprets dreams of fellow inmates)

(called to interpret dream of Pharaoh)

(Joseph rises to power in Egypt – not a problem with him being a slave)

(reuniting of Joseph with father and brothers)

Reading for today focuses on his being sold into slavery and his ending up in prison – 2 of the most difficult parts of his life.

Scripture Reading: (~ 5 min)

Genesis 37: 12-28 and Genesis 39:1-23 (go around room with each volunteer reading a paragraph)

Comments/Discussion: (~ 5 min)

This is someone who encountered a number of difficulties - Did God abandon him? What do you think?

(God was with him in slavery, and helped him excel, and was with him in prison and helped him.)

(while a slave: Genesis 39: 2-5, and while in prison: Genesis 39:21-23)

I believe people sometimes think that God would have nothing to do with a prison, and yet, isn't it true that God shows up in some pretty interesting places?

Play Song/Video: (5-10 min) "More than you think I am", by Danny Gokey

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea-TRh5RYCY>

Look through lyrics (on opposite side of handout) – does anything strike you as pertinent to what we are talking about here?

Small Group Discussion (~10 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group for 10 minutes re the following questions (write on newsprint or whiteboard):

Have you ever had God help you in the midst of a difficult situation?

Did you recognize that at the time, or only see that in hindsight?

What can help us trust God in future difficult situations?

Report out Testimonies – briefly, as people are willing to share (~5 -10 min)

Closing Comments: When we are in a new difficult situation, can we remember God's help to us in the past and trust God again?

Pass out Index Cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers share a takeaway/new thought (~ 5 min)

Prayer – Dear God, We give you thanks that you are always with us, even in the midst of our greatest difficulties. Help us to remember this as we go out from here to face all that we are dealing with in our lives. Grant us safe travel, and help us to share our assurance of your love and presence with us, with others we encounter. In Jesus’s name we pray. Amen.

Bibliography

Terrence E. Fretheim, “*New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume I*” (Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press, 1994), 592-602, 607-612.

Claus Westerman, *Joseph: Eleven Bible studies on Genesis* (Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 1996).

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 1 – DOES GOD ABANDON US IN TIMES OF TROUBLE?

Scripture Reading: Genesis 37: 12-28

Genesis 39:1-23

Notes:

HANDOUT (side 2)

More than you think I am, by Danny Gokey

You always think I'm somewhere on a mountain top, But never think behind bars
You'd be amazed the places that I'd go - to be with you Where you are
So forget what you've heard - What you think that you know
There's a lot about me That's never been told
I'm more than you dreamed - More than you understand
Your days and your times Were destined for our dance
I catch all your tears - Burn your name on my heart
Be still and trust my plan - I'm more than you think I am
More than you think I am

Rumor has it there's a gavel in my hand - I'm only here to condemn
But let me tell you secrets you would've never known - I think of you as my best friend
So much has been said - Even doubted my name
But I'm showing you now - Who I really am
I'm more than you dreamed - More than you understand
Your days and your times - Were destined for our dance
I catch all your tears - Burn your name on my heart
Be still and trust my plan - I'm more than you think I am
More than you think I am

Let me open your eyes to see the heart of me, differently
Come closer than you've ever been - Let me in like never before
Bring me every broken part - The wounds and scars of who you are
And hide in me and you will see
I'm more than you dreamed - More than you understand
Your days and your times - Were destined for our dance
I catch all your tears - Burn your name on my heart
Be still and trust my plan - I'm more than you think I am
I'm more than you think I am
More than you think I am
More than you think I am
I'm more than you think I am

Songwriters: BERNIE HERMS, DANIEL JAY GOKEY, JAMES TIMOTHY NICHOLS

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<https://www.bing.com/search?q=more+than+you+think+I+am+lyrics&form=WNSGPH&qs=SW&cvid=d0e662416c2c401faca8b2e9bf031aca&pq=more+than+you+think+I+am+lyrics&nclid=8A759000A0D092C35212E6B1415C7569&ts=1481949712849&cc=US&setlang=en-US>

BIBLE STUDY: LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 2 – CAN WE FORGIVE?

- Materials Needed: Laptop, projector, screen or blank light colored wall, pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room.
- Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate. Set up laptop and projector with link to Song for this week: *Forgiveness*, by Matthew West

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Forgiveness+Matthew+West+YouTube&ru=%2fvideos%2fsearch%3fq%3dForgiveness%2bMatthew%2bWest%2bYouTube%26FORM%3dVDMHRS&view=detail&mid=E186FB0C1C9C1FF802D4E186FB0C1C9C1FF802D4&&FORM=VDRVRV>

After test, leave laptop on, but projector light off until use.

- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatroom and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~5-10 min)

(Welcome and thank each person for coming – ensure all have nametags)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Last week we began by looking at the story of Joseph, concluding from that story that God is with us, even in the midst of whatever difficulties we may be experiencing.

Today, we will be examining one of Jesus' parables – about the unmerciful servant, but let's first begin with prayer.

(Ask for any joys or concerns within the group)

Prayer: Dear God, we give you thanks today for this opportunity to come together and learn more about your word. We come with joys and concerns – you have heard them all, and know also those that are unspoken on our hearts. We lift these all up

to you. Help us now to hear the message within this parable, so that we might continue to grow in our knowledge and love of you. Thank you God. Amen.

Intro: (Pass out handout for today)

How many of you have heard of the parable of the unmerciful servant?

It's a great story - lets now read it together

Scripture: (~ 5 min) Matthew 18: 23-35

(go around room with each taking a turn to read a verse)

Large group discussion: (~10 min)

What do you think about the characters in the story?

The king (willing to forgive, but expects slave to pass that on)

The slave (owes a seemingly impossible amount of \$ - Matthew hyperbole?)

1 talent ≈ 6000 denarii, as per Snodgrass, and a denarii = a days wage

How do you feel about what happened to the slave at the end – being thrown in prison– was that deserved?

Are we ever that slave?

As Christians, have we been offered forgiveness for our sins? Do we forgive others?

Do we seek to be “tough on crime”, or do we look for more healing and restorative solutions?

If a candidate running for office says they will be “tough on crime”, ask them exactly what that means, and discern if it is based on retribution or on restoration

Are we on good terms with all we encounter – including those within our families, or do we hold onto anger and grudges?

Forgiveness can be difficult, but it is possible.

Note preceding scripture passage – forgiving 70 x 7 times...

Play Song/Video: (~5-10 min) “Forgiveness”, by Matthew West

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Forgiveness+Matthew+West+YouTube&ru=%2fvideos%2fsearch%3fq%3dForgiveness%2bMatthew%2bWest%2bYouTube%26FORM%3dVDMHRS&view=detail&mid=E186FB0C1C9C1FF802D4E186FB0C1C9C1FF802D4&&FORM=VDRVRV>

Look through lyrics (on opposite side of handout) – does anything there strike you and/or seem pertinent?

Small Group Discussion (~10 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group re the following questions (write on whiteboard or newsprint):

Have you been able to forgive others?

How did you do this?

What made this possible?

How can we extend the grace of forgiveness to those who have wronged us?

Report Out: (~ 5-10 min) Suggestions for how we might be able to forgive others?

Closing Comments/Discussion:

Can we avoid being that unmerciful servant and forgive others?

Yes, with God's help

Pass out Index Cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers to share a takeaway/new thought (~ 5 min)

Prayer: The Lord's prayer (note : forgive us as we forgive those who trespass against us!)

Bibliography:

Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 21-33.

Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories With Intent: A comprehensive guide to the parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 61-77.

Additional Scripture:

Ephesians 4:31-32 – “Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

Matthew 5:23-24 – “So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift.”

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 2 – CAN WE FORGIVE?

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18: 23-35

Notes:

Additional Resources:

Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower: On the possibilities and limits of forgiveness*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group (1998).

Donald B. Kraybill, *Amish Grace: How forgiveness transcended tragedy*, Wiley (2010).

HANDOUT (side 2)

Forgiveness, by Matthew West

It's the hardest thing to give away And the last thing on your mind today
It always goes to those who don't deserve
It's the opposite of how you feel When they pain they caused is just too real
Takes everything you have to say the word
Forgiveness, forgiveness
It flies in the face of all your pride It moves away the mad inside
It's always anger's own worst enemy
Even when the jury and the judge Say you've got a right to hold a grudge
It's the whisper in your ear saying set it free
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Show me how to love the unlovable Show me how to reach the unreachable
Help me now to do the impossible
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Help me now to do the impossible
Forgiveness
It'll clear the bitterness away It can even set a prisoner free
There is no end to what its power can do
So let it go and be amazed by what you see through eyes of grace
The prisoner that it really frees is you
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Show me how to love the unlovable Show me how to reach the unreachable
Help me now to do the impossible
Forgiveness
I want finally set it free
Show me how to see what your mercy sees
Help me now to give what You gave to me
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Forgiveness, forgiveness

Songwriters: MATTHEW WEST, MATTHEW JOSEPH WEST

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BIBLE STUDY: LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 3 – OUR CHURCH LEADERS ARE IN JAIL!

- Materials Needed: Laptop, projector, screen or blank light colored wall, pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room.
- Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate. Set up laptop and projector with link to Song for this week: *Chain Breaker*, by Zach Williams
- <http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=christian+prison+songs&view=detail&mid=C456838DC5D91D06244EC456838DC5D91D06244E&FORM=VIRE>
After test, leave laptop on, but projector light off until use.
- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatroom and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~ 5 min)

(Welcome and thank each person for coming – ensure all have nametags)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Prayer: Isaiah 42: 1-7 (say in unison)

Intro: (Pass out handout)

Scripture: (~5 min)

Acts 16: 16-34. (go around room and ask each volunteer to read a paragraph)

Summarize this story (~ 5 min) – ask group to piece this together

(Paul and Silas exorcise demon from slave girl – she no longer predicts future, owners lose income)

(Paul and Silas dragged before magistrates in marketplace, accused of disturbing the peace, and preaching Jewish customs – proselytism was seen as a threat - and are flogged, thrown in prison)

(Paul and Silas – treated as though have committed a serious crime, sing hymns and pray to God)

(earthquake – doors open, chains broken, jailor plans suicide)

(Paul intervenes, jailor asks how he can be saved, becomes a believer, brings Paul and Silas home to tend to them)

Questions for large group: (~10 min)

How would church members feel about their leaders being in jail- then and now?

Are church leaders ever arrested in modern times? Why or why not?
(bring up civil rights protests, modern day confrontations – standing rock, etc)

Note that Paul and Silas ministered to jailor (loving ones enemies, support of facility staff!)

Play Song/Video: (~5-10 min) “Chain Breaker”, by Zach Williams

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=christian+prison+songs&view=detail&mid=C456838DC5D91D06244EC456838DC5D91D06244E&FORM=VIRE>

Look through lyrics (on opposite side of handout) – does anything strike you as pertinent to what we are talking about here?

(Paul and Silas’ chains were broken – they testified as to God’s grace & love)

Small Group Discussion (~10 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group re the following questions (write on whiteboard or newsprint):

Would you risk arrest as a Christian? If so, under what circumstances?
If not, why not?

Have you ever felt imprisoned by your situation in life?

What is the good news from this scriptural passage?

Report Out: (~5-10 min) Briefly summarize thoughts/conversation from each group

Closing Comments/Discussion:

Can we be the Church, even if it means we end up in jail?
Can we be the Church, even if we feel like we are in prison?

(Yes – God is there with us - recall Joseph)

Pass out Index Cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers to share a takeaway/new thought (~5 min)

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for the bold example set by Paul and Silas in this text. Help us to boldly be the Church as we leave here today to go out in today's world, knowing that you will be with us as we do so. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Bibliography:

Craig Keener, *Acts: An exegetical commentary, Vol. 3* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 2420-2515.

Robert W. Wall, *New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. X* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 232-234.

Additional Scripture: 2 other instances - apostles jailed and liberated:

Acts 5: 12-32, 40-42

Acts 12: 3-17

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 3 – OUR CHURCH LEADERS ARE IN JAIL!

Scripture Reading: Acts 16: 16-34

Notes:

HANDOUT (side 2)

Chain Breaker, by Zach Williams

If you've been walking the same old road for miles and miles
If you've been hearing the same old voice tell the same old lies
If you're trying to feel the same old holes inside
There's a better life There's a better life

If you've got pain He's a pain taker
If you feel lost He's a way maker
If you need freedom or saving He's a prison-shaking Savior
If you've got chains He's a chain breaker

We've all search for the light of day in the dead of night
We've all found ourselves worn out from the same old fight
We've all run to things we know just ain't right
And there's a better life There's a better life

If you've got pain He's a pain taker
If you feel lost He's a way maker
If you need freedom or saving He's a prison-shaking Savior
If you've got chains He's a chain breaker

If you believe it If you receive it If you can feel it Somebody testify
If you believe it If you receive it If you can feel it Somebody testify, testify
If you believe it If you receive it If you can feel it Somebody testify

If you've got pain He's a pain taker
If you feel lost He's a way maker
If you need freedom or saving He's a prison-shaking Savior
If you've got chains He's a chain breaker

If you need freedom or saving He's a prison-shaking Savior
If you've got chains He's a chain breaker

Songwriters: JONATHAN LINDLEY SMITH, MIA FIELDS, ZACH WILLIAMS

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<https://www.bing.com/search?q=chain+breaker+lyrics+zach&form=WNSGPH&qs=AS&cvid=cf65b31470d847e7814238106f5642e6&pq=chain+breaker+lyrics&nclid=8A759000A0D092C35212E6B1415C7569&ts=1482202807333&cc=US&setlang=en-US>

BIBLE STUDY: LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 4 – JESUS ON DEATH ROW

- Materials Needed: Laptop, projector, screen or blank light colored wall, pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers, evaluation forms.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room.
- Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate. Set up laptop and projector with link to Song for this week: *My victory*, by Crowder
<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+cross+meant+to+kill+is+my+victory+lyrics&view=detail&mid=CB808F230F35CF06D642CB808F230F35CF06D642&FORM=VIRE>
 After test, leave laptop on, but projector light off until use.
- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatroom and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~ 5 min)

(Welcome and thank each person for coming – ensure all have nametags)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Prayer: Dear God, we give thanks for this opportunity for all of us to come together to learn from your word. Thanks for each person who has participated . Help us to learn more today, and to discern what you would have us do in response to our learning. Thank you God. Amen.

Intro: Last week we discussed Paul & Silas being in prison as the church leaders. Today we move on to consider Jesus, having been sentenced to death, as dead man walking

(Pass out handout for this session).

Scripture: (~ 5 min)

Luke 22:47-23:25 (go around room with each volunteer reading a paragraph)

Summarize events: (~ 5-10 min)

(Judas betrays Jesus, - should we not blame Judas so much, but ask how we are doing?)

(Brief scuffle ensues – note that Jesus still takes time to heal others – would we be able to do that if we were arrested?)

(Jesus beaten, led to home of high priest. Peter denies knowing Jesus – are we afraid to associate or be known as an associate of someone who has been arrested?)

(Council of elders pronounces Jesus guilty and takes him before Pilate)

(Pilate finds Jesus innocent, sends him off to Herod, who treats him with contempt)

(Herod finds Jesus innocent, sends him back to Pilate)

(People demand crucifixion of Jesus, and release of Barabbas, who is in prison for insurrection and murder – note that “Barabbas” means “son of the father”)

(Pilate finds no fault, but grants demands of people – Jesus led away to be crucified)

Large group discussion: (~5 min)

Anything stand out for you in this scripture reading?

Have you ever thought about Jesus as being an inmate – on death row, no less?

Note that Jesus didn't have a lawyer provided for him. Current day inmates do, but they may not be too helpful due to caseload.

Play Song/Video: (~5-10 min) “My Victory”, by Crowder

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+cross+meant+to+kill+is+my+victory+lyrics&view=detail&mid=CB808F230F35CF06D642CB808F230F35CF06D642&FORM=VIRE>

Look through lyrics (on opposite side of handout) – does anything strike you as pertinent to what we are talking about here?

Small Group Discussion (~15 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group re the following questions (write on whiteboard or newsprint):

As Christians, do we see Jesus' death sentence and crucifixion as a good thing or not? We glory in the cross, don't we?

As United Methodists, our Social Principles call for an end to the death penalty. (Read aloud and point it out on handout).
How do we fit this in with Jesus' crucifixion?

Report Out: (~5-10 min) briefly, as people are willing to share

Closing Comments/Discussion:

How might we reconcile Jesus' crucifixion with the UM stand on the death penalty?

(God, through Christ, turned a horrible event into something wonderful – conquering of death, and no more sacrifice desired – only faith.

Can we now live out Christ's values of caring for all life – even criminals?

Pass out index cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers to share a takeaway/new thought (~ 5 min)

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for these participants who have journeyed together through this study these past 4 weeks. Help us each to live our lives in the knowledge that you are present with us even in our most difficult moments. Help us to forgive others, as you have graciously forgiven us. Help us to boldly be the Church in our everyday lives, looking for opportunities to act out and share God's message with all. Help us to understand the depth of God's great love for us, that would lead to the death of God's very son on a cross. Help us to share that love with ALL in this world, including those who are, or have been imprisoned. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO FILL OUT A BRIEF EVALUATION FORM

(Distribute to all)

Bibliography:

Fred B. Craddock, *Luke, Interpretation: A Bible commentary for teaching and preaching* (Louisville, KY, John Knox Press, 1990), 260-270.

R. Alan Culpepper, *New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. IX* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 434-450.

Additional Scripture - other gospel accounts of the arrest of Jesus:

Matthew 26:47 – 27:31

Mark 14:43 – 15:20

John 18:1 – 19:16

BIBLE STUDY: LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 4 – JESUS ON DEATH ROW

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:47-23:25

Notes:

United Methodist Social Principles – The Death Penalty¹

We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore and transform all human beings. The United Methodist Church is deeply concerned about crime throughout the world and the value of any life taken by a murder or homicide. We believe all human life is sacred and created by God and therefore, we must see all human life as significant and valuable. When governments implement the death penalty (capital punishment), then the life of the convicted person is devalued and all possibility of change in that person's life ends. We believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and that the possibility of reconciliation with Christ comes through repentance. This gift of reconciliation is offered to all individuals without exception and gives all life new dignity and sacredness. For this reason, we oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes.

¹*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012), 137, ¶164G.

HANDOUT (side 2)

My Victory, by Crowder

You came for criminals And every pharisee
You came for hypocrites Even one like me
You carried sin and shame The guilt of every man
The weight of all I've done Nailed into your hands

Oh, your love bled for me
Oh, your blood in crimson streams
Oh, your death is hells defeat
A cross meant to kill is my victory

Oh, your amazing grace I've seen and tasted it
It's running through my veins I can't escape its grip
In you my soul is safe You cover everything

Oh, your love bled for me
Oh, your blood in crimson streams
Oh, your death is hells defeat
A cross meant to kill is my victory

Be hold the lamb of god Who takes away our sin, Who takes away our sin
The holy lamb of god Makes us alive again Makes us alive again

Be hold the lamb of God who takes away our sin Who takes away our Sin
the holy lamb of god Makes us alive again Makes us alive again

Oh, your love bled for me
Oh, your blood in crimson streams
Oh, your death is hells defeat
A cross meant to kill is my victory

Songwriters: CHARLES BENTLEY, DARREN MULLIGAN, DAVID CROWDER, ED
CASH

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<https://www.bing.com/search?q=my+victory+lyrics+crowder&form=WNSGPH&qs=AS&cvid=b5dd1cd83ef04eeb84ff0cd6a4df6562&pq=my+victory+lyrics&nclid=8A759000A0D092C35212E6B1415C7569&ts=1482207683293&cc=US&setlang=en-US>

BIBLE STUDY: LESSONS FROM BIBLICAL PRISONERS

EVALUATION

- 1) Which week of the study did you find most engaging/helpful?(circle one)
 - a) Week 1 – Does God abandon us in times of trouble?
 - b) Week 2 – Can we forgive?
 - c) Week 3 – Our church leaders are in jail!
 - d) Week 4 – Jesus on death row

- 2) Which week of the study did you find least engaging/helpful? (circle one)
 - a) Week 1 – Does God abandon us in times of trouble?
 - b) Week 2 – Can we forgive?
 - c) Week 3 – Our church leaders are in jail!
 - d) Week 4 – Jesus on death row

- 3) Which aspect/activity of the study did you find most engaging/helpful?
(circle one)
 - a) Reading/reviewing scripture
 - b) Song/Video and discussion
 - c) Large group discussion
 - d) Small group discussion
 - e) Reporting out/sharing takeaways/new thoughts

- 4) Which aspect/activity of the study did you find least engaging/helpful?
(circle one)
 - a) Reading/reviewing scripture
 - b) Song/Video and discussion
 - c) Large group discussion
 - d) Small group discussion
 - e) Reporting out/sharing takeaways/new thoughts

- 5) Additional comments/suggestions:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!