

“Living the Way of the Cross”

Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare to experience spiritual transformation in a practical way. It is a flexible guide that will help you discover, own, and apply the truths of God’s Word.

Message Summary

This week’s passage covers the trial scenes of Paul’s arrest in the temple following his 3rd Missionary Journey. It begins with Paul being taken into custody by the Roman tribune because the Jews were ready to execute him for his faith in Jesus and commitment to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. The passage ends with Paul being ordered to Rome because he had appealed to Caesar. This long story, which covers more than 2 years and several trials by different leaders, has one overarching theme. Jesus had promised Paul that he would testify to the facts about Jesus in the great city of Rome. Regardless of what would come, Jesus’ promise would be fulfilled and gave Paul the hope and assurance for living the Way of the Cross. It was reminiscent of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. Just as Jesus had to go to Jerusalem to suffer, Paul would have to go to Rome to suffer. Jesus suffered for the sins of the world and Paul suffered for the spread of the Gospel. Jesus died in our place and Paul ultimately died in Rome as Jesus’ servant.

Paul lived the Way of the Cross. Last week we saw the necessity for Jesus suffering in the Way of the Cross. He went to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and be raised again to new life. But with this suffering Jesus would bring a hope and restoration for all who would call on His name.

Jesus chose self-sacrifice as the means through which His Kingdom would expand. And that self-sacrifice applies to believers today just as it applied to Jesus. When we choose to follow Jesus we lay aside everything for His sake, for His purposes. This is how Paul lived and it’s how he died. This is how God has called you and me to live too. He has called us to live the Way of the Cross.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that promotes self-service rather than self-sacrifice. It’s a world that tells you to “have it your way.” In a weird sort of way when we come to worship we often choose a church family based on what that family can give us rather than what we can contribute to the family. But there is a better way. That way is to live your life based on the Way of the Cross. The text for this week will help you see that God has given us promises, just as He did Paul, that will give us hope and assurance for living the Way of the Cross.

As you prepare to meet with your Missional Community this week, examine the truths from the Message Outline and determine where you need to live by faith in light of these promises. How will your life change so these promises can be displayed in your life? In what ways are you living in the Way of the Cross?

Message Outline

Hope for living the Way of the Cross:

1. God’s promises are fulfilled in Jesus.
 - In His death Jesus satisfied God’s wrath.
 - In His resurrection Jesus secured our future.
2. Jesus calls His followers to walk in His promises.

God’s Promises fuel our:

- Decisions.
- Courage.
- Speech.
- Faith.

3. God’s promises cannot be thwarted.

Regardless of:

- Suffering.
- Circumstances.
- Ability.

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Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help make application of God’s Word to your Head (What God wants me to know), to your Heart (What God wants me to desire/value), and to your Hands (What God wants me to do).

In regard to Acts 22:22-26:32:

1. What does this passage say about God’s character?
2. What is God doing here? How does this passage fit in the overall narrative of the Bible?
3. What is God saying about me?
4. Where am I not living by faith? How do I return to faith?
5. How should I practice this in everyday life?

Weekly Prayer Focus

- **Church:**
 - Pray that God would give us new believers and covenant members.
 - Pray for new relationships that will lead to Gospel conversations.
 - Pray for the elders as they lead us to accomplish the mission.
 - Pray for the Missional Communities to establish their goals and objects and begin to live them out.
- **Local:**
 - Pray for the Friday Night Beach Bonfire Outreach.
 - Pray that God would burden us with the lostness in our cities, neighborhoods, and at work.
 - Pray that God will identify 5 people you can begin to invest in and engage with the Gospel.
- **Global:**
 - Pray that God would give you a heart for the nations.
 - Pray for the new believer in SEA and for those who have heard the Gospel.
 - Pray for Good Shepherd Ministries and Bill & Sandy Younger
 - Pray for Servants Hearts Ministries and Bob & Georgette Kornegay
 - Pastor Abraham and his church in Guatemala.