



## **Week 1 - Arrest**

Dramatic events cascaded, one after another, as Jesus' crucifixion drew near. Jesus faced rejection at the hands of two of his closest friends. Judas betrayed him to powerful authorities. Peter, the one on which he would build his church, denied knowing Jesus in front of total strangers. Religious and civil authorities tried Jesus on trumped-up charges. Soldiers beat and mocked him, and a ruthless crowd called for his crucifixion. Jesus suffered this for one reason: to reconcile the world to God.

Jesus' Passion is one of the most detailed stories in scripture. This study slows down to look closely at these events, the people who participated in them, what Jesus did, and what we can learn from them 2,000 years later.



**Asbury**  
come. build. love.

# Part 1

**Begin** by praying for God's will to set the standard for our actions and treatment of others, especially within your small group.

*One of those with Jesus reached for his sword. Striking the high priest's slave, he cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put the sword back into its place. All those who use the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I'm not able to ask my Father and he will send to me more than twelve battle groups of angels right away? But if I did that, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this must happen?"*

*[Matthew 26:51-54]*

- John tells us that Simon Peter was the disciple who cut off another's ear during Jesus' arrest. Why do you think Peter responded with violence? What emotions might Peter have been feeling? Joy? Triumph? Relief? Fear? Anger?
- What do you imagine the other disciples thought of Peter's actions with his sword?
- A crowd had come with swords to arrest Jesus. What do you imagine they felt when one of the disciples attacked one of their own?
- Describe the possible outcomes of the disciples resorting to violence instead of allowing Jesus to be arrested peacefully. How would Jesus' message be affected? How would the early church look different if they were successful in preventing Jesus' arrest? What if they were not successful?

# Part 2

*“Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God’s children.*

*[Matthew 5:9]*

*“You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you that you must not oppose those who want to hurt you. If people slap you on your right cheek, you must turn the left cheek to them as well. When they wish to haul you to court and take your shirt, let them have your coat too. When they force you to go one mile, go with them two. Give to those who ask, and don’t refuse those who wish to borrow from you.*

*[Matthew 5:38-42]*

- How does Jesus respond to unfolding violence in the garden? What were the consequences of Jesus willingness to be arrested?
- Peter later denies Jesus. Do you think Jesus’ rebuke of Peter’s violence affected Peter’s willingness to deny Jesus? If so, how?
- How are Jesus’ priorities revealed in this interaction? What are they?
- What do you think the crowd with swords thought of Jesus’ healing one of their own?

# Part 3

*If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people. Don't try to get revenge for yourselves, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. It is written, Revenge belongs to me; I will pay it back, says the Lord. Instead, If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. By doing this, you will pile burning coals of fire upon his head. Don't be defeated by evil, but defeat evil with good.*

*[Romans 12:18-21]*

- Violence takes many forms including using force or power to harm, control, or damage others in physical or psychological ways. These can be minor or major actions. What emotions arise inside of you when you are tempted to cause another harm?
- What consequences arise when we choose violence over peace-making? Can we really defeat evil with good?
- When, in history or your own life, have you seen good overcome evil?
- How can we leave revenge up to God?

**Close** by praying for each person to know how to bring peace and trust God.

**Dig Deeper:** Research Christian uses of non-violent resistance, pacifism, and just war theory. Christians have wrestled with the use of violence for centuries, and the answers are not always clear.