

Study Series: The God Who Is There

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Lesson Title: “The God Who Dies—and Lives Again”   
(pp. 120-134)

Session 9

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The main point of this lesson is: Jesus willingly died on the cross, but victoriously came back to life.

Focus on this goal: To help adults live with the confidence of a resurrected, living Savior

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 27:27-51; John 20:24-28

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask adults if they can recall from a literature class the main premise of a tragedy and state examples of literary tragedies. Explain literary tragedies are stories of human suffering, usually detailing a hero’s faults that trigger a devastating event. Examples are Othello, Oedipus Rex, and Death of a Salesman.

Ask if adults can recall the main premise of a redemption story and state examples of redemption literature. Explain redemption stories are about negative events that lead to positive outcomes. Examples are Les Misérables, A Christmas Carol, and The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.

Ask: How would you categorize the Bible if all you knew were the Old Testament stories and why? What makes the Bible a redemption story rather than a tragedy?

Step 2. Born to Die

Read the Day One Note (p. 120). Invite a volunteer to read Mark 8:31-33. Analyze what Peter might have thought Jesus and His disciples were headed toward. Determine what Jesus knew He was headed toward. Discuss Day One, activity 2 (p. 121).

Ask: What’s the danger when studying familiar Bible passages? Note that’s why it’s valuable to look at a familiar passage in a new way, such as studying the crucifixion by examining the ironies of the cross.

State that Alanis Morissette sings a song in which she identifies situations then notes their irony with a question. State most of the situations are examples of unfortunate coincidences rather than irony. Guide adults to determine what irony really means (see last paragraph of Day One, p. 121).

Step 3. Ironies, Part 1

Discuss Day Two, activity 1 (p. 122). Consider why the soldiers were so cruel to Jesus. Ask how they were being ironic with their declaration, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Determine the deeper irony in their statement. Request adults underline the Day Two statement (p. 122), “Matthew knows, God knows, and the readers know that Jesus is the king.”

Invite a volunteer to read the Day Two paragraph (p. 123) beginning with “But what sort of a kingdom is it?” Discuss Day Two, activity 2 (p. 123). Explore what it may look like for Christians to live that kind of ironic life.

Step 4. Ironies, Part 2

Discuss Day Three, activity 1 (p. 124). Request a volunteer state the irony identified in this passage. Explore ways Jesus is actually demonstrating great power in Matthew 27:32-40.

Explain it was customary to offer those who were being crucified wine mixed with a narcotic to dull the pain. The CSB Study Bible states, “Jesus’s refusal to drink it expressed His determination to suffer the full agony of the cross.”1

Ask a volunteer to read John 2:19-22. Ask how people used Jesus’s own words to mock Him. Ask: What’s ironic about that?Use the last two paragraphs of Day Three (pp. 125-126) to add to this discussion.

Invite responses to Day Three, activity 2 (p. 126).

Step 5. Ironies, Part 3

Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 126). Evaluate the difference between what the mockers and Matthew meant by “saved.”

Analyze what’s ironic about the Jewish leaders’ statement about Jesus. Invite a volunteer to read the Day Four paragraph (p. 127) beginning with “But Matthew, God, and readers know . . . .” Analyze how Jesus was driven by an internal moral imperative. Examine how that is also true of those who have been saved by Jesus because He didn’t save Himself.

Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 27:45-46. Examine the author’s question from Day Four (p. 128): “Is Jesus actually giving up at this point, drowning in despair?” Read Psalm 22:1 and state that while Jesus was certainly suffering separation from God while bearing humanity’s sin, when He cried out Psalm 22:1, He probably also had in mind the remainder of the psalm that prophesies His crucifixion (vv. 2-18) and concludes with victory (vv. 22-31).

Consider why it is ironic that the Man who cries out in despair trusts God. Invite responses to Day Four, activity 2 (p. 128).

Request a volunteer read Matthew 27:50-51. Explore the significance of the veil being torn from top to bottom.

Step 6. The Resurrection

Ask what prevents the story of Jesus being from a tragedy. Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 28:1-6. Inviteother volunteers to identify some events of that first Easter Sunday.

Discuss Day Five, activity 1 (p. 129). Use the Day Five remarks (p. 130) to examine what led Thomas to full belief. Ask: How does Thomas’s story challenge and comfort you?

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Ask: How can our life stories be redemption stories? How are our lives ironic when we bow to Jesus as our Lord and our God? (Examples: When we die, we truly live. When we are weak, we are strong. When we surrender, we live with the confidence and power of our resurrected, living Savior.)

Close in prayer.

1. Note on Matthew 27:33-34 in CSB Study Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017) 1551.

