

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 25

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the most meaningful way you've commemorated or marked the traditional 40-day season of Lent? (For example, maybe it's something you've abstained from, a practice you've added to your routine, or an activity you did with your family.)

CAIAPHAS' PROPHECY

Lazarus is alive when he should be dead. Jesus has performed another miraculous sign near Jerusalem, and the most powerful legal, judicial, and legislative court gathers to discuss how to deal with this Nazarene. The Sanhedrin, as they are called, fear what will happen if Jesus is crowned King and the Romans retaliate by sacking the Temple or taking away their power.

It is the High Priest, Caiaphas who speaks, "it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."

John tells us that Caiaphas unknowingly speaks prophetically. Jesus will indeed die as a substitute for the nation of Israel. Though, it wouldn't be because this Jewish court wants him dead. Jesus goes to his own death willingly to die on behalf of the whole world. Caiaphas has no idea that his words are more true than he ever likely intended—Jesus won't just die to save the Jewish people, but the gentiles like you and me, too.

Like the Good Shepherd, Jesus will lay down his life to save those he loves. And as we witnessed with the Joseph story in Genesis, while Caiaphas intends to kill Jesus for his own reasons, God is working through the entire situation to bring about the redemption of the entire world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Read John 11:45-53. Why do you think some people believe in Jesus after seeing his miracles, while others do not?

3. Put yourself in the position of High Priest Caiaphas. If Jesus continues to gain followers, the Romans will likely come and destroy everything you know and love. How would you have handled the situation?
4. Can you think of an instance today where one group may have justified hurting one person or people to protect their own interests?
5. You are blessed to be a blessing. Discuss a few practical ways you as a group can share your blessings with others this week.

WEEKLY PRACTICE

This week, we will commemorate Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten season. Starting next Monday, we'll use the weekly fasts and practices laid out in the [2023 Lenten Companion Guide](#) as weekly practices. But for this week, we focus on the spirit of Ash Wednesday, when we confront our own mortality and confess the areas where we've fallen short of God's best. Use this prayer as a starting point each day as we enter this next 40-day period leading up to Easter.

Lord, we confess our sins before you. We confess that we have fallen short of your glory and your intent for our lives. Open our eyes that we may see ourselves with clarity and truthfulness, that we may have eyes to see all of that within us that is not pleasing to you.

Lord, we confess to you that we have not loved as we ought. We have been impatient with others with whom we could have been patient. We have disregarded those you have called us to serve. We have chosen the selfish way when you have called us to selflessness.

Lord, we confess that we have not tended to the care of our souls. We have been too busy to pray. We have been too quick to speak and too slow to listen for you. We have filled our lives with all kinds of noise instead of patiently waiting like sheep for our shepherd's voice.

Lord, we confess our need of you. We need your grace. We need your patience. We need your guidance. We cannot see beyond the moment. We cannot worship you as we ought. As we begin this solemn journey toward the cross, we call upon your mercy and your love for our salvation.

Amen.