**The Beautiful, Terrible Cross**  week of March 25, 2018

Life Group Discussion Questions

Business Insider put together a list of the reported last words of notable individuals.

**What do the final words of the individuals listed below tell you about what was important to them?**

**Augustus Caesar, the first Roman emperor:** "I found Rome of clay; I leave it to you of marble."

Bob Marley, a musician: "Money can't buy life."

Karl Marx, a philosopher: "Last words are for fools who haven't said enough."

**Humphrey Bogart, an actor:** "I should never have switched from scotch to martinis."

**Thomas Hobbes, a philosopher:** "I am about to take my last voyage, a great leap in the dark."

**Ludwig van Beethoven, a deaf composer:** "I shall hear in heaven.”

Share with each other: **If you were to die today, what would you say to those you love most? What would you want to be remembered for?**

**What shocks you most about Jesus’ coronation? Why?**

**What is that touches your heart; or grieves you? Why?**

**What other emotions do you experience when you reflect on what happened to Jesus?**

On the day we call Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem to be crowned as King. But there never was and never will be a coronation like his. In anticipation of his coronation, the body of Jesus should have been washed with clean water. Instead he was bathed with his own blood that poured from the wounds inflicted on him by flogging. Those who helped Jesus dress, should have put on him royal clothing. Instead, they stripped him naked. They did put a crown on his head, but it was made of thorns. A scepter was placed in Jesus’ hands. But it was a staff of wood, which was then taken from him and used to strike him …repeatedly. The oil poured out on his head was spit. The praise which greeted him was shouts of scorn and mocking. The gifts given to honor Jesus were three nails and a spear that were driven into his hands, his feet and his side. The food offered to him was sour wine. The throne he was placed upon was a cross. And the final words spoken by Jesus were – “It is finished.”

Ravi Zacharias says, *“The cross of Jesus brings into focus evil’s assault against innocence …[the cross serves as] both a mirror and a window.”* Jesus Among Other Gods, p.132

**Discuss together how the cross is like a mirror; like a window.**

God is a holy God, which means he is more than simply good. In the Bible, to speak of God’s holiness is to speak of his… *“’tremendous ‘otherness.’ God has revealed himself as the Being in whom all goodness dwells...He is the very essence of what the word ‘goodness’ is based upon.”*

Jesus Among Other Gods, p.123-124

**What other instances can you think of in the Bible where people encountered the “otherness” of God. What happened? What happened to the individuals? See Luke 8:22-25; Ezekiel 1.**

**Share with each other a time when you have experienced the “otherness” of God?**

**What happened to you?**

**Interact with the statement made by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and John Stott.**



John Stott: *Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it as something done by us.* leadershipresources.org

**The word used in the Bible to describe God’s response to sin… is wrath.**

**Put in your own words what you have understood wrath to be.**

**And then interact with what James Smith says.**

James Smith: *“Wrath is not a permanent attribute of God…but a temporary, necessary and just reaction of a loving, holy, good and beautiful God, to sin and evil….Wrath is not something that God is, but something that God does… God is fiercely and forcefully opposed to that which destroys his precious people….”* The Good and Beautiful God, p.121-122

**Read Galatians 6:14. Why do you think we are to boast in the cross of Jesus?**

**See also Philippians 2:6-8.**

**Read Colossians 2:13-15. What happened on the cross on which Jesus hung?**

**Share with each other why the cross of Jesus is precious to you.**