

COURAGE

LESSON 13 - "Via Dolorosa: The Path of Suffering"

MARCH 29, 2026

WORSHIP (15 MINS)

Venue: Home gatherings

Sing one or two songs or play a song from You Tube.

Venue: Public place (school, café, park, etc.) or **Via Online**,

Testimonies: **"What is your "high" or "your "low" this past week?"**

Ask someone to do the opening prayer.

WELCOME (10 MINS)

Welcome guests/first-time visitors.

Ice-breaker: 1. Can you name one or two things that experiencing suffering has taught you in life? How did you cope with those situations?

WORD (30-45 MINS)

Main Text: John 12:27 NIV

Intro: Jesus did not choose an easy and comfortable life, He chose a path of suffering. Via Dolorosa is a Latin phrase that means: "Way of Suffering." It is the path in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ is believed to have walked while carrying His cross on the way to His crucifixion. From the beginning, Jesus was very clear with God's plan for His life. All the way to Golgotha, Jesus was nailed to the cross between two criminals. Soldiers gambled for His clothing. After extreme suffering, He died, His side was pierced, and His body was laid in a tomb. It was the only path He could take and He chose to walk it for two reasons:

1. To please God - Philippians 2:6-8 NIV *"Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God..."*

His decision to become human and eventually die for the sin of the world was all about to please God through His obedience. This brought pleasure to God the Father. **Read Matthew 17:5 NIV**

Below are some reasons why we should also please our Heavenly Father:

a. **Jesus pleased the Father perfectly.** Jesus is the standard for what it means to live a life that pleases God. Read John 8:29

b. **Believers are called to please the Father the same way.** The New Testament repeatedly teaches that pleasing God is the normal Christian life. Read Hebrews 11:6 NIV

c. **Pleasing God Through Walking Worthy.** Paul's prayer is that believers would live lives that fully please the Father. Read Colossians 1:9-11 (KJV)

Q: What practical ways can we do to live a life pleasing to our Heavenly Father?

Q: Was there a time that you struggled when it comes to pleasing God?

2. To redeem us - The Via Dolorosa represents: Jesus' journey of pain and sacrifice, a spiritual reminder of His love and suffering for humanity. He was sent by God with a mission that will benefit us all. He came and walked the path of suffering for our redemption. Ask the group:

Q: What is your idea of the word **"redemption"**?

Q: How does knowing about redemption help us to respond with gratitude to God?

Redemption in the Bible means reclaiming or rescuing what belongs to God, especially people. Redemption means God rescuing and reclaiming people from sin and death, restoring them to life with Him made possible through Jesus Christ our Lord. Our redemption required the death of an innocent person and Jesus chose to be our substitutionary sacrifice. We were sold into darkness and bound for eternal destruction in hell, but the Lord became the ransom that secured our freedom and restored us to God.

Q: If you know we have been redeemed, what's one thing in your life that should change (ex. hobbies, perspective, life choices, etc.? What's holding you back?

Q: Since Jesus set you free, how can you live differently this week that people can see God is working in your life?

Read Colossians 1:13-14 NIV

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

Conclusion: Read 1 Peter 4:1-4, 7-8 NLT

First-century believers were taught to expect suffering as a natural part of following the Lord. They knew that to be a follower of Jesus during that time may cost them their lives. History tells us about the sufferings of many Christians all over the world because of their commitment to follow Jesus.

It was understood to be within God's will and a consequence of choosing Jesus as Lord and Savior.

At the same time, they were called to live in love toward others. Scripture teaches believers to embrace this path enduring hardship as they follow the Lord in order to please God and live for the good of others.

May God grant us the grace to be like our Master from this day forward.

Reflection questions:

Q: When following Jesus gets difficult or challenging, how do you keep going?

Q: What's one way you can show love to someone this week, even if it's not easy?

Q: How can you start seeing challenges as something that helps you grow?

WORK (15 MINS)

Application

1. Find a partner. Ask what you can pray for him/her then pray for each other.

2. Pray and prepare a Hit List (max. of 5-10 names of family, relatives, friends, schoolmates, workmates, neighbors, etc.) of possible people you desire to invite in the next life group gathering.

What is your take-away from this lesson? Closing Prayer