Lesson 1: Determined to Die

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: That Jesus explained to His disciples why He must die and gave detailed predictions to prepare them for this necessary part of His Ministry.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: To reflect on the importance of Jesus' death for their sins on the Cross and His resurrection, which secures our salvation.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: Matthew 17:22-23; 20:17-19, 28; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34

KEY TAKEAWAY: As the Messiah, Jesus was determined to die as a sacrifice for our sins, knowing it was the only way to save us.

OVERVIEW:

Jesus' ability to predict His death and resurrection should have amazed His disciples. However, it brought on more fear than reverence. Jesus was not the Messiah that the Jews had grown up expecting. Instead of punishing the enemies of God, He was prepared to die for them. In this lesson, students will engage with the final moments before Jesus took His journey to the Cross, in which He attempts to prepare His disciples for what is to come.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *This Is Jesus* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. *The Details* give you background info for each book. *The Setting* informs you of what's happening in and around the passage. *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible Study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context," we mean, at the very least, helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

Matthew

- *Author*: Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- *Time frame:* Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's A.D., though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.
- *Purpose:* Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

Mark

- *Author*: The Gospel of Mark was written by its namesake. Mark, also known as John Mark, is believed to have received most of his information for his Gospel from Peter's firsthand accounts.
- *Time frame:* Mark is thought to have written his Gospel in the mid 50's A.D.
- *Purpose:* Mark was writing primarily for a non-Jewish audience. His Gospel explains Jewish customs to non-Jews in an effort to get them to see the big picture of Jesus' identity.

Luke

- *Author*: Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian, and a companion of Paul.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 A.D.
- *Purpose:* Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

THE SETTING

Jesus predicted His death three times to His disciples. In this lesson, we will examine the second and third of these predictions. The first prediction is recorded in Matthew 16:21-23, Mark 8:31-33, and Luke 9:21-22. The first time He predicted His death, there was a poignant exchange between Jesus and Peter. Peter rebuked the Lord for speaking of such a violent death. Jesus responded by saying, "'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men'" (Matthew 16:23). God insists that His followers accept His will even when it is unpopular or painful. When the incidents in this lesson took place, Jesus' ministry in Galilee was complete. He and His disciples were moving toward Jerusalem. With this journey as the backdrop of their day-to-day lives, Jesus explicitly revealed His purpose and what the outcome of their travel would be.

THE MAIN POINT

On several occasions, Jesus explained His purpose to His disciples as He prepared them for His death and resurrection. In the first of the passages this lesson addresses, Jesus spoke to the twelve just after His transfiguration. Luke notes that they did not understand what Jesus was telling them. As Jesus prepared for His Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the exciting beginning to His last week on Earth, He once again warned His disciples that He would soon die a horrible death. Although this was contrary to what many expected from the Messiah, it was the culmination of His purpose on Earth.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: an introductory activity called *The Lead In;* the Bible Study section called *The Main Event;* and an application-focused segment called *The Last Word.*

THE LEAD IN

- *Goal:* To introduce the idea of predicting 'what will happen next.'
- *Set-Up:* Bring 6-9 small objects (all different) that you can conceal in a box. Students should not be able to see any of the objects. Make sure you also have some paper and writing utensils available for students to use.

FIRST, welcome students, and explain that you are going to begin your time with a game. Set the box in a place where everyone can see. (Make sure to fill the box with at least six different and completely random objects ahead of time.) **Say to students:**

- **If anyone can guess each of the three items that I'm going to pull out of the box, I will let you have them. The catch is, you have to write down what you think the three items will be without any further context.**

THEN, give students a chance to write down their guesses. Ask them to give their paper back to you in order to keep things honest. It is virtually impossible for them to guess what you will pull out of the box, which will be the point at the end of the exercise.

Slowly reach in and take out the first item. Once you have revealed it, take out the second and the third. **Ask:**

- **Was anyone able to guess all three items?**
  - *Answer: No*
- **What about one of the three items? Did anyone guess one of the items?**
  - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, **say something like:**

- **Even if I had told you which items were in the box, you still might not have correctly guessed which three would be pulled out. You would have been even less likely to guess them in the correct order. Today, we will be taking a closer look at Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection. Pay close attention to the specific details that He provides to the disciples so that instead of trying to predict what was coming, they would know.**

Make sure there are no questions, and then transition to The Main Event.

THE MAIN EVENT

- *Goal:* To help students examine Jesus' pre-knowledge and His obedience to the Father in choosing a death on the Cross for our sins.
- *Set-Up:* Make sure students have a Bible or Bible App.

FIRST, briefly explain to students that we will be discussing the time in Jesus' ministry that occurred a few days before He was taken into custody by the Roman authorities and religious leaders. **Say something like:**

- **Jesus and the disciples were in Galilee near Capernaum. While they were there, Jesus brought the twelve together and spent some time alone with them. Jesus didn't want anyone to know He and the disciples were in the area. Unlike the times in public where Jesus was teaching a crowd, this was a time of private teaching intended just for the disciples.**

Read or have a student read Matthew 17:22-23. **Ask:**

- **What does it feel like to be distressed? Would anyone be willing to share a time when they experienced distress?**
  - o *Answers will vary.*

Say something like:

- **Distress could be described as extreme anxiety, sorrow, pain, or overwhelm. In a lot of instances, distress comes along when we feel helpless or when we know that something is wrong, but we don't understand why. In different translations of verse 23, the disciples were described as "filled with grief," "deeply grieved," and even "greatly distressed."**

THEN, explain that the disciples' reaction showed they at least partially understood the first part of Jesus' that he was the Son of Man who would be given over to the hands of men to be killed but raised on the third day. But they failed to comprehend the last part. While Jesus' death was disturbing to them, His resurrection was beyond their grasp.

Read or have a student read Matthew 20:17-19. **Say something like:**

- **These verses we just read record Jesus' third prediction of His death. If you've ever read through all four of the gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), then you may have noticed that sometimes there are passages that are almost word-for-word the same. This passage is a great example.**

Instruct students to read Mark 10:32-34 and Luke 18:31-34. **Ask:**

- **What things are repeated in each account?**
  - o *Answer:* Son of Man, handed over, killed, rose on the third day

- **Why do you think these three gospels found this particular passage so important to share?**
  - o *Answers will vary.*

NEXT, **say something like:**

- **Jesus and the disciples were traveling to Jerusalem. They were probably on their way to the Passover festival. Their destination also serves as an interesting backdrop to this prediction. In Matthew 23:34-39, Jesus later noted how Jerusalem was well known for killing God's prophets. Jesus gave an incredibly detailed description of His own death in order to prepare His disciples, as well as to display His divine knowledge of what would transpire.**

Explain to students that Jesus was doing the absolute most He could to clue the disciples in on what was about to happen. This was not paranoia or a series of great guesses that He made based on observation. **Ask:**

- **What events did Jesus say would precede His death?**
  - o *Answer:* He would be handed over to and condemned by the religious leaders, and the Gentiles (in this instance, the Roman government) would carry out His death penalty (mocked, flogged, and crucified)

THEN, **say something like:**

- **Everything that Jesus predicted would eventually come to pass exactly as He said. But you may wonder, "If He knew what would happen and how, couldn't He have prevented it? Why didn't one of the disciples try to stop it?" This path to the Cross was inevitable as it was necessary for our salvation. Jesus knew well before this moment what would happen, and by letting His disciples know exactly how things would go, He seemed to assert a sense of control over the whole thing that only God could have.**

Briefly explain that Jesus gives even more context about what He came to do in the following passage. Read or have a student read Matthew 20:28. **Ask:**

- **According to Jesus, why must He die?**
  - *Answer:* To be a ransom for many

FINALLY, **say something like:**

- **Jesus' entire ministry was started with one purpose in mind: to die on the Cross as a sacrificial, permanent offering, or payment, for our sins. When the disciples heard Him predicting His death, they were rightfully scared. Nobody wants to lose a friend, much less the promised Messiah, even if they claim that they will come back to life a few days later. But, if they had really heard Jesus' message, it's likely their grief or distress would have been mixed in with a little bit of shame- followed by an incredible amount of thankfulness. Every moment on their journey so far has led to this. The Messiah that they had been hoping would finish His ministry by taking the earthly throne was telling them in great detail that He planned on taking death on the Cross instead. And while that may seem devastating to the flesh, it is an incredible message of hope for our souls. Jesus was determined to die as a sacrifice for our sins, knowing it was the only way to save our lives.**

Allow for questions, and then transition into The Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- *Goal:* To help students begin thinking about the importance of the Cross (as that will be the direction Jesus takes His ministry from this point forward).
- *Set-Up:* It is helpful, but not necessary, to collect a few images of the Cross that you can display for students. Try to find a variety of ways that it has been imagined in art, as well as a few examples of jewelry, patches, t-shirts, etc.

FIRST, explain to students that to end your time, you will think about the symbol of the Cross, and what it has come to mean for followers of Jesus. (If you have a few pictures of the Cross, this would be the time to display them.) **Ask students:**

- **Where have you seen the Cross in your daily life? Let's try to name as many places as we can think of.**
  - *Answers will vary.* Some great starting points if students struggle: In Church sanctuaries and hallways, on bumper stickers, on face paint at sporting events, etc.

THEN, once you have finished brainstorming, **ask students:**

- **Sometimes the Cross can carry a different meaning for the people who are displaying it. What does the Cross mean to you?**
  - *Answers will vary.*

- **Do you think other Christians have the same understanding of the Cross as you? Why? What about non-Christians? Why?**
  - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, **say something like:**

- **Jesus' entire life was led with one purpose in mind- to give His life on the Cross as an offering or payment for our sin. From this point on in Jesus' ministry, He will be journeying towards the Cross. This simple symbol will carry the weight of His death, but also the hope that followers have because of it.**

Allow Time For Any Closing Thoughts Or Questions From Your Students. Before Leaving, Close With A Prayer.

- Don't forget to remind students about their devotions this week. If you're posting them on Social Media or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.