

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

PART 3: THE GOSPEL COME TO LIFE

LESSON 11 || JESUS' ARREST AND TRIAL

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Matthew 26:36-56

GOSPEL FOCUS: Isaiah 53:7-10

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

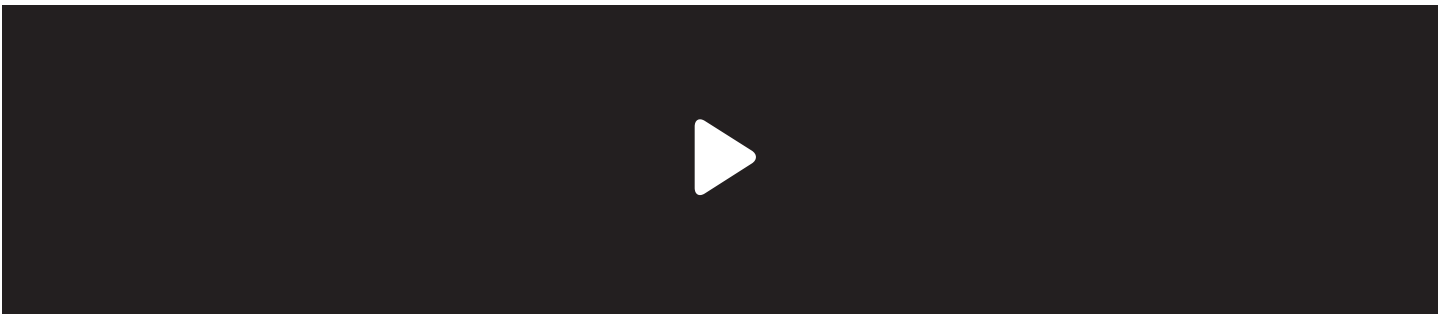
- Understand that Jesus was arrested and tried even though He was found to be innocent of any crime.
- See that by allowing Himself to be arrested and crucified, Jesus confirmed Old Testament prophecies concerning His identity as the Messiah.
- Consider the depth of God's love for them, that Jesus would willingly endure what He did to save them from their sins.

OVERVIEW:

The narrative of Jesus' arrest and trial contains some of the most powerful scenes in Scripture. We see Jesus in a tattered and worn emotional state, pressed down by sorrow. We see Him fighting to remain obedient to His Father. We learn that all of it, every act of people's betrayal and deceit, is God's plan and that God will use these twisted acts of injustice to rescue humankind from sin and death. In the middle of it all stands this single powerful truth: Jesus willingly laid down His innocent life in order to pay the penalty of our sins.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* 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 the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

MATTHEW

- *Author:* Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the events he details in his gospel.

- *Time frame:* Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50s or 60s AD, though some think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- *Purpose:* Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to persuade them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. He was also probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel declares that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

ISAIAH

- *Author:* Isaiah, son of Amoz, wrote the book of Isaiah.
- *Time frame:* The events of Isaiah occurred between 740 and 681 BC.
- *Purpose:* The purpose of this book was to call the nation of Judah back to God, to warn of coming judgment, and to tell of God's ultimate salvation through the Messiah.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**– An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**– A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**– A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**– An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* Students will discuss being wrongly accused of a crime to understand how it feels to be accused even when innocent.
- *Set-Up:* You may want a dry-erase board to write down students’ answers.

FIRST, explain to your students that throughout human history, there have been examples of people who were convicted of crimes, even though they were innocent. The most famous examples of innocent people being wrongly accused include Joan of Arc, Rubin “Hurricane” Carter, and the Salem Witch Trials. Explain to them one example called the Dreyfus Affair. In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the French army, was wrongly accused of treason and exiled to Devil’s Island, a penal colony, as punishment. The real traitor was found two years later, but military authorities didn’t want to look bad, so they covered up the evidence until 1899 when Dreyfus was given a new trial. It was not until 1906, 12 years later, that he was fully cleared of any wrongdoing. (For more details: <http://listverse.com/2013/03/27/10-people-who-were-wrongfully-accused-of-heinous-crimes>)

THEN, ask your students to think about what it would be like if they were wrongly accused of doing something they did not do. **Ask:**

- **How would you feel if you were wrongly accused, like Alfred Dreyfus? What would you do?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Have you ever been falsely accused of something?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **What would you do (or did you do) if you were falsely accused of a crime? Would you defend yourself? What lengths would you go to in order to prove that you were actually innocent?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **How would it make you feel to know that people wrongly accused you for their own personal gain?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, explain to your students that in today’s lesson, you will learn that Jesus was falsely accused, arrested, and tried. Ask them to remember the emotions they just described as they study what Jesus went through.

IF THERE ARE NO MORE QUESTIONS, TRANSITION TO THE STORY.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* Students will understand that Jesus was arrested and tried even though He was found to be innocent of any crime.
- *Set-Up:* Students will need a Bible or a Bible app.

FIRST, explain to your students that in this lesson, you will explore Jesus’ arrest and trial. Review the last lesson to remind them of the context. As you review, instruct your students to go to Matthew 26:36-56. As they find the passage, explain that this story happens immediately after the Last Supper. You can use the Connecting the Dots section below to help fill in the gaps.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

As you teach *The Thread*, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it to review or connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- Jesus' arrest and trial happen immediately after the Last Supper.
- The Last Supper is when Jesus gathered with His disciples to observe the traditional Jewish Passover meal.
- One of the main characters in today's story is Judas. Judas was one of Jesus' disciples and, as we'll see, is infamous for betraying Jesus.

THEN, read or have a student read Matthew 26:36-46. As the passage is being read, ask them to focus on Jesus' words to His disciples. **Ask:**

- **What was Jesus' emotional state? Why was He feeling this way?**
 - *Answer:* The Scripture says that He was full of sorrow and deeply troubled. He knew that the cross was in front of Him, which was causing His very emotional response.
- **How does it make you feel to know that Jesus experienced these types of emotions?**
 - *Answers will vary.* But students should understand that Jesus can empathize with them when they are experiencing sorrow. He understands.
- **How would you summarize Jesus' prayer? What does that prayer teach us about Jesus?**
 - *Answer:* He prayed not His will, but God's will be done. This shows us that Jesus did not have a death wish. He wasn't looking forward to the suffering ahead, but He was committed to God's will and plan to save people from sin.
- **Jesus mentions "the cup." What is He talking about?**
 - *Answer:* Your students may not fully understand this, but it is important. The cup was God's wrath intended to be poured out on humankind for their sin (Jeremiah 25:15, Isaiah 51:17). Don't get bogged down in that discussion, but your students need to understand that "the cup" is God's punishment for sin. Jesus is going to take all the sin of the world (drink the cup) when He dies on the cross.

Explain to your students that the key idea is that Jesus is willingly going to the cross. He is willingly laying down His life as a substitute for sinners to take our punishment that He doesn't deserve. He is willing to die for sinners both because He desires to obey the Father and because of His great love for us.

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 26:47-56. **Ask:**

- **We now see that Judas had been plotting with the Jewish religious leaders to betray Jesus. How would you respond to a betrayal like this? How does Jesus respond?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Jesus responded by calling Judas "friend," which was a powerful display of grace. It is also important to remember that Jesus is going to die for Judas' sin as He dies for the sins of the world.
- **Is Jesus powerless to stop His arrest? What does He say that lets us know He is able to stop it but chooses not to?**
 - *Answer:* No, Jesus explains that He could stop His arrest by calling on angels to rescue Him. Yet He chooses not to in order to fulfill the Scriptures. He means that this is happening according to God's plan.

Explain that you can make three clear and important observations from this story: 1) Jesus is willingly laying down His life; 2) God's will is for Jesus to suffer at the hand of sinners; and 3) the Scriptures foretold this would happen.

THEN, ask your students to go to Matthew 27:11-26. As they find the passage, explain to your students that after Jesus' arrest, He was tried by the Jewish high priest and a counsel of Jewish religious leaders. These men, while powerful among the Jewish people, did not have the authority to execute criminals; only the Romans could. So they sent Jesus to Pilate, a Roman ruler who

could sentence Jesus to death. Read or have a student read Matthew 27:11-23. **Ask:**

- **Will someone summarize what we read?**
 - *Answer:* 1) Jesus did not defend Himself against His accusers; 2) Pilate allows the crowd to decide Jesus' fate; and 3) the chief priest and the elders bribe the crowd to demand Jesus' crucifixion.
- **What does the Scripture say was the motivation for the chief priests and the elders delivering Jesus to Pilate?**
 - *Answer:* Verse 18 says that it was apparent to Pilate that they delivered Jesus to him out of envy.
- **Why does Pilate allow the crowd to make the decision about Jesus' future? Do you think he was surprised by the crowd's response?**
 - *Answer:* Pilate is playing politics. He doesn't want to hurt his relationships with the religious leaders by denying their request, but he also doesn't want to sentence Jesus to death. He is trying to get out of being responsible for either decision.
- **In verse 23, Pilate asks, "Why, what evil has he done?" What is the answer to his question?**
 - *Answer:* Nothing. It is obvious from the story that Jesus is innocent of wrongdoing. The crowd demands His crucifixion without an explanation of His guilt.

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 27:24-26. **Ask:**

- **What was Jesus' crime, according to Pilate? What had He done to deserve to be crucified?**
 - *Answer:* Nothing. Jesus was not guilty, yet Pilate bent to the will of the people and sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion.
- **Pilate tells the crowd that he is innocent of Jesus' blood. What does the crowd say? Why is it significant?**
 - *Answer:* The crowd says, "His blood be on us and our children." It is significant because they are taking responsibility for Jesus' death. While they are unaware at this point, the only hope for their forgiveness is the blood of Jesus being applied to their sin.

Explain to your students that they should see clearly in this passage that Jesus was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death despite the fact that He was innocent. Pilate and his wife attest to Jesus' innocence. The religious leaders know that Jesus is innocent, which is why they arrest Him at night, make false accusations, and bribe the crowd to demand His crucifixion.

IF STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE THREAD AND EXPLORE FURTHER HOW JESUS' ARREST AND TRIAL CONNECT TO THE BIG-PICTURE NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE

THE THREAD

Instruct your students to go to Isaiah 53:7-10. You may want to cover the background information on Isaiah in the Bible Background section, at least so they understand that Isaiah was written well before Jesus' birth.

THEN, read or have a student read Isaiah 53:7-10. Explain that these verses are prophecies. In other words, they are describing an event that will take place in the future. **Ask:**

- **What do you see in this prophecy about the Messiah that reminds you of Jesus' arrest and trial? Look at each verse carefully.**
 - *Answer:* He was silent before His accusers (verse 7). The people didn't understand the true reason that Jesus was laying down His life (verse 8). He was treated as a wicked man, even though He was innocent (verse 9). It was God's will for Jesus to die (verse 10).

- **Wow! Isn't it incredible that approximately 700 years prior to Jesus' birth, Isaiah prophesied these things? What does that tell us about God's plan?**
 - *Answer:* It is incredible. It tells us that God's plan involved Jesus' death and crucifixion from the beginning.
- **How does it make you feel to know that God was always planning on sending Jesus to rescue us?**
 - *Answers will vary.* We should be amazed, blown away, humbled, and even overwhelmed.

Explain that they should clearly see an example of how God's plan to redeem His people extends through the entirety of Scripture. Specifically, God intended for Jesus to be falsely accused, arrested, tried, and convicted, even though He was completely innocent.

FINALLY, conclude The Thread by reminding your students that Jesus died for our sins, not His own. He is the completely sinless sacrifice for us, dying in our place to pay the penalty of our sin. If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the Wrapping Up section.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* Students will consider the depth of God's love for them, in that Jesus would willingly endure what He did to save them from their sins.
- *Set-Up:* A dry-erase board or paper and pens for everyone in your class.

FIRST, review the facts of the lesson with your students. Jesus was betrayed by a friend. He was arrested under false pretenses. He was wrongly accused as a criminal. He was sentenced to death by crucifixion even though He was innocent. After reviewing the facts, **ask:**

- **Who was to blame for Jesus' death? Who's fault was it?**
 - *Answer:* Your students may answer Judas, the religious leaders, Pilate, or the crowd. Write down their answers on the board or ask them to write their answers on a piece of paper.
- **Then, ask the students to identify the motivation for each name on the list. What drove those people to send Jesus to the cross?**
 - *Answer:* Judas - personal gain. Religious leaders - jealousy. Pilate - fear. The crowds - money.

THEN, tell your students that all these people shoulder some of the blame for Jesus' death. Explain that it would be easy for us to be appalled by the conduct of these people. Remind them, however, that Jesus is willingly laying down His life to rescue all people from sin and death. So, while we can blame others, the truth is that Jesus died in our place as well as the place of each of the people we've identified. We are also to blame for Jesus' death.

NEXT, explain to your students that the wicked characteristics of the men listed above are easy to point out. Tell them to now make a list of the characteristics that Jesus embodies when He willingly lays down His life for us. The list could include: humble, self-sacrificing, loving, gracious, generous, and much more.

THEN, draw a circle around the negative motivations on one side and the positive characteristics on the other. Make it clear to your students that Jesus extended humility, love, grace, generosity, and selflessness to us when we only have pride, jealousy, selfishness, and fear to offer Him. **Ask:**

- **How does it make you feel to know that Jesus did this in order to take your punishment in your place?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **How does this story demonstrate God's love for you? What do you think is the depth of His love for us?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, challenge them to remember this list when they begin to doubt or forget God's love for them. Make sure your students don't have any questions. Then, close your Bible study in prayer.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 37 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.