# John 19 ENCOUNTER JESUS

"Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them. So the soldiers seized him and took him away to be crucified." (John 19:16)

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e was led away to be crucified not just for the *whole world* but for me! Calvary speaks to loves' ultimate demonstration—that love might be the declaration of my life.

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering" (Isaiah 53:3).

Pause and allow the Spirit to move your heart in loving response to Jesus:

• What do you feel in your heart for Jesus? It's your ever deepening love of Him that empowers your ever widening love of others. "Deep" and "wide" such is His love!

"As I consider the sorrowful Savior, despised and rejected—"for me"—my heart is moved with \_\_\_\_\_\_ for Him."

• Now tell Jesus about what is in your heart. Respond to Him with compassion and love as you would for your most beloved friend.

"Jesus, my heart is touched deeply with \_\_\_\_\_as I consider Your sacrifice for me. It grieves me deeply that \_\_\_\_\_

. May my sadness for You in some mysterious way, bless You with my love. Might your Spirit prompt in and through me to others expressions of this same sacrificial love. In your name, Amen."

# M9 experience scripture

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"So when Jesus looked down and saw the disciple he loved standing with her, he said, "Mother, look—John will be a son to you." Then he said, "John, look—she will be a mother to you!" From that day on, John accepted Mary into his home as one of his own family." (John 19:26-27)

rom the cross, Jesus shares loving forgiveness to the soldiers: "Father forgive them...." From the cross, Jesus shares loving acceptance to the thief "Today I say you will be with me in paradise..." And now from the cross in His ever widening demonstrations of love, the Christ shares loving support toward His mother.

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Since Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), consider a burden or need on your heart, and share it with Jesus:

I am reminded of this burden:

(For example: I am reminded of the financial pressures I am facing. Or I am reminded of my daughter who is out of God's will).

· Pause now and share your burden with Jesus. He still makes loving provision for those in need. Express your needs to the Lord and allow His Spirit to speak words of care and love to your heart.

"Dear Jesus, I have this burden on my heart and I need to be reassured that you care..."

- · Imagine Christ sharing with you like He did with soldiers, a thief, and His own mother: "I want to share in this hardship with you. I am here for you because I love you."
- Now share with a partner or small group in prayers of yieldedness: "Holy Spirit, would you use my deepening love of Jesus to empower and prompt expressions of love to an ever widening circle of my relationships."

## John 19 experience scripture

"After this, Joseph from the city of Ramah, who was a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jewish authorities, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. So Pilate granted him permission to remove the body from the cross. Now Nicodemus, who had once come to Jesus privately at night, accompanied Joseph, and together they carried a significant amount of myrrh and aloes to the cross." (John 19:38-39)

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be ceret disciple!" The two words do not go together. For me to be a disciple – a true follower – it will not be in secret. As I truly follow Him, He will lead me into ever widening expressions of His love.
You no doubt have been the recipient of His sacrificial love shared through others and as you gratefully embrace this love it frees you to unselfishly love others. Both Joseph and Nicodemus seemed "slow to love" as secret disciples. Let's not be slow.

"Freely you have received, therefore freely give" (Matthew 10:8)

Recall a time when you were discouraged, misunderstood or "needy of love" in some way, but God brought another Jesus follower, family member, or friend to support and encourage you. How did this person reassure you, showing loving commitment to you so that you were not alone?

"I remember a time when \_\_\_\_\_and God brought \_\_\_\_\_into my life to \_\_\_\_\_."

*Celebrate with a partner or small group.* Talk about the times when God brought people in your life to encourage, support and reassure you.

*Celebrate these times with one another* – acknowledging our great God and how He is at work to share His love through you and me as His people.

"We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

How might you or your family or your Jesus community become ambassadors of Christ's love for one or more of the people in your life?

- Make a special snack and give it to a co-worker, neighbor or family who is new to the workplace, neighborhood or school.
- Involve your kids in sitting with someone at lunch who doesn't seem to have many friends.
- Organize a clothing drive, canned food drive, or "bring a penny" campaign for "the least of these" who are struggling financially
- Investigate where the "gates of hell" seem to be "winning" in your community—and prayerfully engage His church in sharing His love and the gospel (Matthew 6:18).
- Ask the Holy Spirit to continue to widen His expression of His love and the gospel through you.

Pray with a partner or small group, asking the Holy Spirit to engage and empower you as an Ambassador for Christ.

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