A screenshot of a website

Description automatically generated

**OPEN THE CONVERSATION**

Today’s RBQ (Relationship Building Question): If you could sacrifice a day of your time to help any cause, what would it be and why?

**INTRODUCTION**

The Gospel of John offers a unique perspective on the life, ministry, and ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ. John focuses deeply on the identity of Jesus as the Son of God and the significance of His mission. Jesus’s willing sacrifice on the cross is the cornerstone of our faith.

Think about how often we need to upgrade our technology, whether it be our laptops or phones. Each new model promises to fix the issues of the last version, making things faster and more efficient. Now, imagine if we were stuck using an outdated model, constantly dealing with the same bugs and limitations, having to reset it every day just to get by. When Jesus went to the cross, His sacrifice ended the cycle of daily animal sacrifices that only temporarily patched things up. Through His willing sacrifice, He completed God’s redemptive plan, giving us direct access to God without the need for constant resets. Instead, we are called to live in the freedom and grace that His sacrifice provides. Christ eliminated the need for ongoing sacrifices, providing lasting salvation and hope for everyone who believes.

***READ JOHN 19:17-18***

1. How does Jesus’s act of sacrifice reflect His love for humanity? How does it make you feel?

***READ JOHN 19:19-22***

1. In what ways do you see God working through difficult or unexpected circumstances in your own life, similar to how the inscription above Jesus's cross unexpectedly affirmed His kingship?
2. How might we unintentionally reflect or misrepresent who Jesus is to those around us?

***READ JOHN 19:23-24***

1. How does understanding Jesus’s sacrifice impact your view on the sacrifices you make in your daily life?

**WRAP UP**

**Put today's lesson into action: How can you apply today’s lesson to your life this week?**

*Ask for any prayer requests and pray for one another.*

**EXTENDED CUT**

The Gospel of John stands apart from the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—because over ninety percent of its content is unique. Unlike the other accounts, which highlight miracles, parables, and public speeches, John's Gospel centers on revealing Jesus's identity as the Son of God and guiding believers on how to respond to His teachings. To understand the significance of John 19:17-24, we need to recognize the context of Jesus’s crucifixion. In the Old Testament, sin created a barrier between humanity and God. To restore this relationship, a system of sacrifices was established, particularly outlined in the book of Leviticus. Animal sacrifices were a central part of worship. Each year, people would bring their best lambs, goats, or doves to the temple as offerings for their sins. This practice symbolized their need for atonement and their dependence on God’s mercy. However, these sacrifices were only temporary; they had to be repeated over and over.

By the time we reach John 19, Jesus had already been tried and convicted. He was carrying His own cross to Golgotha, where He would be crucified. This event marked the climax of God’s redemptive plan—a plan that had been unfolding since the fall of man in Genesis. Through His death, Jesus established a new covenant between God and humanity, as foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34. This new covenant promises forgiveness and a transformed heart, allowing believers direct access to God without the need for intermediary sacrifices.

**2. In what ways do you see God working through difficult or unexpected circumstances in your own life, similar to how the inscription above Jesus's cross unexpectedly affirmed His kingship?**

God can work through difficult or unexpected circumstances in life in ways that reveal His greater purpose, much like how the inscription above Jesus's cross unexpectedly affirmed His kingship. The inscription above Jesus's cross, meant as a mockery, highlighted His true identity and purpose. In times of struggle or hardship, individuals often face situations that seem overwhelming or discouraging. However, these moments can lead to profound personal growth, renewed perspectives, and unexpected blessings. For example, when someone experiences a job loss, it may initially feel like a setback. Yet, this circumstance can prompt them to explore new opportunities, develop new skills, or even pursue a passion they had previously set aside. Just as the inscription ended up proclaiming a powerful truth about Jesus’s identity, our trials can lead to moments of clarity that affirm our own purpose and identity in God’s plan. Ultimately, these experiences remind us that even when we face challenges, God is actively working behind the scenes to bring about good and to fulfill His divine purposes. It reminds me that even in moments when things seem chaotic or discouraging, God can use those circumstances to teach us valuable lessons or to redirect our paths in ways we never imagined. It’s comforting to know that, just like in the story of Jesus, God can turn our challenges into something meaningful.

**3. How might we unintentionally reflect or misrepresent who Jesus is to those around us?**

We might unintentionally reflect or misrepresent who Jesus is to those around us in several ways, often through our actions and attitudes without even realizing it. For example, if we respond to stress or conflict with anger or negativity, we can create an impression that Jesus is harsh or unapproachable, which is far from His true character of love and grace. Similarly, if we engage in gossip or judgmental conversations, we risk sending the message that Jesus doesn't accept people as they are when know He welcomes everyone with open arms. Ultimately, it’s crucial for us to be mindful of how we act and speak, as these behaviors can either draw people closer to Jesus or push them away, influencing how they perceive Him based on our example.