

Read: John 12:20-33

Jesus Came to Suffer for Us

John 12:27-28

“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A humongous basketball player laid on the court and folded his arms under his head like a pillow. LeBron James was ready for a nap. He had just finished playing game three of the 2015 NBA Eastern Conference finals, and he was exhausted. The television announcer praised LeBron for playing so hard, but it wasn't easy.

Some people think LeBron James is the greatest basketball player of all time. When they try to convince others that LeBron is the best, they don't say, “He is the best because he makes the tastiest tacos.” They don't say, “He's the best because he has a beautiful singing voice.” No, the best thing about LeBron is his basketball skills. He scores a lot of points, wins a lot of games, and plays very hard. That's what makes him tired, and that's what makes him famous.

Jesus got tired too. It wasn't from running or jumping. It was because his body was going to be punched, whipped, and then nailed to a cross. Jesus' friends would run away from him, and he would feel guilty in his heart because of all the things that other people did wrong. Jesus didn't suffer for sins that he committed, but for sins that you and I committed. And worst of all, Jesus' Father in heaven would ignore him when he was on the cross. You can see why he was going to be so tired. His suffering would take a lot out of his body and soul.

Before Jesus suffered, he was nervous. Suffering would tire him out, but he was determined to do it for you. Jesus felt guilt, so you don't have to. God abandoned Jesus so that you will never be abandoned. That's how much Jesus loves you.

And that's why Jesus is famous. LeBron James might be the best basketball player, but Jesus is the glorious person of all time. Not because he was smart—and he was brilliant. Not because he was kind—and he was the most thoughtful. No, the best thing about Jesus is that he suffered and died for you, even though it was hard. He said, “Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!”

And God is glorious because Jesus suffered for us.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What made Jesus tired?
- What is the best thing about Jesus?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What did it mean when Jesus said, “My soul is troubled”?
- For what reason did Jesus come from heaven to earth?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How could you respond to someone who says Jesus was a wise teacher, but not our Savior?
- Explain how Jesus’ most humiliating experiences were also his most glorious accomplishments.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for suffering in my place. Help me appreciate your love and glorify your name. Amen.

Hymn: CW 100:1,2 – A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,
Our guilt and evil bearing
And laden with the sins of earth,
None else the burden sharing.
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,
To slaughter led without complaint
That spotless life to offer,
Bears shame and stripes and wounds and death,
Anguish and mockery and says,
“Willing all this I suffer.”

This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great friend.
The Lamb of God, our Savior;
Him God the Father chose to send
To gain for us his favor.
“Go forth, my Son,” the Father said,
“And free my children from their dread
Of guilt and condemnation.
The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
But by your passion, they will share
The fruit of your salvation.”