

## A summary of John 19:1-37

- 1. Jesus was crucified by the whole world, including us (v.20)** In vv.19-20, Pilate wrote an inscription that said “Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews,” and put it on top of the cross. This inscription was written in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Hebrew was the language of the Jewish people, the nation of Israel. Greek was the language of the entire western civilization, due to the influence of the Greek empire which, though replaced by the Roman Empire in the time of Jesus, was still the language spoken by the people, and the language of much of the literature, philosophy and science of the time. Latin was the language spoken by the Romans, who ruled the western world under the Caesars, and to whom the nation of Israel was subject. These three languages represented the world as it was known at the time, indicating that the entire world was responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. When we read the account of Jesus’ trial and death, we may think only the Romans (Pilate and the soldiers), or only the Jews (the high priest, the chief priests and scribes and the crowd) crucified Jesus. No. Each one of us, even though we were all born more than two centuries after Jesus Christ, was responsible for His death, because we are sinners by nature, and against God in our living. Just like the chief priests cried out, “We have no king but Caesar” (v.15), we also may make that declaration in the way we live. Do we crucify Jesus, even today, or do we lift Him up as our King? If He is our King, do we obey Him? Anytime we do not obey Him, we, in essence, crucify Him (in our experience), that is, we are against Him. Objectively, in His love and mercy, Jesus died for us (the ones who were against Him, His enemies), once for all, the Righteous one for the unrighteous ones (us), on the cross, in order to bring us back, or reconcile us, to God (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus can never be crucified again. His work was complete and perfect (John 19:30). However, in our daily life, we may live in a way that wounds the Lord. For example, if the Lord speaks to us to say sorry to our parents, or a brother or sister, but we ignore that speaking, the Lord will be grieved. If we refuse to come to the Lord’s Day gathering with the brothers and sisters, we grieve the Lord. This may not even involve anything sinful in our living. However, we may be occupied with our family, with our children’s activities on Sunday morning, and with their education. All these things are legitimate, but may be a “vain manner of life” (1 Peter 1:18), and may be in the principle of putting the Lord to death.
- 2. Without the divine life (the eternal life of God), we may be “good” people,” but we are actually empty, and we do not know God (John 19:34).** Jesus’ side was pierced by one of the soldiers, and blood and water flowed out from His wound. Blood signifies the blood that Jesus shed for our redemption and forgiveness of sins, to bring us back to God, and to cleanse us from all our sins, so we can righteously come to God and be accepted by Him. Water, on the other hand, signifies the divine life that was released in order to regenerate us, that is, to give us a new birth, with a new life (the divine life) (John 3:5). Without the divine life, we are empty vessels, and we do not know God. For example, we may come to the church gatherings, but if the gatherings are merely a time to socialize, we will have little knowledge of God. How can the divine life increase in us? On the one hand, Jesus was pierced for us. We did, and can do, nothing. On the other hand, we need to cooperate by receiving the divine life? How? By praying, by talking to the Lord, both individually and with the brothers and sisters. By reading the Bible, individually and with the saints. By preaching the gospel. All of these are fundamental exercises that may allow the divine life in us to grow, so we can know Jesus Christ, and what He desires. This requires us to deny ourselves, to take up our own cross, even as Jesus took up and bore His own cross (19:17). Without death, there can be no life released or gained. If we are willing to “die to ourselves,” the Lord’s life in us will be released, and may flow into other brothers and sisters or gospel friends. Thus, the church can be blessed.

- 3. Nothing can overcome the resurrection life (v.36).** Not one bone of Jesus was broken (indicating His resurrection life). This was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalms 34:20. Jesus' physical life was terminated, but nothing could destroy His resurrection life, the eternal life. The more the opposition, the more the frustration, the more active and powerful is the resurrection life. Do we have such a testimony? For example, do we contact people continually, even if they reject us, or do we give up? If we are enjoying the resurrection life, we will continue to preach the gospel, to contact people, regardless of the results, because the resurrection life in us cannot be thwarted. Do we come to the church gatherings joyfully, or out of duty? If we live by the resurrection life, we will joyfully praise the Lord with the saints, we will joyfully join the corporate prayer gathering to pray with the saints concerning the Lord's burden. When we preach the gospel, or visit people, we will be joyful. At our job, and in our family life, we will have inward peace and joy. Even in our failures, we will know how to return to the Lord and how to be with the brothers and sisters, and how to continue to pursue the Lord, despite our weaknesses and shortcomings.
- 4. Do we love others who may not be as close to us as our relatives or friends? (vv.25-27).** John, the beloved disciple, took care of Mary the mother of Jesus (vv.25-27), at Jesus' request. John was not related biologically to Mary. Yet he loved her by taking care of her (John 15:12). This was probably not easy. As we read later in the book of Acts, John, along with Peter, took the lead in the church in Jerusalem. John no doubt had many responsibilities, and as an elder of the church and an apostle, his time was limited. Yet he denied himself to love and care for an elderly sister, according to the Lord's leading. Do we love the brothers and sisters, or the children, by praying for them and serving them, or do we just love our own family or immediate friends? To get to know a brother or a sister whom we may not yet know, and spend time with, and pray for, him or her, is not easy. John may have sacrificed his "spiritual pursuing." Was he not the disciple whom Jesus loved, occupying a special place in Jesus' heart and affections? Why then should he be burdened to care for Jesus' mother? This may indicate that any "spiritual pursuing," such as reading the Bible, or trying to understand and expound the Bible, or attending conferences and trainings for spiritual equipping and perfecting, must be accompanied by a church life where we are contacting and praying for people, to love them, to care for their human needs and also their spiritual needs. As we live such a church life, the Bible may begin to be opened up, and the Lord may give us more revelation. That may perhaps explain why John wrote the book of Revelation and his three epistles when he was old, because the Lord was able to grant him more revelation based on his caring for and shepherding of people. Otherwise, much of our knowledge of the Bible may be mental and objective, but not practically experienced, and even our pursuing and serving may be out of religious zeal. Any spiritual pursuing must be backed up by diligent contacting of brothers and sisters, and prayers for them.
- 5. Do we have a testimony of who the Lord is in our daily living? (v.35).** John bore witness, or testified, of what he saw, and his testimony is true, in order that we may believe (19:35). For example, do we have a testimony of who the Lord is in our daily life, of how He has answered our prayers? Such a testimony requires us to experience death to ourselves (the Greek word for "witness" has the meaning of "martyr"). For example, do we pray specific prayers for the church, for the saints? We may say that the Gospel of John in particular, out of the four gospels, is an eyewitness account of a disciple who faithfully recorded what he saw and experienced, in order that we may believe. In the same way, our testimony of how the Lord answered our prayers may lead others to believe in Him, and practically live a life of believing, by also themselves engaging in prayers for the church and for people. The more we exercise in such a way to testify of the Lord's faithfulness, love and grace, and the more we pray for His need, the more people will be attracted to live a life of believing in the Lord, and the more the church will be blessed.