

Tre Ore Study Questions and Answers

The First Word: “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”

-Luke 23:34

1. How does Jesus exhibit and fulfill the Beatitudes on the cross? (see the Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5:1-12)
 - *Jesus is “poor in spirit” as he humbles himself to be put to death according to his Father’s will. He also commends his own spirit into the hands of his Father with total trust in the outcome.*
 - *Jesus mourns the entire sin of the world and the specific sins of the people who put him to death. He prays for forgiveness for all.*
 - *Jesus is meek because he does not fight back. He accepts God’s will and knows that his tormentors do not realize the significance of their actions. He also tells us to come to him when we are burdened and take his yoke upon his shoulders for he is “meek and humble of heart.” (Matthew 11:29)*
 - *Jesus hungers and thirsts for righteousness as he cries out “I thirst.” He is thirsty for sinners to come to him to obtain the living water of faith and also hungry for righteousness which can now triumph as he has defeated sin and death.*
 - *Jesus is merciful by asking forgiveness for his tormentors and also by forgiving the good thief and assuring him a place in Paradise.*
 - *Jesus is pure of heart as although he is fully man, he never sinned.*
 - *Jesus is a peacemaker because by his death, God and man are reconciled. He restored God’s friendship with Man that was lost in the Garden of Eden through original sin.*
 - *Jesus is persecuted for righteousness by being an innocent man who was brutally tortured and killed to pay for our sinfulness. Through faith in him, we all become righteous and without sin in God’s eyes.*
3. St. Thomas Aquinas said the beatitudes are best exemplified in Christ crucified, so that “men will be happy only if they despise what Jesus despised on the cross and love what he loved.” What did Jesus despise on the cross? What did he love?

Jesus despised all sin, which is why he became the “once and for all” sacrifice to pay for original sin and the sins of all mankind. While on the cross, Jesus exhibited his love for God the Father, for true faith, for humility, for forgiveness and for all people: his mother, his disciples and all sinners.

4. How would you describe the love Jesus exhibits by his cross?

Variable answers. Could include life-giving, unconditional, Godly, transcendent, without equal, greatest love ever exhibited.

**The Second Word: "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."
-Luke 23:43**

1. What did the "good thief" realize about Jesus that many at the crucifixion missed? How did he show it? (Luke 23: 33-41)

The good thief realized that Jesus was innocent and was very close to God. He also realized that he was a king and possibly knew that Jesus was the Messiah. He showed this realization by the words he chose to rebuke the other thief and by asking Jesus "to remember me when you come into your kingdom."

2. How does the temptation of Christ in the desert relate to our own temptation to worship false gods? (Matthew 4:1-11)

The world and popular culture hold up many false gods and we are sorely tempted to worship them. Power, wealth, pleasure and honor take many forms, but all are false gods through whose worship we separate ourselves from God.

The devil tempted him to use his divine power to "turn stones into bread" to ease his hunger (pleasure) and to "command his angels" (honor). Finally, the devil offers the wealth of the world if Jesus would only bow down and worship him. Jesus was not deterred from following God's will, no matter how tempting all these things may have sounded at the time.

3. What factors led Jesus to promise Paradise for the "good thief"? What does this promise show about the nature and power of Christ?

The good thief gave verbal testimony to the truth that is Jesus. He exhibited faith in Jesus and humbled himself to ask for mercy. Jesus' promise that the thief will be with him in Paradise that very day shows Jesus' divinity. As only God can forgive sins, only God can give us the gift of eternal life, where we will participate in the divine life of the Trinity forever.

The Third Word: “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother.’ “

-John 19:26-27

1. What kind of freedom did Eve choose to exercise in the Garden of Eden? (CCC 396-398)

Eve chose the freedom to worship herself, follow her own desires and turn away from God. This is the type of freedom the secular culture idolizes. “In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good.” (CCC 398)

2. What kind of freedom did Mary choose to exercise throughout her life? (CCC 494, 2617)

In faith, Mary chose the freedom to submit to God’s will and trust in his providence, humbling herself as God’s creature and seeking to worship only him. Only by exercising this type of freedom are we truly set free to live life abundantly, as God has planned for all his people.

3. Think about the extremely high value Americans put on freedom. What are the strengths and potential pitfalls of this prioritization and view of freedom?

Answers will vary. Could include strengths, such as freedom from oppressive government; self-determination; freedom to choose what and who to worship. Pitfalls could include: selfishness; individual choice is held in higher esteem than what is good for others; freedom becomes the highest value, above the respect for the dignity of life; worshipping self or false idols.

**The Fourth Word: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
-Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34**

1. Read Job Chapter 38. What can we learn about “meaninglessness” from God’s conversation with Job?

God is God and we’re not. God has his divine plan and our meager, human understanding cannot comprehend that plan.

2. How does understanding Jesus as the “once and for all” sacrifice help explain the fact that he was forsaken by his own Father on the cross?

Because of God’s love for humanity and his desire for us to live with him eternally, he sent his only Son to be the once and for all sacrifice that would reunite humanity and divinity (CCC 613-615). Sacrifice involves suffering, so as Jesus cried out using the words of Psalm 22, he was expressing his physical and emotional pain.

As the perfect sacrifice on the cross, Christ bore the sin of the entire world – past, present and future. We can understand his physical suffering; however, his emotional suffering of bearing all sin, which keeps man and God apart, is much more of a mystery. Although Christ never sinned, he became the only acceptable “sin offering” and was put to death in place of each one of us. St. Paul said, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23).

3. How does the resurrection illuminate God’s plan of salvation?

The resurrection is the key tenet of our faith and shows clearly that Jesus Christ defeated the power of sin and death, since these “enemies of men” could not keep him in the tomb. God’s plan of salvation is for all those who are in Christ to also conquer death, rise bodily and live with him eternally.

The Fifth Word: “Aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said ‘I thirst.’

--John 19:28

1. Does God need us or need our worship? Why or why not? What is the meaning of our worship?

God does not need us or our worship because he is complete in himself and needs nothing. Our worship is important for our own awareness of who we are and who God is. Right worship, as Fr. Barron says, is the key to our own joy and fulfillment. When we worship and praise God, we remind ourselves of our humble nature as his creatures and of our dependence on him for life.

2. Explain what Fr. Barron means when he says, “Divine life only exists in gift form.” (1 Kings 17:7-16)

The widow gave away her last bit of food to the prophet Elijah and the Lord filled her pantry with enough food for a year. Divine life is love and love is all about willing the good of the other, so it exists in continual giving. God is love and all he does stems from love. We can participate in the Divine Life when we too give away our gifts, in confidence that the Lord will continue to give us what we need.

3. Read the story of the woman at the well. (John 4:4-29, 39-42) What is Jesus really thirsty for? How does his thirst get quenched in this story?

Jesus is thirsty for the woman’s soul, so she can live life to the fullest and dwell with him forever. His thirst is quenched when she believes that he is the Messiah and gives testimony to her belief among the townspeople.

4. Blessed Mother Teresa said she often heard the voice of Christ saying, “I thirst” and it motivated her in her ministry. How can you help fulfill God’s thirst for souls?

Answers will vary. Overall theme is to discern your gifts and then give them away in love.

The Sixth Word: “Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Father into your hands I commend my spirit.’ “

--Luke 23:46

1. How does the description of the Trinity that Fr. Barron shares (the Lover, the Beloved and the Shared Love) show forth while Jesus is on the cross?

God the Father sent his only Son to die for our sins, out of love. Jesus acts in perfect obedience to the Father, out of love. Jesus shares love while on the cross by forgiving sins, promising paradise, looking after his mother’s future and being meek and humble of heart.

2. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (John 3:16)
What did God ask of his only Son? What does this mean for you personally?

God the Father asked his Son to take on a human nature, step off his throne in heaven and come live amid his sinful creatures and then die a brutal death as an innocent man.

Personally, answers will vary. It is important to connect personally to the Passion and Death of Christ. Jesus died for you, to atone for your sins and to allow you to participate in the Divine Life eternally.

3. How does Jesus’ example of surrender on the cross encourage you to trust in God always? In what ways is this type of radical trust difficult for you?

Answers will vary. Through faith, we know the end of the story.

**The Seventh Word: “When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’
And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.”
--John 19:30**

1. How is Jesus both the high priest and the sacrifice on the cross? (Hebrews 5: 8-10 and 7:24-28; CCC 608)

Through Jesus’ passion and death, he offers a sacrifice that reunites man with God, which is the role of the high priest. In the Old Testament, an unblemished animal would be killed and offered as atonement for sin by the high priest. Jesus himself is the unblemished lamb and he offers himself as the definitive sacrifice that unites God and man for all eternity.

“He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, declared by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 5:9-10).

2. What does Jesus fulfill and finish by his death? (CCC 436, 536, 606)

Jesus fulfilled his mission as the Messiah, according to the will of God the Father. By his death and resurrection, he reunited mankind with God forever by defeating the enemies of man -- sin and death.

He inaugurated the Kingdom of Heaven and has provided the way for all to share in the Divine Life.

3. What replaces the Jewish temple in the New Covenant (John 2:13-22; CCC 593)? In what way is the Church linked to this temple?

Jesus, fully God and fully man, is the temple of the New Covenant. The New Covenant was sealed by his sacrificial blood on the cross.

The Church is the “Body of Christ,” submitted to its head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the Church, God continues to accomplish the renewal and redemption of all creation.