

Each month we have a special memory verse and Life App.
All of our stories revolve around those.

This month's Memory Verse is:

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
John 16:33b, NIV

This month's life app is

HOPE

"Believing that something good can come out of something bad"

Weekly, we have a different bottom line that goes with our story and Life App

This week's **Bottom Line** is:

1) **Whatever happens, remember God is always at work** (The Crucifixion)

For this week's story we need to start off with a little background. Jesus and His disciples had gathered together for a very special dinner. This dinner was called Passover. During the meal Jesus tried explaining many different things to His disciples, some things that were about to happen.

* He tried telling them that He knew one of them would betray Him. *"What, no way" they said.*

*He told them that some of them would deny they even knew Him... *"NEVER" was the response.*

*Jesus told them He had to go away, but they could not follow. He said He would get a place ready for them and then He would come back to get them. They asked: *Where are you going? Why can't we come too? How will we find You?*

Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6

The disciples tried to keep up with everything Jesus was telling them, but they were just so confused. They simply did not understand what Jesus was telling them.

After Jesus and His friends ate the Passover meal together, they walked toward the Garden of Gethsemane. Along the way, Jesus promised that even though things were about to get dark, God would make everything right in the end. In fact, what He told them is our memory verse this month.

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
John 16:33b

Soon Jesus and His friends crossed a valley and climbed up to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Not long after, soldiers arrived, sent by the Jewish religious leaders to arrest Jesus! Of course, none of this was a surprise to Jesus, He knew everything that was going to happen to him. So, He approached the men. Here's what was said...

"Who do you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said."
John 18:4-5a

Jesus was tied up and taken to the high priest. His friends scattered, though Peter and another disciple snuck along behind until they got into the courtyard. Three times, bystanders accused Peter of being Jesus' friend, and three times Peter denied it 😞

Even one of Jesus' closest friends had pretended not to know Him. Nearly everyone had abandoned Him. Then, Jesus was put on trial. Witnesses spoke lies about Him. The religious leaders twisted His words. The trial was completely unfair. But the high priest sent Jesus to be condemned by the Roman governor, Pilate.

Pilate came out to talk to the men who had brought Jesus to him. He asked them what charges they were bringing against Jesus. In other words, what bad things did they think Jesus had done? They told Pilate that Jesus had committed many crimes, even though He really hadn't.

Pilate questioned Jesus directly. He asked Jesus if He was the king of the Jews. Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not from this world. Jesus went on to say;

'You say that I am a king. In fact, that's the reason I was born. I was born and came into the world to be a witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to me.'
John 18:37b

Pilate could find nothing that Jesus had done wrong. Despite that, he had soldiers whip Jesus and then went out to address the religious leaders. He said 'I find no basis for a charge against him,' (*John 18:38*). Then the soldiers brought Jesus out before the religious leaders once again. They had dressed Him in a purple robe and pressed a crown of thorns down on His head.

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" the crowd cried out when they saw Jesus. John 19:36

Pilate didn't want to make the crowd angry or get in trouble with his Roman bosses. So, he went along with what they wanted. He sentenced Jesus to die and handed Him over to the soldiers.

The soldiers led Jesus to a hill outside the city called Golgotha. Jesus had to drag His own cross along the dusty road. A few of Jesus' friends straggled along behind, including His mother Mary, several other women, and John. Once they reached the hill, they were hardly able to watch as a soldier nailed Jesus' hands and feet to the cross and lifted it high into place.

Two other men—men who had actually committed crimes—were crucified on either side of Jesus. They were actually criminals, but Jesus, He had done nothing wrong. That didn't matter though, the priests & officials wanted Him dead.

A soldier posted a sign on Jesus' cross. It read '**Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.**' (*John 19:19*)

Nearby, there was a group of religious leaders who stayed far away from both the soldiers and Jesus' cross. They mocked Jesus, shouting things like, 'Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God,' and, 'He saved others, but he can't save himself' (*Matthew 27:40, 42*). Then, others joined in mocking Jesus too.

Even one of the lawbreakers, hanging on his own cross, gathered enough breath to laugh at Jesus. He mocked Jesus saying 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself! Save us!' (*Luke 23:39*). But the second lawbreaker called out to the first one, 'Don't you have any respect for God? ... We are being punished fairly. ... But this man hasn't done anything wrong.' Then he turned to Jesus and said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And Jesus answered the man, 'Today, you will be with me in paradise.' (*Luke 23:41-43*)

“Soon, deep darkness covered the land, even though it was the middle of the day. Jesus knew that God was still at work, but still, He must have felt completely alone.

He struggled to breathe, His throat dry and gritty with dust.

‘I am thirsty,’ He called out. (John 19:28)

One of the soldiers hoisted up a sponge dipped in vinegar on the end of a stick. Jesus took a sip of the bitter liquid and choked it down. Now everything He had come to do was complete.

In John 19:30, we have His last words recorded for us in the Bible;

‘It is finished’.

Slowly, He lowered His head and took one last, rasping breath. Then ... He died.

Afterwards, the soldiers and religious leaders shuffled away. Jesus’ friends were left alone in the dim light, the dry desert wind whipping against their faces. Their friend, the Man who they believed came from God, was dead. They couldn’t see how God could bring any good from this. But in the darkness...**God was still at work.**

Remember, Jesus had promised He was coming back. But the disciples didn’t understand God’s plan. The disciples had just one sliver of hope to hold on to when everything went dark, and it’s the same hope that you and I have. And that truth is that

Whatever happens, remember God is always at work.

Even when we can’t understand what God is doing, we have to remember that we can always **trust God no matter what.** He always has a plan, we can always trust Him and He is always at work.

Like the disciples, we have no need to worry. Jesus’ death was not the end of the story.

We will go over that next week.

Right now, let’s thank God now for all that He has done and is still doing in the world.”

PRAY

“Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. We know it must have been so hard to see Him die, but You still carried out Your plan to save the world. Sometimes we face things that are hard too. Help us to remember that whatever happens, You are still at work. We love You, and we trust You and Your plan, even when we don’t know what will happen next. We ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”