

A Series of Unfortunate Events
A Curtain Gets Ruined
Matthew 27:45-56
John 18:15-26; 21:1-17
(April 21-27, 2019)

Opening

Now is the shining fabric
of our day
Torn open, flung apart,
Rent wide by Love.
Never again the tight, enclosing sky,
The blue bowl,
Or the star-illuminated tent.
We are laid open to infinity,
For Easter Love
Has burst His tomb and ours.
Now *nothing* shelters us
From *God's desire* –
Not flesh, not sky,
Not stars, not even sin.
Now Glory waits
So He can enter in.
Now does the dance begin.

"Opening", Elizabeth Rooney

Answer and discuss the following question with your group

1. What do you think the author means when she writes "Easter love has burst His tomb and ours? To where does He want to enter in? What is God's desire, and why did Jesus come into our world?"

Read the following excerpt out loud or watch message segment #1

An excerpt from the StoneBridge message, "A Curtain Gets Ruined".

He (the Priest) would atone for their sins with 2 goats. The first goat would die. He would confess the sins of the people and place the sins of the people on the goat and the goat would be slaughtered...the second goat the sins as well would be placed on the goat and the goat would be sent out into the wilderness.

SO the high priest would do this year after year. A reminder to everyone – we need forgiveness. Every year the priest would go behind the curtain and the people would wait – may God accept our sins and cover us for another year. The priest every year would bridge the gap between us and God.

Read Matthew 27:45-51, Genesis 3:21, Leviticus 16: 5-25 and Psalm 103:12 and answer/discuss the following questions.

2. In Genesis 3:21 God kills an animal to make garments of skin for Adam and Eve. Why did Adam and Eve need garments?
3. Why do you think God gave the instructions in Leviticus to the nation of Israel? How do you think the verses in Genesis and Leviticus relate to the death of Jesus on the cross? How long do you think the Israelites had been observing the ritual given in Leviticus?
4. What significance did the torn curtain have with respect to the instructions given in Leviticus? What does this mean to you?

Read the following excerpt out loud or watch message segment #2

An excerpt from the StoneBridge message, "A Curtain Gets Ruined".

The death on the cross – is an all access pass. Jesus is handing them out.

You have been clothed with Christ. He covers you. I no longer have to hide from him or fear him. He covers me with his grace and his love and my sins – and they are many – have been atoned for. They have been paid for once and for all.

And now he no longer dwells in a building. He is in me.

The Bible says that I am the temple of God's Holy Spirit. He left the building and now lives in me. Guiding me – helping me – strengthening me – forgiving me.

Read Galatians 3:27, John 17:20-24 and John 6:51-58 and answer/discuss the following questions.

5. In Galatians 3:27 Paul says all who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. What does this mean to you? What does it mean with respect to your relationship with Christ?
6. In John 17:20-24 what do you think Jesus is praying for? What do you think he means in verse 23?
7. Why do you think the Pharisees were shocked at what Jesus said in John 6:52-58? What do you think Jesus meant when he spoke of eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking his blood? How should we respond to this?

Reflection and Wrap-up

8. Near the end of the message we hear, “Easter is about access. It’s about atonement. It’s all about you.” Explain.

9. How do you respond to the truth of the Easter story?

Pray Together as a Group

Additional Study

If you have time during your Small Group or you want to study more about the message topic, read and consider the following passages:

- Hebrews 9:28
- 1 Peter 2:24
- 1 Peter 1:6-9

Just Thinking

- God loves me so much that he provided a way for my sin to be washed away.
- God is always near me; in fact, he is in me and everyone else – even those who are different than me.
- God loves me so much that he wants to walk with me and talk with me as often as I can manage.
- I am never alone. Jesus is always ready to talk with me. He is closer than the air I breathe.
- Jesus brings salvation to everyone eagerly waiting for him.
- By his wounds, we are healed. Isaiah 53:5
- You are clothed with Christ – he covers you!
- Easter is about all access to God’s grace.