

Lenten Study:

“Questioning Our Grip on the Cross”



Study 2

**What would you be prepared to do
to keep the cross?**

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

PRELIMINARY NOTES

This Lenten Study has been prepared for use in study groups at Blackwood Uniting Church and other interested groups. It is hoped that engaging with this study series will, in some small way, lead to a deepening of understanding and an enlivening of personal faith.

It has been my observation that there are some people for whom reflection on their beliefs and understanding of the Christian faith seems not to be so terribly important, so focussed are they on compassionately *living* their faith, through acts of service and love. If you are in that category, all I ask is that I continue to be permitted to sit at your feet and to learn from, and be inspired by, the ways of your heart.

It is my view that Christian practices, including engaging in studies such as this, are valuable insofar as they contribute to our change and growth as human beings, better enabling us to engage positively with the world, and lovingly and compassionately with those around us. Whether this study contributes in such a way remains to be seen, but...*one lives in hope!*

A word about the reflection questions that accompany each study. Please consider these as suggestive, rather than prescriptive. They are not questions which I'm expecting you to answer like it's some sort of exam! Some of the questions I have raised may be questions that also come to *your* mind. Some questions may not have occurred to you, and you may deem them worthy of exploration. Other questions may have no interest or relevance to you at all.

To the extent that the questions are helpful in facilitating discussion in your group, or sparking your own thoughts, use them. Otherwise consider them of no account.

TWO WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH THE STUDY SERIES:

Study documents and YouTube video clips

Study participants have two ways in which they can engage with the study materials. Firstly, there are the printed studies, which are also available as downloadable PDF documents that can be viewed on your computer, tablet or smartphone. Secondly, there are YouTube videos for each of the seven studies. It is hoped that these two study media will complement each other, but either can be used separately too.

How each group approaches the study is, of course, up to them. I would anticipate, however, that it may be helpful for a study group to first watch together the YouTube video for the particular week's study, and then discuss the study, using the printed/PDF study notes as a reference. The links to the downloadable PDF files and to the YouTube videos can be found at:

<http://blackwooduc.org.au/downloads/studies/lentenstudy2022>

I hope that you appreciate this study series *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*.

Michael Dowling
Minister
Blackwood Uniting Church
Email: minister@blackwooduc.org.au

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

I invite you into an imaginative exercise by reading the following, and immersing yourself in the story as it unfolds, becoming part of the story...

Shocking... yes, it was shocking indeed. Mel Gibson, the director of *The Passion of the Christ* had stated that it was his intention to make the film “shocking.” He wanted people to appreciate the magnitude of Christ’s suffering. In this goal he had succeeded beyond a shadow of doubt. As I left my seat I felt profoundly humbled by the knowledge of the agony that my Lord and Saviour had experienced in order that I might have eternal life.

The other members of our church group walked with me down the stairs of the theatre, they too, numbed by the experience. “How could the Pharisees be so vindictive?” and “How could the Roman soldiers be so merciless?” were the questions to which we were seeking answers. One of our group, Randall, seemed to think the reason was obvious. “It’s really no mystery. I think Mel Gibson was quite astute in his portrayal of the role of Satan in the crowd. It was Satan who was working his evil influence on the Pharisees and the soldiers, urging them on, to torture and crucify our Lord.”

Deeply affected by what we had seen, we pushed through the theatre doors and out into...*what!!!!???* The heat and the light momentarily blinded and disoriented us, but as our pupils adjusted we stopped as one and...*simply stared*. We were standing not in the theatre foyer, but instead a market-place. Shabbily clothed people milled about, inspecting produce and moving from stall to stall. We simply stood and stared, dumbfounded. After the longest time, some critical thinking started to kick back in. It was hard to pin down, but something just wasn’t right. No, not simply the fact that our theatre had vanished, but something else. There was something other-worldly about this place. Now that the initial shock had passed, words started to intrude on our consciousness. Words that sounded...familiar. “That man’s speaking Aramaic!” exclaimed John. “I recognize some of those words from *The Passion* because the movie was done in the Aramaic language!” “Oh my God, so are you, John!” For the next few minutes, we were all talking over the top of each other, both excited and afraid, as the situation dawned on us. We were *all* speaking Aramaic, and...we could *all* understand this ancient language. We noticed that our garb had changed as well: we were dressed like the locals. One of the younger women of the group, Julia, broke down and began to sob, “What’s happened to us? Where are we!?” Richard, one of the senior members of the church, took charge. “Look, at this stage, we have no idea what’s occurred or how it’s occurred. All we know is that somehow we’ve arrived in a very backward country town. It’s not all bad though, because at least we can communicate with the locals.”

At this point, Phillip, a recently retired Registered Nurse, had a brief panic attack as he remembered his insulin requirements. “I need my syringes!” Frantically he searched through his unfamiliar garments, sure that he was in deep trouble. He was almost ready to give up when his hand emerged gripping a small bag containing syringes and ampoules of his diabetic medication. “Thank God!” he exclaimed in relief.

We began to wander through the alleys and laneways, not yet having a direction but nonetheless feeling the need to make some progress. After rounding a corner, we emerged into an area dominated by a single, breathtakingly large structure. The sheer scale of the building and its surrounds simply took our breath away. “That looks like a temple. What religion do you think...”

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

John's words were cut off by a loud exclamation from Roger, "No, God, it can't be!" All eyes turned toward him. Roger wrapped his arms defensively across his chest and began to rock back and forth. His face was ashen. All attempts to communicate with him failed, as he muttered over and over, "it can't be real, it just *can't* be real." When he finally gained control and spoke again, it came out as a dull, metallic monotone. "I holidayed once in Israel. One of the tourist sites we visited was the Western Wall, also known as the Wailing Wall. It was the only part of the Temple left standing after the Roman's razing of the city of Jerusalem in 70AD." Roger looked up at us. "The wall facing us is the Western Wall. We are therefore in Jerusalem, in the land of Israel. There is, however, a problem. The Western Wall we can now see is not a ruin, but quite intact. And this intact Western Wall appears to be attached to an equally intact Northern Wall, which I can only assume is attached to an Eastern Wall, which is attached to a Southern Wall. The temple appears to be intact and whole."

"What are you trying to tell us, man, that somebody has gone and rebuilt the temple!?"

"No, that's not what I'm saying at all. What I'm *trying* to tell you is that the Roman General Titus *has not yet destroyed the temple!*"

Richard grabbed at the next passer-by, demanding to know the year. The man shrugged off Richard's grip angrily, "It's the seventeenth year of the reign of Tiberius, you fool!"

"Caesar Tiberius...seventeenth year...Tiberius succeeded Augustus in 14AD so that would make this...30AD. In a haze of slow-motion thought the penny dropped for us all near enough simultaneously. *We were at the same time and place as modern scholarship placed the crucifixion and death of our Lord, Jesus Christ.*

We had little time to contemplate this latest revelation. A chorus of shouts from the end of the market signalled activity. "The Prophet is being taken to Pilate for trial!" We looked at each other, and then ran as fast as our legs could carry us in the direction of the crowd. We pushed through the throng of people, trying to get to the front. The crowd's forward movement was slowing as the front-runners stopped just prior to a large stone building. John spotted a ledge on the left and beckoned us to follow him. This afforded us a view of what was clearly the focus of attention, a long-haired and bearded young man, surrounded by a phalanx of guards, as well as men wearing what appeared to be priestly robes. The prisoner was brought to a halt before a dais on which sat an elegantly attired official. An ornately garbed man, clearly the Chief Priest, greeted the official with due deference before coming to the point. As we stood transfixed, he explained that charges were being brought against this man, a Nazarene called Jesus. As the official listened, the Chief Priest outlined a litany of charges, including a claim of being the "Son of God." Eventually the official tired of his monologue and held up his hand. As he spoke, we realized that Latin that also been added to our linguistic skills. "Enough. Bring the prisoner inside. I, Pontius Pilate will interrogate the man and decide his fate." With this, he rose and swaggered arrogantly back inside. Jesus was roughly shoved and prodded up the steps to join him.

As we waited for the verdict that we knew was to come, a barrage of emotions hit us. John was enraged at the treatment of our Lord and Saviour. Julia said she had to get away, that she couldn't bear watching the Christ be tortured and killed. No, no, the film was terrible enough, she couldn't possibly watch the real thing. Richard looked upon Julia with compassion, but there was steel in his voice. "Julia, if our Lord and Master is willing to be sacrificed and die for our sins, then surely we can at least be there with him?"

Lenten Study: Questioning Our Grip on the Cross

“There’s no way I’m leaving Him!” said Rhonda. “I’m going to get some water and cloth, so I can mop His brow on the terrible journey to Calvary. I want to touch my Lord, so that He knows I love Him, even if I can’t save Him.” In the end it was decided. We would all stay with our Saviour during his agony, and support Him in any way we could. It was still a mystery as to how and why we were here, but we were here for a reason. It was a privilege beyond imagining for a Christian to be given this opportunity, and we must be equal to the challenge. Even if it meant danger for us, we would not desert the Lord. Our group felt pious and strong.

A hush descended on the square as a centurion heralded the return of the Roman Governor. Jesus was led out before Pilate, who casually resumed his seat. He took his time, sipping at his wine, before directing a withering stare at the Chief Priest. “I am a tolerant and patient man, but you Jews test my patience! You will waste my time once too often, mark my words! I find no case against this man. He may be a crackpot, but no more so than many of your robed colleagues!” To Jesus, he dismissively waved him away, “be gone!” Jesus was allowed to walk down from the dais, and with a brief look toward the priests, walked away with his followers, who were clearly relieved to have him back. As the Chief Priest and his followers began to bristle, Pilate intoned “As for you lot, get out of my sight or I’ll have you all scourged.” At his command, the line of soldiers pushed forward to emphasize where the power really resided. Rome.

To say that we were speechless was an understatement. We had been prepared to follow our Lord to Golgotha, but we weren’t prepared for this. I didn’t even know how I should feel. Relief at our Saviour’s reprieve, or confusion? We needed time to think and process these happenings. What should we do now? Become one of Lord’s disciples, following Him from town to town? Yes, surely that’s what we must do. But, were we really meant to be here at all? Shouldn’t we somehow find a way back to our own time? *What should we do?*

INTERMISSION

Take a break for a few minutes, have a stretch, and then consider the following related intermission questions:

INTERMISSION QUESTIONS:

- If this story was for real, how would *you* respond at this point if you were one of the characters?
- Would you feel: happy, sad, or confused that Jesus had *not* been crucified?
- Would you feel that Jesus *not* being crucified was a *good* thing for our world, or a *bad* thing for our world?

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

THE STORY CONTINUES...

“We need food,” Richard said at last. “And while we eat, we can discuss how to accomplish what we now must.”

“Accomplish what?” asked Julia.

“Isn’t it obvious what we have to do?” asked Richard. “We must do everything in our power to ensure that Jesus is condemned to death.”

The wine was truly awful, but that didn’t matter. It was having the desired effect, steadying our nerves. One of the ladies had found a one-denarius coin in her tunic and we used this to pay for wine and a meal at a nearby inn. The collective anger toward Richard was palpable. “How *dare* you threaten to hurt our Lord!” “Are you *mad*?”

Richard looked at us steadily, waiting for a chance to speak. “I shouldn’t have to do this with such a group, but it seems I must. It is extremely important that regardless of how angry you currently are toward me that you allow me to speak without interruption for the next few minutes. Let me start by reminding you that we are *Christians*. We have accepted Christ as our Saviour, and through this acceptance we have been given eternal life. Let’s try to understand this and take it slowly, because the understanding is absolutely critical to our present situation, and to what we must now do.”

“For Jesus to be our Saviour implies that he has saved us from *something*. He has, of course, saved us from sin and the damnation that comes with it. Not just any sin, though. Not just our own individual sins committed in our lifetimes, but something more: *Original Sin*. Yes, the Original Sin of the first parents, Adam and Eve. Because of their pride, the first parents were banished from paradise, and the stain of this Original Sin has been on their progeny ever since, *including all of us*. The result of *The Fall* has been mankind’s estrangement from God, our inability to be in His presence and share in His eternal life. Our sin prevents us from having the sort of relationship with God that He intended. Because of our fallen condition, there was no way that we could possibly, through our own efforts, redeem ourselves from this tragic situation. To redeem ourselves would require the offering of a perfect gift or sacrifice as atonement, and being fallen, flawed, sinful creatures, we simply couldn’t have offered such a perfect sacrifice. However, because God loves us so much, he had a plan, a means of redeeming us. He would Himself provide the perfect offering, the perfect sacrifice, in the form of His only Son. Jesus was born, both Son of Man and Son of God, to be the means of our salvation. Jesus took the sin of the world – including yours and mine – upon His shoulders, as he offered Himself as the Perfect Sacrifice, the Lamb of God. After the agony of His death, out of despair, comes joy. Through the power of God, death is defeated in Christ’s resurrection. Christ is raised from the dead, at the same time raising to new life all those that believe in Him. We are thus born anew, freed from Original Sin, and given eternal life. The Lamb of God...who takes away the sins of the world. *Are you with me so far?*”

“Thank you for the theology lesson,” commented John acidly.

Ignoring the sarcasm, Richard continued. “In the event we have just witnessed, Jesus was *meant* to have been condemned to death, tortured and crucified. This has been clearly documented in the New Testament, as well as foretold in the Scriptures.

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

This failed to happen. Something has gone wrong. Somehow our traveling back in time must have altered something, somehow changed the nature of these events.”

Karen snorted, “Well, isn’t that a good thing? If our coming back has saved our Lord then I’m happy. I, for one, plan to follow Him. Can you imagine listening to one of his sermons or parables, rather than simply reading it in the Bible? We can have an *actual* relationship with Jesus, rather than just a spiritual one!”

I warmed to the idea. “Yes, Karen’s right! Just imagine it. If Jesus lives a full life, living to old age, just think how many people He can directly touch, how the world can be changed. The world as we know it could be changed! Some, maybe all of the horrors of the next two millennia could be prevented if only more people could hear the Word of God directly from Christ’s lips in His lifetime.”

Richard banged his fist on the table, startling the group. “*Fools!* Karen, William, you clearly have no idea! You say you don’t need a theology lesson! *If Jesus doesn’t* suffer and die under Pontius Pilate, then *there is no redemption*. Do you understand that?! There is no redemption! Even if we follow Jesus as real-life disciples, from village to village until we die, we are still eternally damned! Without the atonement, without the resurrection, Jesus becomes simply another prophet: a Buddha, a Krishna, a Mohammed; just someone who offers wise sayings and an ethical way of living. There have been many such men through history and how much have we listened to them? They have been ineffectual, because they couldn’t solve the fundamental problem of human existence: that we are innately sinful and, as a result, are condemned to be eternally estranged from God. It is only through God’s love and the saving power of Jesus death and resurrection that we are given Eternal Life. Are you starting to get it?! *If Jesus doesn’t* suffer and die, then *all* of us, in fact *all* of mankind, those dead, living and still to be born are *damned*.”

“No, Richard, surely you’re wrong! Think about it. Let’s say that Jesus lives until old age, teaching, healing the sick and preaching the Gospel of love. After his death, a natural one due to old age or sickness, His resurrection can still bring about our salvation.”

The tone of Richard’s voice showed his exasperation. “No, it *can’t*! There is no salvation without atonement for our sins! Jesus *has* to suffer and die so that we might have eternal life. It is *only* through offering His life as the Perfect Sacrifice that the debt of our collective sin is paid. Don’t you remember Hebrews 9:22? *Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness*. Do you remember the phrase? *Washed in the blood of the lamb*. Quite simply, *we are redeemed in no other way*. If the Lamb of God does *not* suffer and die, then God will be *unable* to take away the sins of the world.”

I felt real disquiet and said so. “This is an enormous thing we’re contemplating. I mean, is this *really* God’s will, or merely *ours*? Are we really *that* confident that we know the mind of God on this matter?”

“Yes, we *are*, William! The Atonement is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. Since we are Christians, we believe this doctrine. Since we believe this doctrine, we are duty-bound to fulfill it when it is threatened, as it is now. We are quite simply doing *God’s will*, and there is no room for doubt.” The group lapsed into silence for a prolonged period, as a dawning sense of finality descended upon them.

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

“Our faith in the Christian message is being tested,” said Richard. “The Scriptures must be fulfilled, and it is clear that *we* are now intimately involved in their fulfillment.”

It was at this point that a quiet, retiring member of our group, Judy, stunned us all by announcing that she would have no part of our plans. As she stood up to leave, she accused us of being the modern-day successors to the despised Pharisees. With this, she was gone.

As we watched her recede from view, it was Richard who spoke. “So, Judith has betrayed us and become apostate, leaving only eleven to carry out God’s plan. I pray that we will be able to accomplish what we must with this reduced number.” I asked the question for everyone. “What do we need to do, Richard?”

Richard leaned in, offering his hands to the person on either side. As we clasped hands together and bowed our heads, Richard said, “Let us pray to God for guidance and strength.” We prayed like we had never prayed before.

Much can be accomplished in a short period with good planning and an unrelenting focus. It took exactly one month before Jesus was again brought before Pilate by the Pharisees. Our first action had been to approach the Chief Priest through a paid intermediary. Caiaphas was only too pleased to be shown the means to bring down this King of the Jews. Our “specialist knowledge” regarding the teachings of Jesus enabled us to convince the Pharisees that Jesus was even more dangerous to their cause than they had hitherto suspected. They became utterly determined to have him condemned. Through our insights we were able to present key ideas which, when presented in the appropriate way, would prove decisive. We also provided advice as to how to portray Jesus’ threat to Pilate’s authority, and ultimately Caesar’s himself. So pleased with us were the Pharisees that they offered far more than thirty pieces of silver. We were contemptuous in our rejection of this blood money. “We are doing this because it is *God’s will*, not for money!” we spat at these Christ-killers.

After one such meeting with the Pharisees, I rushed to the side of the building and violently emptied my stomach. “What’s the matter, William?” asked Richard. In between breaths, I managed to gasp, “I feel so awful doing what we’re doing. Throughout history the Pharisees have been vilified by Christians for having brought about Christ’s death. In the film they were depicted as being inspired to do so by Satan, as were the Roman torturers and executioners. Since *we* are now doing the same thing, who is inspiring *us*, Richard?” “William, your problem is a lack of faith. A weak faith leads to doubt, which Satan will ruthlessly exploit. Perfect faith banishes doubt, leaving one totally focused and confident.” He bent down and put his hand on my shoulder. “William, I hate these self-serving Pharisees as much as you do. But can’t you see that God is allowing us to use them and their evil desires to His noble ends. Our motives are *pure*, and our actions are being supported and inspired by *God*. It is *God’s will*, not Satan’s that we seek to follow. Here, hold my hand, and let us pray together than God will strengthen our faith.” I closed my eyes tightly and promised God that my faith would be strong.

In and of itself, our assistance to the Pharisees would have been insufficient to carry the day. Jesus was indeed regarded as a prophet and loved by the majority of the people. At the same time as we proffered advice to the Chief Priest, we also mounted a campaign to undermine Jesus’ popular support. This was not as difficult as one might imagine, since most people are only too willing to believe the worst of someone else.

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

Within a short period of time, simply by mingling with the crowds and agitating, we identified other dissenters ready to attack Jesus and His teachings. We worked together with these troublemakers to sow the seeds of suspicion and mistrust in the common people. It became increasingly the norm for people to take Jesus' sayings the wrong way, to doubt His sincerity, and to see in His comments a quest for power.

The Chief Priest hit the mark on the occasion of our Lord's second trial. He diligently followed our advice regarding his criticisms of Jesus. These comments, meant specifically to inflame the crowd, did just that. Soon they were baying for Christ's blood. Pilate was now clearly troubled by the threat Jesus posed to his authority and how Caesar would respond to this. The judgment was short and swift: scourging, then death by crucifixion.

It began with an act of humiliation, stripping the prisoner bare in front of the crowd. It was only then that Jesus, naked, his hands bound, was led away by the soldiers. Their path to the whipping post took them directly past our position at the front of the crowd.

Phillip grabbed urgently at Richard. Richard was shocked to see the knife in Phillip's hand. "What are you doing? Where did you get the knife?!" Phillip gestured for Richard to lower his voice. In hushed tones, Phillip said, "I stole it. Look, it doesn't matter. We can spare our Master's pain. Jesus will pass right next to me in the next few moments. I know what to do and have the skill to do it. I can open his femoral artery. He'll bleed to death in a couple of minutes and be spared his agony. I don't care what they do to me after that." Just as Jesus was passing by, Phillip readied himself to spring forward. But as he began to lunge, he was pulled back and held by Richard, the knife pinned to his side.

"Bastard! Why did you stop me?!"

Still holding Phillip as he struggled, Richard put his mouth close to his ear and whispered urgently. "I had to, Phillip. You would have undone and ruined everything. Christ's painless death, *without suffering*, would *not* provide atonement. I tell you the truth. What I am about to say, I say with a heavy heart. According to Scripture, the Suffering Servant must *suffer* for our iniquities.

Jesus' torture and death were horrific indeed. The cinematic version, although more theatrical, captured the essence of the brutality and the agony suffered by our Lord. Admittedly this required some assistance from us. The Roman soldiers assigned to Our Lord seemed at times to simply be going through the motions. My former headmaster would have put their initial flogging efforts to shame. Our time-travel had obviously put things more out of kilter than we had realised. In order to carry the sins of the world, Christ had to *suffer*, and any schoolboy could have taken this beating. Once again, Richard was inspirational, and began to move amongst the crowd, stirring them up. In the cacophony that ensued it became impossible to separate our pious exhortations from the crude cries of the mob for vengeance. For we used the same words. *Aren't they paying you Romans enough? Put your back into it! Make him suffer! Don't just string him up with rope, nail him to the cross!*

In the vicinity of the cross were two soldiers, the Pharisees, and our own group. The Chief Priest looked at Richard, smiled and nodded his approval. Richard looked back with contempt, and cursed him as an unbeliever. The Chief Priest merely shrugged, then moved off with his colleagues.

Lenten Study: *Questioning Our Grip on the Cross*

As Christ hung on the cross, His strength fading fast, our Christian fellowship group knelt as one to worship Him and to give thanks for His sacrifice. “*Lord, Lord!*” we called to Him.

With a supreme effort Christ lifted His head. His gaze focused and fell on us. We yearned for His blessing, perhaps a promise to meet us again one day in paradise. As Christ’s parched lips moved, we leaned forward, eager to hear his every word.

“Father, *forgive them*, for they know not what they do...”

Richard exploded. “What do you mean *forgive* us?! We know *exactly* what we’re doing! We are doing the *Will of God!* You *had* to die! This is *God’s Will, God’s Will, God’s Will, Will, Will...*”

“Will, Will, wake up!” I looked up with a start and saw Richard standing over me. Confused and disoriented I realized that I had fallen asleep, just like the apostles in the garden of Gethsemane. With shame I asked, “Is it *finished?*” “Yeah, mate, the film’s finished. I just want to know how *anyone* could possibly fall asleep during the credits of *that* movie! You must have sleeping sickness!” As my eyes began to focus on my surroundings, I saw not a cross, but comfortable chairs. I was in the cinema once more.

As we walked down the stairs, I was asked my impression of the movie. I took a long time to respond. “Sorry, I’m still a bit confused.”

I looked at my friend. “Can I ask you a question, Richard?”

“Sure” he said.

“Did He *have* to die?”

Even before Richard spoke, I knew the movements his lips would make.

Yes, of course He did.

Study 2 Reflection Questions

The following reflection questions are not meant to be prescriptive, but are offered in case they assist people in exploring and articulating their responses to the study.

1. Reflect on your response to the story.

Jot down some emotions you experienced, and at which points of the story.
What thoughts come to mind now as you look back on the story?

Can you identify the threads of *violence* and *love* in the story?

2. Do you identify with any particular character in the story?

Richard in his certainty?

William in his doubts?

Judith in her “betrayal”?

Jesus, when he realised he was being set free?

Jesus, when he realised he was being crucified?

Someone else?

3. What do you think of the actions of the Christian group in the story?

Do you support or condemn their actions, and why?

As you reflect on the significance of the crucifixion for *you*, what would *you* be prepared to do in order to keep the cross as part of your faith?

4. What distinguishes the actions of the Christian group from those of the Pharisees?
Which is more important? The underlying motivations or the action that flows from those underlying motivations?

5. What if (*another* hypothetical!) the modern Christian group had *not* intervened in the story, and Jesus had actually gone on to live a long life, to a ripe old age, preaching, teaching and healing all over Palestine and then, one night, simply dying in his sleep?

How would the Christian faith today be different to what it actually is?

How would your personal Christian faith today be different to what it actually is?

How would the world today be different to what it actually is?

6. If you could, miraculously, choose to go back in time and prevent the crucifixion of Jesus, so that he had gone on to live a long life, to a ripe old age, preaching, teaching and healing all over Palestine and then, one night, simply dying in his sleep, would you choose to do so, or would you not?

Reflect on your reasons.