

“The Lower Story Disaster; the Upper Story Victory”
“The Story—New Testament—Part 5

1. What did Jesus do with His last hours?

He abandoned all pride and dignity.

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

John 13:1-5

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you...Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:12-15 and 17

He focused on their peace and comfort, not His own.

*Don't let your hearts be troubled...
I will come back and take you with me...
You will do even greater things than I have...
You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it...
You will receive another advocate to help you and be with you forever...
I have told you these things that you may have peace...
Take heart! I have overcome the world...*

He affirmed the one timeless relationship He had.

"Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." "You believe at last!" Jesus answered. "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me."

John 16:25-32

He prayed for them.

"I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one." John 17:9-11

The selflessness of Jesus was never more apparent than here.

Practice selflessness!

2. Why is the cross such a big deal?

Jesus' testimony was accurately reflected.

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Matthew 27:41-43

The cross revealed the holiness of God and the severity of sin.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. Isaiah 59:2

For the wages of sin is death...

Romans 6:23

In the cross God's holiness and love are displayed completely.

... But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Hebrews 10:8-12

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. John 3:16-18

Application: All of the Bible has been pointing to this moment. The name of Jesus has been whispered throughout the Old Testament. We've seen Jesus as precisely the Messiah the world needed, but the opposite of what they expected. And now, on this day, everything converges. On this day, darkness eclipsed the land as sin overtook the Light of the world. God gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice. He uttered the cry for which all of history had longed: *"It is finished."*

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:28-30

Jesus had done what He'd come to do.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45

Practice selfless service!

"The Lower Story Disaster; the Upper Story Victory" is fifth in a series titled, "The Story—New Testament." January 25, 2015.

All verses are taken from the International version unless noted.