

introduction

The Easter Experience is meant to be just that: an experience.

An experience is not something we simply read or comprehend. An experience is something that we, well . . . experience!

We *feel* an experience. We *meet* an experience. We *enter* an experience. Maybe more accurately, an experience enters *us*.

During the Easter Experience we will *feel . . . meet . . . enter* the last few hours of Jesus' natural life as well as the first few hours of His resurrected life. We will find ourselves reclining next to Him in the Upper Room, walking beside Him in Gethsemane, standing near Him in Pilate's courtyard, weeping alongside Him at Golgotha, and celebrating with Him at the empty tomb.

As we shadow Jesus, we will often find ourselves identifying with those around Him—Peter, Judas, Mary, and others. But most of all we will find ourselves identifying with Jesus Himself. And that's a good thing because the more we identify with Jesus, the more we will become like Him. For Christianity is not simply following rules; it is following Christ. And Christianity is not merely knowing about Christ; it is knowing Christ Himself. For Christianity is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Session 1

my life has a purpose

OPENING QUESTIONS

?If people were asked to give a one- or two-word description of you, what might it be? Fun loving? Hardworking? Family oriented? Good-looking?

Watch DVD episode.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts or reactions after watching this episode?
2. This episode challenged us to make our purpose in life to be a servant of others. But why would anyone choose to be a servant?
3. Would you say you are a servant? Why or why not?
4. What is it like for you when you serve others? How does it feel?

What is it like for you when you don't serve?

Which experience is better, and why?

5. Have you found it to be true that when we really know our purpose in life, and that purpose is something beyond ourselves, then we experience the greatest fulfillment?

What life purposes have you found to be most fulfilling?

What does that fulfillment feel like?

6. Read Mark 10:35-45.

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

³⁶ "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

³⁷ They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." ³⁸ "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

³⁹ "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ 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."

What stands out to you from this passage?

FOR REFLECTION

Read this passage from John 13 every day this week, first asking Jesus to open your eyes to what He wants you to see. Circle, underline, or write in the margins whatever words, phrases, or thoughts stand out to you.

¹ 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. ² The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

⁵ 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. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." ⁹ "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" ¹⁰ Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. ¹² 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. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an

example that you should do as I have done for you.¹⁶ I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."