

## STORY 5: SACRIFICE

**S**o Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth as the fulfillment of God's promise to His people that He would restore their relationship with Him. He lived a perfect life, never disobeying His Father.

In his last three years on earth, Jesus healed sickness and disability, performed miracles, and told the people about God and His Kingdom, always showing love and compassion wherever he went. But the religious leaders of that day hated him and wanted him dead. One of his friends, Judas, went behind his back and met with these religious leaders. He agreed to help them get Jesus arrested for only a few coins.

So while Jesus and his close friends were on a hill outside the city praying to God, Judas brought the authorities with him to arrest Jesus. One of Jesus' friends rushed to his rescue with his sword, cutting off the ear of one of the men. But Jesus said, "Stop! No more of that!" and he touched the man's ear and healed him.

Then they took Jesus to the chief religious leaders and governors of the area to investigate his crimes. They accused Jesus of stirring up the people and claiming to be a king. They had him stripped and put a crown made of thorns on his head. They made fun of him, spit on him, and beat him with a nasty whip. Finally, they brought him to the governor of the area. But the governor said, "What crime has this man committed?" The religious leaders were insistent and formed a mob, shouting, "Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!" So the governor relented, saying, "Fine. Take him. But I won't be responsible."

So the soldiers marched Jesus out of the city to a hill where they killed criminals by hanging them on large wooden crosses. They nailed his hands and feet to the wooden posts and raised him up between two other criminals. After hours of pain and misery, the sky turned dark, and Jesus cried out, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Then he breathed his last.

A few days later, a few of the women who knew Jesus were taking some burial spices to his tomb when they found that the stone that covered the entrance of the tomb was rolled to the side. Curious, they walked in and found that his body was gone. Now they were puzzled. Who took his body? But all of a sudden, two angels appeared and said, "Why are you looking for the living in the cemetery? He told you before that he would come back to life and he has!" So the women left the tomb and went to tell all of Jesus' followers.

A short time later, Jesus appeared to his followers. They thought they were seeing a ghost and were scared. Jesus said, "Don't be upset, and don't let all these doubting questions take over. Look at my hands; look at my feet—it's really me. Touch me. Look me over from head to toe. A ghost doesn't have muscle and bone like this." As he said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

He told them, "I am sending you out as my witnesses to the earth and I will give you power in the form of God's Spirit within you." And after he had spent some time with them, he was taken up before their very eyes.

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- **review:** re-tell the story
- **dialogue:** discuss the story
  - What did you like or not like about the story?
  - What can we tell about Jesus from his actions in the story?
  - How was Jesus treated? Why do you think he was treated this way?
  - What can we learn about God from this story?
- **application:** live the story
  - The Bible tells us that Jesus' death was for us- that in dying he paid the penalty for our disobedience. What do you think it takes to die for someone else? What do you think Jesus was going through?
  - What does Jesus coming back to life prove? If someone you knew came back to life, how would you respond?
- **notes:**