

# Oak Grove Church of Christ

(502) 749-9209

## Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship: 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship: 6:00 PM

## Wednesday

Bible Class: 7:30 PM

**Evangelist:** Bruce J. Dehut

*Home Bible Studies Available  
Upon Request*

Oak Grove church of Christ  
9203 Thixton Lane  
Louisville, KY 40291



## OAK GROVE ENCOURAGER

**"And let us consider one another in order to  
stir up love and good works" Hebrews 10:24**

*JUNE 25, 2006*

### **DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION**

by Boyd Sellers

Picture a human being, stripped of clothing, beaten with a metal-tipped scourge, goaded to the outside of town, and nailed to a post alongside a public road to helplessly await a slow, torturous death. Josephus called crucifixion "a most wretched death." It was a common practice in the time of Jesus and the method by which He was put to death (Matt. 27:35-36).

"Death by crucifixion," the Roman magistrate announces, and the victim is placed into the rough hands of soldiers who are just "doing their job." Cries for mercy fall on deaf ears. There is no pity.

Rather, there seems to be even a degree of levity as preparations are made for the execution.

The procedure has little variety. It begins with the scourging. The prisoner is stripped of his clothing. His hands are tied to a post above his head, and the Roman legionnaire steps forward with whip in hand. His whip (or scourge) consists of a small handle that holds several heavy, leather thongs, each containing pieces of bone, metal, or other sharp objects at the end. The heavy whip is brought with full force again and again across the back, shoulders, and legs of the prisoner. The legionnaire has not done his job well until bones are laid bare and the flesh of the back is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. The beating is stopped when the centurion in charge decides that the prisoner is near death. Hands untied, he slumps to the ground. The ordeal has just begun.

The slow, painful, humiliating journey to the place of execution now begins. Weakened and faint from the scourging, the victim is forced to get up and carry, on his lacerated back, part or the entire cross on which he is destined to die. All along the road he is pushed, thrown down, gouged with sticks and forced on by every indignity and abuse imaginable. Crowds gather. Friends, (if there are any), and relatives keep their distance as they look on in anguish. Others, not so friendly, have come simply to see the sight and possibly to add to the pain and

humiliation of the sufferer.

Arriving at the selected site, a society of women are on hand to offer a pain killer - wine mixed with myrrh. The criminal is now forced to watch the preparations for his torture. The soldiers waste no time. Before his eyes the upright part of the cross is driven into the ground. Stripped of his clothing, he is thrown backward against the cross piece on the ground. One of the soldiers grabs and arm, feels for the depression at the front of one wrist and drives a spike through the wrist into the wood. He moves to the other side and proceeds likewise. A small sign naming the crime is nailed over his head. The cross piece, with victim attached, is now lifted up and secured at the top of the upright. Leaving knees flexed, one foot is placed over the other and another large spike is used to secure them to the wood. The victim is now crucified. The pain is excruciating. The soldier's duty now is to remain and watch until he is dead. This will probably take two or even three days.

The real suffering has begun. As the body hangs against the nails in his wrists, the pain is unbearable. He pushes up with his feet to take the pressure off the wrists only to feel the nail tearing the flesh of the feet. Every movement brings new

and excruciating agony. His thirst is unbearable. Insects buzz around. Birds of prey circle overhead. Friends and relatives watch helplessly.

Death does not come from loss of blood or from exposure to the elements or by the terrible pain connected with crucifixion. Instead, the sufferer slowly suffocates. As the arms grow tired, cramps knot the muscles. The cramps prevent the victim from being able to push himself upward. The chest muscles are paralyzed and the breathing muscles (intercostals) are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. There is a struggle to pull up with the arms or push up with the feet to get even one short breath. Spasmodically, he pushes himself upward to bring in the life-giving oxygen. The time drags by as the victim is forced to endure the agony of this "lingering death." Eventually there is no more will or strength or ability to push himself up. Death comes mercifully either by suffocation or heart failure.

Without the lurid details, the Bible simply tells us, "and when he (Pilate) had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified and they crucified Him" (Matt. 27:26, 35). R. C. Foster said, "He died a thousand million deaths on the cross as He died for us." Paul said, "He loved me and gave Himself for me!" (Gal. 2:20).

## We Must Die In Order To Live

Every human upon the face of the earth owes their existence to God, even though secular science seeks other alternatives. *Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.* The scriptures also point to the fact that the physical component of man will expire eventually. *Hebrews 9:27a And as it is appointed for men to die once.* But there is a part of man's being that will endure forever, and if we search our hearts we know this to be true. *Ecclesiastes 3:11a He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts.*

Don't misunderstand the title of this article. Our physical life is a blessing from God and it is not our place to hurry the process of leaving this earth. But because sin has entered this world we are instructed to die, cease from living, to the lusts of the flesh. *Colossians 3:5-9 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness,...put off the old man with his deeds,*

When we have committed ourselves to a life of serving God and are baptized for the remission of our past sins, we emulate the death, burial and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. *Romans 6:1-6 ...5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

The apostle Paul went on to encourage us to crucify the old man of sin that our spirit might live in the eternal abode with God. *Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

- Bruce Dehut

## Membership Has It's Privileges

Being a dues paying, cardholder of some elite country club grants you certain advantages above and beyond that of a nonmember. You can utilize the golf course for free or a reduced rate. The gymnasium and weight rooms are at your disposal. And the member's only showers and sauna make for a relaxing end to your day's activities. To be a participant in this lap of luxury usually comes at a steep price, one that the common person can't even envision. But in order to take advantage of the amenities of a facility like this a person **MUST** be a member.

A similar scenario presents itself as far as the church is concerned. Dues must be paid in order to gain entrance to the kingdom. Fortunately for us, Jesus Christ paid the price of our admission with His own blood (Acts 20:28). It is imperative that a person realizes it is only after our act of faithful obedience in the watery grave of baptism that the Lord adds us to the church (Acts 2:38-47). Jesus Christ is the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23), and that body is the church (Colossians 1:18). Thus we must be members of the church that Christ established in order to attain the rewards.

At one time or another we all find ourselves outside looking in (Romans 3:23). Jesus referred to Himself as the door by which a person may enter into His rest (John 10:9). This is the only entrance given to us by God the Father, and when we pass through that portal we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

Membership in the Lord's kingdom is essential for eternal salvation because it is only His glorious church that will be presented in the end (Ephesians 5:25-27).

- Bruce Dehut

## THE LORD'S DAY PRIVILEGE LIST

### Sunday Morning Service

Announcements: **J.O. Smith**

Song Leader: **Steve Smith**

Opening Prayer: **Jim Phelps**

Lord's Table: **Arvil Young  
Larry Runner  
Andy Milliner  
Jr. Alford**

Scripture Reading: **Brandon Yates**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Closing Prayer: **Wayne Runner**

### Sunday Evening Service

Announcements: **J.O. Smith**

Song Leader: **Steve Smith**

Opening Prayer: **Bill Milliner**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Lord's Table: **Arvil Young**

Closing Prayer: **Chuck Sharp**