



## WEEK 4

by Chris Love

*“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, ‘Woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.”*

– John 19:25-27

If you were to ask my family, they would tell you that I’m not fun to be around when I’m sick, uncomfortable, or exhausted. Under those circumstances, my long-developed social graces give way to thin patience and a short temper. Instead of putting others before myself, I adopt an all-consuming self-focus. My thoughts and my attention are on my needs and well-being. Times of crisis and pain can reveal our character, but sometimes what we find isn’t pretty. When things are good and we are safe and comfortable, we can play the part of a nice, kind, and compassionate person; but when circumstances change, we may revert back to a more selfish default.

With this in mind, consider this account from John 19. Jesus is in the midst of being crucified. His body has been nailed and is currently hanging from the cross. It’s hard to imagine the level of physical pain that Jesus is currently experiencing. As if the physical suffering weren’t enough, He’s also taken on the sin of the world. The Son of God is suffering for us. The mixture of physical and spiritual pain are beyond fathoming. It’s impossible to imagine any response to this experience other than a complete and total withdrawal into oneself. Unable to cope, you and I would turn inward and succumb to self-absorption.

Yet, Jesus isn’t alone. Crucifixions are public affairs; he’s surrounded by a crowd. The people around him aren’t all strangers. John 19 tells us that he is joined by his mother and a number of his closest friends. It’s difficult to envision the pain of seeing their beloved son and friend on the cross--the shock, horror, and hurt in seeing Jesus in such anguish.

In the midst of all this, notice Jesus' behavior. Just as he has throughout his life, Jesus is defying all expectations. There is every reason to be completely withdrawn, but he isn't. In fact, Jesus is not focused on himself at all. He's not self-centered or self-absorbed. Even while Jesus is hanging nailed to the cross, he is demonstrating genuine concern for his mother. He is making sure that she will be cared for after he is gone. Even from the cross, Jesus sees his mother's need and he takes action. "Woman<sup>1</sup> here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

This is a perfect picture of a loving God who sees our needs and is faithful to meet them. Jesus is not distracted by his circumstances, but is focused on those he loves. This should shape our understanding of Jesus' character. Even while being crucified, we see the magnitude of Jesus' knowledge of our needs and his powerful love to meet them. I hope and pray that it also shapes our awareness and love towards others. I pray that by His Spirit we can show even a fraction of the love that Jesus shows on the cross.

#### Questions for Reflection:

1. What are some ways that you have seen God's faithfulness in meeting your needs? Consider taking some time to write a few down. Perhaps spend some time with a friend reflecting on God's faithfulness.
2. What are some ways that you are being distracted by your circumstances? What are some things in your life that are consuming all of your attention. Bring them before the Lord and ask Him where He would like your attention placed. What are some ways He might be calling you to think beyond yourself to demonstrate love to someone else today? Pray that He will give you the strength to shift your focus.



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<sup>1</sup> From the NIV: "The Greek for Woman does not denote any disrespect."