

## Reflection

The Crucifixion is an ancient method of executing criminals, involved in nailing them to a large wooden cross and leaving them to hang until death. This execution results in a slow, painful, and horrifying death for the criminal as well as for the public who watches the execution.

What we heard from John's gospel is the story of the crucifixion of Jesus and his death.

He was betrayed by his own disciples, persecuted by the crowds and Roman soldiers who whipped, insulted, and finally killed him.

Jesus experienced suffering, agony, and death.

He was physically crucified by the people who surrounded him.

When the people who loved him crucified him, they couldn't recognize him as the Messiah. Consequently, his crucifixion was a direct consequence of their unbelief.

In response, Jesus prayed to God, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

As these verses indicate, it was Jesus' genuine experience and real-life testimony that he had to endure. Through his physical body, just like ours, fragile, he experienced what any human could experience.

The Crucifixion was completed when he died on the cross and his death was a highlight of his crucifixion and that was the end of his suffering and pain and human life on earth.

When Friday dawned, this crucifixion plunged people into darkness, making it appear as though everything had come to an end.

Even the very meaning of crucifixion, Jesus' message, and his life and labor seemed futile.

Everything had come to an end. People's dreams and hopes, which they had placed in Jesus as a political leader, had all been shattered. The crucifixion and his death ensured that everything had fallen apart.

The crowds and disciples were bewildered and disheartened, realizing that their hopes had been dashed. They may have felt their entire existence had come to an end.

As we all know, when a loved one dies, anything that reminds us of life after death can feel like the end. It's as if we can't imagine the sun rising again.

For those who had lived with Jesus, heard his words, and witnessed his miracles, this was indeed the end.

But for those of us who know the story of Jesus, the words have a different meaning. Tomorrow, the sun will rise once more, and the light will return.

Jesus overcame death by conquering the darkness. Our hope lies in this darkness of death, and a new life will come after the darkness of death.

Because we know the story that follows, our hope doesn't end there; our experience isn't complete there; our life isn't over here.

But it begins here. It begins right in our darkest moment. Our life starts anew through the real crucifixion experience of Jesus.

Isaiah 53:5 says true prophecy, "We are healed by his suffering; he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, and his punishment brought us peace."

His death brings us power over his own death and our own death. It has no power to scare him and us anymore.

This crucifixion story continues right through Jesus' resurrection. It continues from his resurrection to life with the Father and his second coming to us.

Today, after 2,000 years later, since the first Good Friday, we are still remembering his crucifixion and death like the first one.

It becomes our experience, our belief, and our life because it is a genuine fact and a real experience of Jesus.

Jesus, the cornerstone, is the firstborn among the dead. He demonstrated to us the path to become like him. Through his demonstration, we will experience a life of pain and death, just as he did.

Whatever the pain that we bear, we will also overcome our pain and death, as he did.

So through his own life and resurrection, he is the way, the truth, and the life for us.

Therefore, crucifixion symbolizes every victory over life's challenges and the promise of life beyond this life.

While we mourn Jesus' death on the cross today, we must also prepare to celebrate his resurrection in three days.

So let us mourn today while we are celebrating this crucifixion and death of Jesus. It will bring us new life, new hope, and new strength for now and in the days to come.

Amen.