

Small Group Study — Acts 2:22–41

The Violence of God: Cross

Opening Thought

The cross stands at the center of the Christian faith. It is both an instrument of violence and a symbol of reconciliation, forgiveness, and healing. In Peter’s sermon at Pentecost, we see the cross through fresh eyes: humanity reveals its violence toward God, and God reveals his love toward humanity.

Read Together

Read Acts 2:22–41 aloud as a group.

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Peter’s sermon?

What emotions or themes do you notice as Peter explains the death and resurrection of Jesus?

2. Peter says, “you... put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (Acts 2:23).

Why is it important that Peter places responsibility for the violence on human beings rather than saying “God killed Jesus”? How does this shape your understanding of the cross?

3. The sermon suggests that the cross exposes humanity’s belief that “violence can fix things.”

Where do you see this assumption at work:

- in society?
- in politics?
- in relationships?
- in yourself?

4. Read Acts 2:24 again.

What does the resurrection reveal about the character of God?

The sermon contrasts:

- Humanity gives death → God gives life
- Humanity rejects → God forgives
- Humanity crucifies → God resurrects

Which contrast speaks to you most personally right now?

5. Brian Zahnd writes:

“The cross is not the place where God vents his anger—it is the place where God absorbs our violence.”

What do you think this means?

How is “absorbing violence” different from “returning violence”?

6. Peter calls the crowd to “repent” (Acts 2:38).

The Greek word means “to change your mind.”

According to this sermon, what specifically are people being invited to change their minds about?

7. The sermon said:

“Jesus does not come to change God’s mind about us. He comes to change our mind about God.”

Do you agree or struggle with that statement? Why?

8. Peter’s listeners were “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37).

Can you think of a time when the truth of Jesus deeply convicted or changed you?

What happened afterward?

9. The cross is not only about personal forgiveness, but also about “how the world is healed and how the church is called to live.”

What might it look like for Christians to live in the way of the Lamb:

- at home?
 - online?
 - in conflict?
 - toward enemies?
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10. Final Reflection

The sermon concluded:

“The Lamb conquers—not by killing—but by being slain.”

Why is this vision of victory so different from the way the world normally thinks about power?

How might following Jesus reshape our understanding of strength, justice, and love?

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to spend a few moments in silence reflecting on the cross. Then pray together that God would:

- renew our minds,
- heal our violence,
- teach us forgiveness,
- and form us into people who reflect the self-giving love of Jesus.