

THE CRUCIFIED KING



+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Jesus gave up His life to provide salvation to all who repent of their sin.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Luke 23

+ **SETTING:**

Only a handful of hours into His last day before death, Jesus had already been falsely accused and wrongly condemned to death. He was flogged by officials, forsaken by His followers, and left so weak that He could not even carry His cross as He marched to the place of His execution. Yet the emotional anguish and physical pain He bore could not keep Him from obediently fulfilling God's purpose. Christ came to be a ransom for sinners so that those who believed could become part of the forever family of God.

DAY 1

READ:

Luke 23:26-38

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 23:34-37

NOTES

A few years ago, one of my kids had to have a cavity filled. This was a first, so it was an appointment filled with apprehension. A few hours later, I checked in on him and noticed that one side of his bottom lip was badly swollen. He had nothing to say when I asked him what happened. He still had no feeling on that side of his face and had no idea that it was swollen so badly. I looked into his mouth and to my horror, the inside of his lip was bleeding and raw from my son chewing on it!

What he thought was a gentle rubbing up against his teeth was actually a deep digging into his lip. For a while, I was worried that he would forever have a smile that was scarred and swollen from the damage. But within a few days, his lip returned to normal. (And now, before any dental work my kids have, I make sure to make a big deal about keeping their teeth away from their lips while their jaw is numb!)

Because of his ignorance, my son did great damage to himself. Though he was unable to feel the tearing of flesh or taste the tinge of blood, his actions still had consequences. At first, I was upset, but I knew that I could not blame him. He knew not what he did.

We are each like my son at times. We take actions and don't understand the consequences. Even worse, there are times when we know full well what we do and the damage our actions will cause, but we do them anyway. The good and glorious news is that when we cause harm out of ignorance, and even when we are willfully disobedient, Jesus is faithful to heal and to forgive those who repent of their sins.

What ignorant or not so ignorant actions of the past have you taken that you need to bring to Jesus, and how can you walk forward trusting in His forgiveness?

DAY 2

READ:

Luke 23:32-43

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 23:33-34

NOTES

From time to time, obscure words resurface in popular vernacular. One such word is “hangry.” This refers to the state in which one is hungry to the point of becoming irritable and angry. Of late, silly shirts and many memes have emerged with the statement: “I apologize for what I said when I was hangry.”

We can probably all relate to the grouchiness that comes with being hungry or even tired. While in a hangry state, our threshold for dealing with annoying and frustrating situations is drastically lowered. The same is true when we are in pain. The degree of physical discomfort we are in determines the extent to which we can absorb any other sort of stimuli. Typically, when we are in misery, we tolerate very little interaction with others. We prefer silent spaces so that we can heal.

Jesus, as He hung on the cross, had already endured more agony than most of us can even imagine. He was sleep-deprived and starved. He had already sustained injuries from beatings that He possibly would not have survived even if He had not been crucified. Yet instead of drawing inward, simply trying to find enough energy to draw in a breath that would bring the least amount of pain, He chose to ask His heavenly Father to forgive His killers because they were ignorant of their actions.

While we may struggle to think clearly when we are hangry, Jesus had the presence of mind and compassion of heart to pray for the ones who had inflicted upon Him mortal wounds.

When in the midst of suffering and persecution, what are your prayers typically geared toward?

DAY 3

READ:

Luke 23:32-49

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 23:44-49

NOTES

Every nation has its civil wars and coups and takeovers. Governments are constantly in fear of insurrectionists.

This is ultimately the charge that brought Christ to the cross. The Jewish leaders could not get Pilate to execute Jesus on their religious allegations of blasphemy, so they painted Him as an insurgent. Jesus, the Son of God, was crucified between two true criminals, His punishment for supposedly threatening Rome's dominion by attempting to become the King of the Jews.

The conniving Jewish leaders thought they had won the day. The reluctant Roman rulers thought they had averted a coming storm of civil unrest. Yet even when societal chaos led to injustice for Jesus, He was still sovereign. God was not surprised. No twist or turn was outside His purpose.

Through a murderous, evil plot, our holy, magnificent, all-knowing God was able to provide for the salvation of souls. Whatever chaotic seasons we go through, we can walk through them with comfort and security as we trust that God is not caught off guard by the very things that make life feel topsy-turvy. Nothing can stop His plan.

In what parts of your life do you need to trust more the sovereign King of the Jews?

DAY 4

READ:

Romans 3:21-26

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Romans 3:23-25

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #59:

CHRIST AS PROPITIATION

Because of God's righteousness and holiness, humanity's sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ's death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. Christ's propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Romans 3:26).

Early in my twenties, a young man asked me out. He took me to a park along the St. John's River to enjoy the sunshine, conversation, and a bit of disc throwing. Not five minutes in, one of my not-so-elegant throws landed the plastic disc into the current of the deep river.

Embarrassed (and one who struggles to admit when I'm wrong), I was not sure what to say. I think I might have mumbled a short, "Sorry." Then I got to thinking that playing disc golf right along the bank of the river may not have been the best plan. Plus, I had assumed it was a cheap object you could find in the dollar store if he wanted to replace it. I didn't give it another thought.

Decades later, my eldest became obsessed with disc golfing. Over time, he collected all sorts of discs that mirror "real" golf, such as drivers and putters, including them costing a pretty penny. I had no idea!

Looking back, my unwieldy throw that cast that plastic disc into the river needed more than a "sorry." I flushed twenty dollars (that weren't mine) down the drain and never gave it a second thought. I should have taken the time to figure out how to make amends for the loss I had caused with my clumsiness.

Perhaps that's why we never had a second date.

There is a big difference between human and divine appeasement. Replacing a twenty-dollar disc is different from making up for the eternal punishment due to our sin. The chasm between us and our holy God was huge. Yet Christ bridged that gap through His sufficient appeasement, or propitiation, for our sins. His sacrifice became the means of mercy that would allow our holy God to pass over our sins. Christ made things right between us and God.

How can you worship God today in response to the forgiveness and restoration Christ has provided us?

DAY 5

READ:

Luke 23:44-49

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 23:47-49

NOTES

Do you ever have those nightmares from which you wake up wrapped in panic? They are not frequent, but over the years, I have had these types of dreams. One involves me unknowingly enrolled in a class and finding out about halfway through the semester. The rest of the dream is spent trying to find the professor to explain the situation to no avail.

Other nightmares are more serious. They involve an accidental death of a loved one as a result of an action I took. The moment of realization of the irrevocable loss I caused feels like an agonizing eternity. Panic sets in as I try to undo the consequences.

As vivid as those dreams are, I still can't imagine the sheer horror and deep pain I would experience if this nightmare became real. Here in Luke 23, we see a glimpse of what that might be like as some of the crowd went home beating their chests, realizing that a just man had been put to death. Perhaps they were experiencing the horror of an irrevocable act—one they had a hand in producing.

The Bible is clear that no matter our allegiance here on earth, one day every knee will bow to Jesus. Every tongue will call Him Lord. From His most faithful follower to His greatest enemy, every soul will know undoubtedly that Jesus is who He claimed to be. Some will bend the knee willingly and worshipfully. Others will bend the knee while beating their chests in recognition that they were wrong all along.

How can you live with a greater urgency for God's glory to be shown in your life to those around you?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"The saving power resides exclusively, not in the act of faith or the attitude of faith or the nature of faith, but in the object of faith."¹

—B. B. Warfield (1851–1921)

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Forgiveness does not consist of remission of penalty. . . . To forgive is to restore to the old relationship . . . so the forgiveness that Christ wins for us is not chiefly a remission of penalty; it is the restoration to the affectionate intimacy of sons with their Father."²

—William Temple (1881–1944)

POINT 1: Jesus, the crucified King, extends forgiveness to the executioners (Luke 23:32-38).

On the cross, Jesus's love and mercy compelled Him to pray for forgiveness for those involved in His execution.

? From Day 2: **When in the midst of suffering and persecution, what are your prayers typically geared toward?**

As some ridiculed Jesus on the cross, little did they know that He was there to forgive and save the world.

? **Why is it difficult to forgive others?**

POINT 2: Jesus, the crucified King, promises salvation to the repentant (Luke 23:39-43).

Any sinner can find salvation by acknowledging that God is to be feared, we deserve punishment for our sins, and Jesus is every soul's only hope for salvation.

? **Which of these three truths do you think our culture struggles with the most, and why?**

KEY DOCTRINE #59: CHRIST AS PROPITIATION

Because of God's righteousness and holiness, humanity's sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ's death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. Christ's propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Romans 3:26).

POINT 3: Jesus, the crucified King, entrusts Himself to the Father

(Luke 23:44-49).

When Christ died, the veil was torn, revealing that God's people, now being the priesthood of believers, could have direct access to God.



What are the benefits of having direct access to the Father?

As others responded to Jesus's death in their own way, Jesus's last words were those of Psalm 31:5, committing His spirit and entrusting His life to the Father.



What are ways we can fill our thoughts and words with Scripture?

MY RESPONSE

Because Jesus died in our place to pay for our sins, we not only proclaim to the world that Jesus died on the cross but also why He died.

- **HEAD:** What part of Jesus's perfect obedience are you most grateful for?
- **HEART:** How can you thank Jesus today for His sacrifice on the cross?
- **HANDS:** With whom can you share the good news of Jesus this week?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from THE CHURCH

"The cross is not just about one chapter of the Christian faith; it casts its shadow and stamps its form upon all of that theology."³

—Alister E. McGrath