

This Is the King of the Jews

Luke 23.26–43

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • February 19, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2023

Scripture Reader and Reading: Jacob Noveske – Luke 23.23–25

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on the crucifixion of Christ

Persuasion:

I. Luke 23.26 • Bearing the Cross for Jesus

26 Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.

A. His six trials over,

1. they began the journey to Calvary, or
2. in some translations, Golgotha.

B. Jesus must not have been moving fast enough or

1. could not carry it anymore, and so,
2. the Romans soldiers compelled a man from Northern Africa
 - a) to carry the cross the rest of the way.
 - b) Jesus had taught:

41 “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.”

– Matthew 5.41

(1) Simon of Cyrene did what Jesus taught,

(2) although what the government was doing to Jesus was wrong.

C. Why could Jesus not carry it anymore?

1. Think of the emotional low he experienced.
2. He had not eaten or drunk anything.
3. He had no chance to sleep that night.
4. He went through six trials.

5. They had beaten him.
6. They had scourged him.
 - a) Viewing him as a man,
 - b) it does not surprise me
 - (1) that he moved slow or stopped completely.
 - (2) He did not use his miraculous power.

II. Luke 23.27–31 • Weep for Yourself and for Your Children

27 And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. 28 But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ 30 Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ 31 For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”

- A. A great multitude would have been thousands of people.
 1. In John 6, a great multitude numbered 5,000 *men*!
 2. See Jesus moving through the city and then
 - a) to the place of crucifixion and
 - b) see thousands of people following.
 - (1) The leaders did not want to arrest Jesus around large crowds, but
 - (2) here they are leading Jesus to his death, and
 - (a) the multitudes did not react violently.
- B. Women also joined the multitude.
 1. They loved Jesus.
 2. He loved them.
 - a) Of course they would mourn and lament him.
 - b) They knew what the Romans would do to him.

- (1) They thought of all his teachings and wonderful works.
- (2) Yet, he was so young to die.

C. However, as was typical of Jesus,

1. he turned the situation around and
2. told them that they needed to weep
 - a) for themselves and for their children, because
 - b) something horrible was coming down on them.

III. Luke 23.32–33 • There They Crucified Him

32 There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

A. Jesus among criminals.

1. He associated with sinners during his ministry.
2. He associated with sinners during his death.

B. Verse 33 is

1. so simplistic and
2. lacking sensationalism
 - a) that as people who have never lived with a government
 - b) that carried out crucifixions,
 - (1) we might read over those words quickly and thoughtlessly.
 - (2) After writing that they arrived at the place of crucifixion,
 - (a) Luke says almost nonchalantly,
 - (b) “There they crucified him.”

C. Although a physician,

1. he did not describe the process.
2. People living in the first century knew the process all too well.

- a) When anyone living then
 - b) read the Gospel of Luke for their first time, and
 - (1) if they had never read the other Gospel Accounts, and
 - (2) had not heard any preaching on Jesus,
 - (a) they would have been thrilled to read of Jesus,
 - (b) admiring his words and
 - (c) amazed by his works.
- D. Then when that reader to the words,
- “There they crucified him,”**
- 1. it would have horrified him.
 - 2. They may have read it again
 - a) to make sure that they read
 - b) what they thought they had read.
 - (1) They would have seen him in their mind’s eye,
 - (2) drawing from crucifixions that they had witnessed, and
 - (a) I think it would have torn them up
 - (b) to imagine him having that experience.
- E. Please, try not to read over those words too quickly and thoughtlessly.
- 1. All translations have the simple words, **“there they crucified him.”**
 - 2. You may have to repeat those words to yourself.
 - a) Think of all the physical abuse
 - b) they heaped upon him in the past hours.
 - 3. Then they brutalized him beyond description
 - a) when they nailed him to a cross.
 - b) What did he suffer on the cross?

F. Just think on those four words:

1. “There”

- a) Where?
- b) Calvary is Latin for skull.

2. “They”

- a) Who?
- b) The Romans instigated by the Jews.

3. “Crucified”

- a) A mere of capital punishment,
- b) designed to make a man suffer as long as possible before dying.

4. “Him”

- a) Who?
- b) The one of whom John wrote:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

– John 1.1–5

IV. Luke 23.34a • Father, Forgive Them

34a Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

A. In light of all that they did to Jesus,

- 1. this prayer is just beyond amazing.
- 2. How could Jesus possibly ask the Father to forgive them?

B. Is it true that they did not know what they did?

1. They did not know what they did.
2. If they had truly realized
 - a) that Jesus was the Son of God,
 - b) that he is the one of whom the prophets spoke,
 - (1) they would not have crucified him.
 - (2) Paul affirms this truth to the Corinthians:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

– 1 Corinthians 2.7–8

V. Luke 23.34b–37 • Let Him Save Himself

34b And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.” 36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”

- A. They actually found an opportunity to gamble, so to speak.
 1. When they did this,
 2. they fulfilled prophecy without realizing it.

**18 They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.**

– Psalm 22.18

- B. People there
 1. did what people do
 2. anywhere and any time

- a) that there is a horrifying event happening to someone:
 - b) They stood looking.
- C. Then the rulers and the Romans
- 1. sneered at Jesus and
 - 2. mocked him.
 - a) They challenged him
 - b) that if he was the Christ,
 - (1) he would be able to save himself, because
 - (2) he could save others.
 - 3. As the King of the Jews,
 - a) the Romans believed Jesus could save himself.
 - b) All he had to do
 - (1) was call for his followers and
 - (2) they would have saved him.
 - (a) This is true, but
 - (b) they did not know that he was dying for a reason.

VI. Luke 23.38 • This Is the King of the Jews

38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

- A. Since the place of crucifixion was next to a well-traveled place,
 - 1. they wanted everyone to be able to read
 - 2. why Jesus was being crucified.
- B. They had a sign in Greek,
 - 1. which was the universal language of the day

2. as English is in our day.
- C. Latin was the language of Rome.
- D. And of course, they wanted it written in Hebrew, because
1. this was happening in the land of the Hebrews, and
 2. it showed what would happen to anyone who rebelled against Rome.
- E. They may have meant it in mockery and sarcasm, because
1. he did not look much like a king,
 2. hanging on a Roman cross
 - a) with evidence of
 - (1) the beatings,
 - (2) the scourings, and
 - (3) being naked.
 - b) However, it was true.
 - c) Jesus was and is the King of the Jews, and
 - (1) Jesus is King of all people
 - (2) who choose to follow him.

VII. Luke 23.39–43 • Today You Will Be with Me in Paradise

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43 And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

- A. One of the criminals picked up on what the rulers and Romans were saying,
1. challenging Jesus to save him and the two criminals,
 2. if he was indeed the Christ.

B. Although, consider what the other criminal said.

1. He rebuked the first criminal.

a) He reasoned that he should be fearing God.

b) He was under the same condemnation.

c) The two of them suffered justly for their deeds.

(1) Remember what we typically call the second criminal:

(2) We call him the thief on the cross.

(a) In Saudi Arabia,

i) if you steal,

ii) they cut off your hand.

(b) In the Roman Empire,

i) if you stole,

ii) they crucified you.

d) He confessed the innocence of Jesus.

2. Then,

a) while still being crucified himself,

b) this man spoke to Jesus,

(1) calling him Lord, and

(2) asking for Jesus to remember when he came in his kingdom.

C. Jesus assured the thief

1. that he would be in Paradise that very day.

2. How did that sound to the thief?

Exhortation:

I. Man has a problem:

A. He has sinned.

B. The people who crucified Jesus sinned.

1. Yet, Jesus asked the Father to forgive them.
2. How did the Father answer that prayer?
 - a) If the Father had said, No,
 - b) we would all be in agreement.
 - (1) However, the Father said, Yes, and
 - (2) we know that from Acts 2.

II. Think of what Peter said to these very people less than two months later:

“Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death...”

– Acts 2.23

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

– Acts 2.36

A. Do you think that hit them hard?

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

– Acts 2.37

B. Peter gave them a simple answer:

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

– Acts 2.38