

# The 6th Hour (2)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Yes, that's the light is on. Thank you. Let us engage in prayer. Eternal and ever-blessed Lord, the psalmist speaks of thee as the rock and the fortress, as the one who is unshakable, as the one who is a place of refuge.

And we thank thee that that is how every born-again person from above finds out for themselves that God is unshakable and unmovable, that he is ever the same yesterday, today, and forever, that he is also a place of refuge, so that they can say that God is our refuge under strength and strength, and strength, and present aid.

Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. Even in the most cataclysmic moments of life, when everything is turned upside down, thy servant could speak of God and have been his refuge, his place of security, his place of safety.

And so, Lord, as we come before thee this evening, may we too be persuaded that our safety and our security is to be found in thee, under the shelter of the shed blood of the Lamb of God.

we give thee thanks for the way in which he came into this world and for the way in which he bowed the great burden that was placed upon him, even from the womb, right up until the cross, bearing the burden that was laid upon him and by the Father, in order that sinners might be gloriously redeemed and set free.

[ 2 : 1 6 ] We thank thee for the freedom that is in Christ. And as thy word reminds us, if the Son shall make you free, you are free indeed.

O grant, most gracious God, as we are afforded the privilege again this evening of gathering in thy name, that thou wouldst presence thyself with us, that we may know that thou art there, walking in the midst, bringing the light of thy presence into our midst, giving us understanding as we reflect upon a part of thy truth, leading us and guiding us, that the word may indeed be richly blessed to our soul and our souls fed at the table of the gospel.

We thank thee for the many rich feasts that are set on the gospel table. And although there may be times in our experience when thou dost send us away, empty, it is so that we come to appreciate the fullness that is to be found in Christ.

There may be moments when we are given an empty plate instead of the full plate that we crave, so that we come to appreciate the richness and the fullness of the preparation that is in Christ Jesus, so suited to the needs of undeserving sinners.

Bless each one present here this evening. Bless those unable to be present. Through thy restraint and providence, bless the children who today attended Sunday school.

[ 4 : 1 0 ] O grant that the truths that are taught there may resonate with them from an early age, so that they are brought under not only the sound of the gospel, but they are brought under the influence of the Lord Jesus Christ and brought to trust in him for salvation.

Bless, we pray thee, parents who bring them. Bless the congregation at large, every home associated with the congregation.

Thy servant whom thou hast placed over them. Bless them in his soul and in his home and in his family. Bless all who uphold his hands at the throne of grace.

And we pray thy blessing on the services that are ongoing in the presbytery at this time, as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed in various congregations.

O may it please thee to refresh and revive thy people, how we need the quickening agency of thy Holy Spirit in a day of small things that we may again see in our towns and villages, men and women and boys and girls, brought to faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 41 ] Grant thy blessing upon us as a nation. Bless, we pray thee, those in another part of the world who are grieving this day in the light of the earthquake that has struck in that part of the world.

Families decimated. Grant, O Lord, that in their grief and in their sorrow, O that they may be prevailed upon to look to thee, to the one who alone can bring comfort and solace in time of deep grief and sorrow.

Help us as we turn to thy truth. Lead us and guide us, we pray, the cleanse and the blood. In Jesus' name we ask it with forgiveness of sin.

Amen. Amen. Let us read, oh, let us sing again from Psalm 22 and at verse 14.

Psalm 22 and verse 14. Like water I'm poured out, my bones all out of joy into part.

[ 7 : 06 ] Amidst my bowels as the wax so melted is my heart. My strength is like a pot shared. Dried my tongue, it cleaveth fast unto my jaws, unto the dust of death thou brought me hast.

For dogs have compassed me about, the wicked that did meet in their assembly me enclosed. They pierced my hands and feet.

I all my bones may tell, they do upon me look and stayed. Upon my vest your lots they cast, and clothes among them shed.

Let us sing these verses, like water I'm poured out. like water I'm poured out, my bones all out of your joy into part.

Come is myeness, my father, like water I'm said. beyond my bones, God, so talented is my heart.

[ 8 : 36 ] My ich myenrocçoel war. My God, if He leavened, I do my joy unto the Lord.

O guest of all to us, for don't have come as me, O God, the wicked thou did me, And there of seven miracles that curse my hands of thee.

I all my bones may tell thee, And upon me, Lord, I shall share, And upon my bells, I shall long see the cross, And woe I.

Let us now read from the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 23, and reading at verse 27.

Gospel according to Luke, chapter 23, reading at verse 27. And there followed him a great company of people and of women, which also bewailed and lamented.

[ 10 : 52 ] But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

For behold the days of coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bathe, and the pups which never gave suck.

Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

And there were also two other malefactors led with them to be put to death. When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment and cast lots.

- [ 12 : 06 ] And the people stood behold him, and the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others. Let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.
- And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.
- And a superscription also was written over him, letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew, This is the king of the Jews.
- One of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.
- But the other answering rebuked himself, Does not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds.
- [ 13 : 13 ] But this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.
- And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
- The sun was darkened, the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.
- And having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly, certainly, this was of righteous man.
- And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.
- [ 14 : 33 ] Amen, and may God bless to us, that reading from his truth. Let us further sing to his praise from Psalm 69, and at verse 15.
- Psalm 69, and at verse 15. Let not the flood on me prevail, whose waters overflows, nor deep me swallow, nor the pit her mouth upon me close.
- Hear me, O Lord, because thy love and kindness is most good. Turn unto me, according to thy mercy's multitude, Nor from thy servant hide thy face.
- I am troubled, soon attend. Draw near my soul, and it redeem. Me from my foes defend. To thee is my reproach, well known.
- My shame and my disgrace. Those that mine adversaries be, Are all before thy face. Let us sing these verses.
- [ 15 : 52 ] Psalm 69, verse 15. Let not the flood on me prevail. Let not the flood on me prevail.
- Lord, nor fear who's pod zab Randy, Or near my grave north. Do you sell love, nor fear per recaud?
- This water, O Lord, God bless me or believed in the appointed Lord. Nor fear, nor fear, nor fear, Nor fear that none heaven should be told. Nor glory per■■■■ Let us attack upon me close. At earth follow, nor fear that no fear that no Ish of good faith Hear me, O Lord, because I love and kindness to you.
- Turn unto me according to thy mercy's altitude.
- Nor from thy servant's heart rises, I travel soon again.
- [ 17 : 34 ] Draw near my soul, my mercy. Meet from thy foes defend.
- To thee is my reward, O Lord, my shame of my mistress.
- Though thy time and earth carries me, I call me for thy kiss.

Let us now turn to the passage that we read. Gospel according to Luke, chapter 23. And we may read again at verse 44.

And it was about the sixth hour. And there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And I'd like to focus particularly on the words the sixth hour.

[ 19 : 06 ] In this chapter we have Luke's report on the various twists in the trial of Jesus.

It is worth remembering that although Luke was a physician, a doctor of medicine, he was a careful researcher of facts.

You could call him an investigative journalist. And he tells us how Jesus was taken to Pilate, then sent to Herod, as Pilate looked for an escape route from his own personal dilemma.

Herod sends him back to Pilate. Pilate tries a further attempt to have Jesus released, suggesting that Jesus be released instead of Barabbas.

And again, Pilate is foiled by the strident, shrill, demanding voices of the Jewish leaders and their followers.

[ 20 : 17 ] So after having Jesus flogged, Pilate ultimately hands them over to be crucified. And Luke gives us some of the details of what took place at Calvary.

He tells us when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

Luke writes of the prayer offered from the cross by Christ. He writes in greater detail than any other gospel writer of the dialogue that took place between the criminals who were crucified alongside Christ.

And you have that amazing assurance given to the thief who pled with Christ to be remembered.

Remember this morning we spoke of one who offered the prayer, Lord, remember me. Well, in this context we have another who offers us similar prayer.

[ 21 : 36 ] And to receive a marvelous response. Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. And so Luke writes of the immediate events from the sixth hour.

He doesn't report everything that took place. He wishes us to focus on certain significant events that took place about the sixth hour and subsequently.

So I have four points that I'd like to cover. First, a strange phenomenon. Second, a startling occurrence.

Third, a strong cry. And fourthly, significant groupings. Strange phenomena. Startling occurrence. A strong cry.

Significant groupings. First, a strange phenomenon. Luke writes, It was about the sixth hour and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

[ 22 : 44 ] You could argue that the land was shrouded in darkness. And metaphorically speaking, an appalling act of injustice has taken place.

The death sentence is being executed on an innocent person. Now, you may argue along these lines that there will be some justification for making the argument.

However, Luke assures us that this is no metaphorical darkness arising out of an appalling act of injustice.

This is a real, physical, intense darkness about the sixth hour. And as I said in the children's address this morning, the Jews marked their day from sunrise to sunset.

Twelve hours. So that the third hour on that clock would be nine a.m. on our clock. The sixth hour, twelve, equivalent to twelve noon.

[ 23 : 51 ] At midday, when the sun was at its height, you do not expect darkness even on the most cloudy day.

That's what makes this phenomenon so unusual. And intriguingly, and you might like to have expanded on it, Luke, he doesn't probe the causes for this darkness.

He merely states that the sun was dark and dark. As it might be translated, the sun's light failed. Was Luke not interested in the phenomenon that was so unusual?

Was he not interested in the strange, unnatural darkness? The cause of it? And yet from the context, you have to conclude that he sees a connection between the crucifixion of Christ and this unusual phenomenon.

In fact, if you compare the gospel writers Matthew and Mark, they also record this fact. But neither do they offer an explanatory comment.

[ 25 : 15 ] And from the words that are used, Luke views this darkness not just as nature's commentary on what is taking place, but he's looking on it as God's own commentary.

Because God governs all things in nature. What then, you have to ask, is the significance of this unusual darkness? If you go back into the Old Testament, you will discover that darkness is frequently associated with divine judgment, sign of the last day.

But there are other times of darkness spoken of as well in the Old Testament. You remember how darkness is spoken of before creation.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void. And darkness was over the face of the deep.

Even before there was light created, light that is, there was just darkness. And you can take that forward.

[ 26 : 32 ] That is also true of the fallen human heart. Darkness before light.

The Bible speaks of darkness when God made a covenant of pact with Abraham. You remember when the sun had gone down, it was dark.

Behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces of the animals. And on that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying to your offspring, I give this land to you.

And that in itself was a strange sight. An amazing scene of dismembered animals drawn up in parallel lines on this strange light moving among them.

God making a covenant with Abraham. God making a covenant promise. Even if it means embracing death for himself. Again, an agent.

[ 27 : 54 ] Again, an agent. You had thick darkness. It was so intense. It was palpable. It was touchable. And the only way that people could get about is, you know, if you close your eyes and you try to find your way around the house.

And you're putting your hand out like this and your hand out like that. Or if the lights suddenly go out and you can't remember where you've left matches to light a candle.

And you're putting your hand out this way and that way in the hopes of avoiding bumping into furniture or being tripped up. Well, that's the kind of darkness that they had in Egypt.

And it lasted for three days. It was a mark of God's displeasure. God's judgment shrouded in the land. And the fact that it lasted three days emphasized the completeness of God's control over all the events that were taking place at that time in Egypt.

He shows he has the power to return to chaos. The very realm he has created. A judgmental act.

[ 29 : 07 ] Demonstrating God's power. Demonstrated that he had rendered a verdict of guilt on Pharaoh and the Egyptians who were oppressing his people.

And yet the strange thing is, although Egypt was in such deep darkness, Goshen, where the people of Israel dwelt, were in the light.

And maybe that's not so strange. The ninth plague then. And then the tenth. Although occurring at midnight, not so dark. But it created and brought its own measure of darkness.

When the firstborn in every home, not under the shelter of the blood of the Paschal Lamb, was destroyed. The sixth hour, too, is Passover time.

And throughout the prophetic literature, you will hear prophets warning the people of God, of God bringing darkness upon them because of their sin.

[ 30 : 14 ] The prophecy of Amos, chapter 8. Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob. Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. And so on. And I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head.

I will make it like the morning for an only sun. The end of it like a bitter day. So it seems to me that we can conclude that the message Luke reads into the darkness and wishes us to understand is that this darkness is divine visitation bringing judgment against man's sin.

Sin is being judged. Sin is being condemned in the flesh of Jesus. And sin is being exposed in all its darkness.

Unbelief, ignorance, injustice in humanity, deep hatred of God. All of that is evident at the cross. The darkness is God's verdict.

The expression of his displeasure as if he must hide it from his eyes. And you can see what Luke is saying. Luke is saying that the day of judgment has come. But guess what?

[ 31 : 31 ] It hasn't fallen on God's people. It's fallen on his only son. And you remember how a way back, years before this, how the prophet Isaiah confirmed that.

When the prophet Isaiah and the marvelous fourth servant son, where he sets before us what God did.

How the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The judgment that the people of God deserved who were chosen in Christ for all eternity didn't fall on them. It fell on God's only son.

The darkness prophesied against the people of God has come against his own son, his beloved son. The darkness is the picture of the judgment of God against sin.

[ 32 : 43 ] That judgment was visited in those deaf girls on his only begotten son. And the commentator, William Hendrickson, makes what I think a moving comment.

He says, The darkness meant judgment. The judgment of God upon our sin. The punishment, though, was borne by Jesus so that he, as our substitute, suffered most intense agony, indescribable woe, terrible isolation, and forsakenness.

And then Hendrickson goes on to say, Hell came to Calvary that day. Hell came to Calvary that day.

And the Savior bore its horrors in our place. That's what the darkness at the sixth hour is about. Luke is bringing it to our attention, Yes, because it happened.

But also because of what it meant. It fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. And so Jesus absorbs the just judgment of God against our sin on the cross.

[ 34 : 02 ] Luke is again telling us what the cross is for, what the cross does, what Jesus accomplished on the cross. But we must not forget that darkness is also a sign of the darkness in Jesus' own soul, as one who was walking in darkness where there is no light.

And I think it is only at the ninth hour that we come to understand in our measure, and only in our measure, the extent of the darkness in the soul of the Savior, when the cry of dereliction is heard, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

A strange phenomenon, darkness at midday. Secondly, a startling occurrence. The second significant event that Luke describes for us takes place at a distance from Calvary.

Luke writes of the tearing of the temple's inner veil, and the veil of the temple was rent in the mist. As it could be translated, the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

How startling that must have been for those who were engaged in the temple service. There were, as you know, two different areas of the temple.

[ 35 : 41 ] And Luke doesn't specify which curtain was torn in two. But if you go to the letter of the Hebrews, it seems clear that this was the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place.

The most holy place, the sanctuary, into God's presence, entered only once per year on the day of atonement by the high priest. And for Luke, the message is crystal clear.

Remember, this was no human act. For Luke, God is, how shall I put it, God is desecrating His own temple. Is that not strange?

God desecrated what had been essentially good. But you see, the only temple now is the new temple in Jesus Christ.

In the book of Revelation, you remember, you remember, in the revelation that was given to the Apostle John, he writes of the new city, the place where there is no night, the place where the Lamb has seen the light.

[ 37 : 05 ] And you remember, in the description that he gives, he says, and I saw no temple. He doesn't say, there was no temple.

But what he does say is, I saw no temple. And the reason that he saw no temple was that the whole of that place is a temple.

There is no place where worship is not offered up in that place of glory. And so, it is no longer, Luke is telling us, to be located exclusively at Jerusalem.

And of course, that was something very difficult for Jewish Christians to grasp. God collapsing the old order given through Moses. And it is pointing to this glorious truth.

This is my son. every other place or sphere of worship, including the temple, insignificant, unless Christ himself is found there.

[ 38 : 15 ] It's a moment of moments in the whole history of faith. God is saying, it is in Christ and in Christ alone, in whom all are to worship me.

He makes it clear, the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 6, chapter 9, chapter 10, that the tearing of the veil into the Holy of Holies symbolizes Jesus having opened our way into the presence of God.

Hebrews 10. And the author of Hebrews says, Brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw our name with our true heart and full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Luke, like the author of Hebrews, is saying that Jesus has opened our way back into fellowship with God. Remember when Adam and Eve, they rebelled against God.

What did they lose? Didn't they lose communion with God? They lost the joy of the nearer presence of God. They lost the ability to talk with God face to face.

[ 39 : 43 ] In Genesis 3, we are told the Lord God came walking in the garden in the cool of the day, ready to experience fellowship with Adam and Eve. But they had rebelled against him and sought to hide themselves, something that cannot be done.

And they were eventually, what? Cast out of that garden. And we are told the cherubim, the guardians of holiness, placed at the east of the garden to keep our first parents from returning again.

But here now in the tearing of the temple, this is a significant point. Jesus has provided the way back into the nearer presence of God. It's not a coincidence, is it, that he had just said to the thief who pleaded, Lord, remember me when thou come into your kingdom.

And Jesus assured him, verily I say to thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise. What an assurance at the end of life, isn't it?

You come to the end of your life and the Lord says to you, today you shall be with me in paradise. It reminds me there was a, before my time, but I used to hear about it, a man in the congregation of Bach.

[ 41 : 11 ] from all accounts, perhaps he didn't have the same talents as many of his contemporaries. And when the Lord came into his life, his house, a way back then, pre-television times and so on, was a Kaley house.

Many people used to gather there in the evenings. And when the Lord came into his life, it became a source of worry to him that his house was being used in this way and he asked for advice.

And someone said to him, you take out the Bible and start reading it and people will soon disperse. And that's what he did. But when he came to the end of life, there were several people gathered in the house and he said to them, you know, he said, Christ said to me, today you will be with me in glory.

And one old Christian who was present said, oh my dear, it's not glory. The Bible says it's paradise. And his response was, it's glory.

he said to me, I'm sorry. Shekohor, it was in Galilee, Shekohor, Oda-Ramsa. And that day he passed to his eternal rest.

[ 42 : 46 ] Well, what comfort could one have more than that at the end of life's journey than to pass into glory to be with Christ?

Because what is Christ doing on the cross? He's accomplishing the way that God's people get back into the presence of God to enjoy communion with God, to fellowship with God, to be near to God, to be ultimately with him.

Luke is telling us that's what the cross accomplishes for all who trust in Jesus Christ. And so Jesus opens the way into the presence of God.

Luke has shown us the darkness, the tearing of the veil, things that accompanied Jesus' death on the cross to help us understand what his death on the cross has accomplished.

A startling occurrence, a strange phenomenon. Thirdly, a strong cry. Why do I say a strong cry? just for this reason, we are told it is the cry of a loud voice.

[ 43 : 58 ] Now, in the normal course of events, we do not associate the cry of a loud voice with those who are in the throes of death, weakened by illness, or whatever overtakes them.

And certainly not those who have been put to death by this most barbaric form of death, crucifixion.

Luke tells us the words he cried in a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. In the original, in the book of Psalms, it is, Father, into thy hands I will commend or commit my spirit.



Now, that comes from Psalm 31. And here it is in the present tense because it shows that he is on the, just on the verge of passing into the presence of God.

They give us a hint, I think, that during these hours of darkness, that Jesus was encouraging and strengthening himself through the ways in which he saw the book of Psalms refer to his own death and his own person.

[ 45 : 24 ] We know that he uses Psalm 22 that begins, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And Psalm 22 gives us an inside Luke, as it were, into the feelings and thoughts of the Saviour on the cross.

Like water, I am poured out and so on. Self-description of the experience that he is passing through. And although initially it belonged to the Psalmist David, it is in the highest sense applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, is it possible that he made his way through Psalm 23? The Lord is my shepherd, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of darkness, all the way to Psalm 31, where he commits his spirit into the hands of God.

It's a suggestion, a loud, strong voice. I think it is worth remembering that crucifixion was not death that was brought about by being nailed to the cross.

It was death by asphyxiation. Death by prolonged and excruciating asphyxiation, so that those who were crucified died by being no longer able to breathe.

[ 47 : 02 ] And here is the Savior, after several hours on the cross, crying with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit.

And what Luke is telling us is that it is Jesus who decides the moment that he dies, not the Roman soldiers. It is Jesus who decides that his work is finished.

He is willingly and authority, laid down his life for us. Nobody takes his life from him against his will. He is laying it down of his own will and by his own authority and no power on this earth could take his life from him if he did not want to give his life.

John records in his gospel Jesus explaining that to his disciples before he ever went to the cross. Do you remember where it is in John chapter 10?

What does he say? I am the good shepherd. What does the good shepherd do? The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for the sheep. I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

[ 48 : 16 ] No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down. I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my father.

Jesus is saying to us and Luke is teaching us because of what Jesus has said that Jesus deliberately, willingly, and authoritatively decided to lay down his life for you.

He decided when he would die. He decided how he would die. He decided to stop breathing and he did it.

He was not a victim. He was a willing sacrifice. He was a deliberate sacrifice. He loved you so much that he said, Father, I will willingly lay down my life for her, for him, for her, and for him.

For a multitude that no man can number. I'll do it because I love them. And Luke again is saying that's what's happening on the cross.

[ 49 : 25 ] So he says that with a loud or a strong voice. In other words, Jesus is in control to the very end. He decides when he stops breathing.

He courts scripture as a king who reigns from the cross. Jesus triumphantly, willingly, consciously, sovereignly, deliberately, royally commits his spirit into the hands of the heavenly father.

And John in his gospel, chapter 19 tells us he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. There's a sort of regal overture to what John tells us.

It's all about, it's all about Jesus. It's all about Jesus. Jesus. Yes, he pays the price for the salvation of sinners.

He gives you the strength to live and to die. A storm cry, a startling occurrence, a strange phenomenon, and finally significant groupings.

[ 50 : 39 ] Let's focus attention on those whom Luke identifies for us in the context. There are three groupings mentioned. First group nearest the cross, the execution squad, under the command of the centurion.

He was the public executioner, if you like. And it is the centurion who says, certainly this was a righteous man.

This man was innocent. And if you read through the whole of Luke's chapter 23, you cannot but think that Luke sees this as the climax to statement after statement made about Jesus.

And all who make these statements are forced to pronounce in judgment that Jesus is innocent. It's one of the, I think, one of the fascinating features of this chapter.

Verse 4, I find no fault in this man. Verse 14, behold, I have found no fault in this man, touching those things, whereof he accused him. Verse 15, neither did Herod.

[ 52 : 02 ] Verse 22, I have found no cause of death in him. Verse 41, the thief who came to faith, this man has done nothing wrong. And now the person responsible for carrying out the execution of the sentence, he too is stating that he is innocent.

And you know, the other gospels tell us that this centurion even said, surely this was indeed the Son of God. But Luke just tells you what he was doing.

Luke doesn't just tell us that the centurion said, is innocent. He was doing something. What was he doing? He was praising God.

He was praising God. He was glorifying God. That's what the centurion was doing. So, the question arises, if this innocent man was not dying for his own sins, for whose sins was he dying?

Whose sins was he dying for? And the answer that faith gives is, he is dying for my sins. He is dying for my sins.

[ 53 : 26 ] That's what Luke is encouraging us to see. Oh, my friend, can you give that answer this evening? That Jesus is dying for your sins.

That's the beauty of the marvel and the glory of the gospel. the second group that Luke focuses on is those that had assembled for this spectacle.

I don't know, they may have been the very ones who had called initially for his crucifixion. And when they saw what had taken place, Luke records they were beating their breasts.

Beating of breasts in the eastern custom was normally associated with women. it indicates a display of extreme emotion. And that is probably all that it was because Luke tells us their return told.

He tells us about the Roman centurion gazing on Christ who died for others. And who knows what happened in the heart of that man.

[ 54 : 45 ] you would like to think, if he were praising God, that he was a changed man as a result of the crucifixion. But for those beating their breasts, perhaps an overwhelming sense of tragedy and sorrow at what had happened to Jesus.

But they were returning home. The world would be better or different tomorrow. No real relevance to them, apart from the fact that they thought it was right to give a show of sorrow.

You remember when Jesus was in the procession on the way to the cross, there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him.

And do you remember what he said to them? He turned to them and said, daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. In other words, come to the Lord in contrition of heart and repentance.

I go to die for the sins of my people to set them free. And of all that they were seen, there was just an injustice of a man condemned wrongly at a physical level, but not seen what was done to save sinners.

[ 56 : 13 ] And they go away on that happy that they've shown. Some kind of empathy with what took place, but it's of no further concern.

Oh, but it is, my friend. It's of huge concern. It ought to be the greatest concern in everyone's life.

Because the death of Christ affects us all in one way or another. Either we trust in the Christ of the cross, or we reject the Christ of the cross, and we go to our lost eternity.

And then there's the third group. They stood at a distance, and all writes Lucas acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

All those who knew him stood at a distance. Luke doesn't say anything about their emotions, or if they shed tears.

[ 57 : 21 ] love him. But what Luke is setting before us is, those who loved him most, understand and watch him.

And you remember Luke, he's also the author of the book of Acts. And Jesus had called those who loved him not just to be eyewitnesses to his death, but also of his resurrection.

They would be the first ones to experience the blessing of grace and salvation through death, his death and resurrection. They are the ones going to tell the world what happened when he bore the curse on the tree, the innocent in place of the guilty, in order that the fellowship of God, which was his by right, would become their privilege as sinners who trusted in him.

Now, could I suggest in conclusion that we are in one of these three groups, those who put him to death to keep Jesus as far from us as possible.

all have we begun to see what the centurion saw. Here's what I want to leave you, you know.

[ 58 : 54 ] I think all of us, like the crowd, if we take stock of ourselves, recognize that we deserve God's judgment on us, and even those of us with the most robust conscience, every once in a while recognize that we deserve God's judgment.

And Luke is saying that's right. You do and I do, but God has dealt with what we deserve in Jesus.

So the way back into fellowship with him, it's not out trying hard enough, or trying to be good, or trying to make up for what we have done, but it is by faith in Jesus, because he is the only way, the only way, back into fellowship with God, because he has taken the judgment of God upon himself for our sins.

So, when that sense of God's just judgment against you speaks in your ears, and your mind, and your heart, the only right answer is to run to Jesus, to trust in him, to come to God through him, who has already absorbed the just judgment of God, that we might be with him forever, throughout all eternity.

A strange phenomenon, thick darkness at noon, a startling occurrence, the rent curtain, a strong cry, on the very cusp of death, on significant gulpings.

[ 60 : 45 ] Let us pray. Eternal and ever blessed Lord, oh, help us to find ourselves amongst those who love the Lord Jesus, who seek to serve the Lord Jesus, who trust in the Lord Jesus for time and eternity, and the glory shall be thine.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen. Let us conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 22, and at verse 22.

Psalm 22, verse 22. I will show forth thy name unto those that my brethren are. Amidst the congregation thy praise I will declare.

Praise ye the Lord, who do him fear. Him glorify all ye the seed of Jacob. Fear them all, that Israel's children be.

For he despised not, nor abhor the afflicted's misery, nor from him hid his face, but heard when he to him did cry. Then the congregation great, my praise shall be of thee.

[ 62 : 01 ] My vows before them that him feared shall be performed by me. These verses I will show forth thy name unto those that my brethren are.

Amen. I will show forth thy name prezoned to him whose hounds upon heart esa purrese die ready may hum sly peace thy praise thy which his army interline and glorify for thee.

As you of Jacob hear him now, Thou ye hearficrelated me.

For He is not my heart. Now be is mystery.

Now so may this heaven We're new, new light When in the congregation day, my prayer shall be holy.

[ 64 : 23 ] My Um Jihy, my meetinging as I be weary Now we perform theady.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with you all, now and forever.

Amen.