

The Crucified King

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[0 : 00] Please have a seat. Thank you for being here on this Good Friday.! My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here.

! And as you know, it is Good Friday. And today, David read the passage that we are going to look at. So please take out your Bibles to Luke chapter 23.

Luke chapter 23. This evening we come to what is the most sobering moment in all of Scripture. We call it Good Friday, but it is not a time in which we come to celebrate. It is meant to be a time we come to stand at the foot of the cross.

With the understanding that this is not another story, this is not a myth, this is not some ancient religious symbolism. But Good Friday, it is the brutal, bloody, historical death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on a Roman cross.

[1 : 13] The Apostle Paul would later write in 1 Corinthians 2. I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

The cross is not a part of the Christian message. It is the Christian message. The fact is, if you do not understand the cross, you do not understand the significance of this day, then you will never understand the word grace.

You will never understand what forgiveness means, and you will never be able to celebrate the resurrection unless you first mourn the death of Jesus Christ.

This morning, my goal is to walk you through, scene by scene, the events of the day of Good Friday. We're going to see Him rejected, mocked, beaten, crucified.

We're going to hear His final words, and we're going to watch as the King of Glory gives up His life. Not because He was weak, but because He was willing.

[2 : 32] And with every verse, every nail, every breath, we're going to remember that this was for us. The cross is not where Jesus lost.

The cross is where Jesus won. So tonight we go to Calvary, and the question I ask you is not, will you be moved?

The question is, what will you do with the crucified King? How will you respond to the crucified King? The Gospel of Luke, upon which we take one of the four stories about this passion, this resurrection, and Luke is interesting, and if you did not know, it's the only gospel written by a Gentile.

It was written after the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and it was done after He investigated these events.

And I want you to listen closely to His introduction to this gospel account, which is found in Luke 1.1. It says, Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who, from the beginning, were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me, also having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.

[4 : 12] Why? Verse 4, That you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught. Everything hinges on this cross.

The first scene that I want to present to you is found in verse 26. This is the road to Calvary. There are two events on this road that I want to call your attention to.

As we arrive in verse 26, the sentence has been handed down. Despite Pilate four times claiming publicly that there is no guilt in this man, yet Jesus will be crucified because the religious rulers want it, the crowd calls for it, and our salvation demands it.

By the time we turn to verse 26, Jesus has been beaten, mocked, crowned with thorns, and now He walks the road that will lead to His execution.

This just isn't any road. Some have dubbed this road the Via Dolorosa. It is the way of suffering. [5 : 33] It is not a specific road, but it is the road upon which Jesus walked with His cross. Every steps He takes is soaked with blood and with purpose.

And on His way to this cross, He is too beaten and too weak to carry His cross. verse 26, as they led Him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene who was coming in from the country and laid on Him the cross to carry it behind Jesus.

Now I believe it's important for us to understand that there are no mistakes written in the pages of Scripture. That there is a very simple purpose for every single word, every single sentence and phrase that we find.

This verse is not simply a filler verse. This isn't a verse meant to give us some color. The details tell us several things. The first, it tells us that Jesus is exhausted.

He is weary. He's been whipped, beaten, and brutalized. So severe are His beatings that He physically cannot carry the means of His execution to the place of His execution.

[7 : 03] The second, and so subtly, Luke draws us to the words of Jesus Christ, which are found in Luke 9, 23. Simply reads, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

This is discipleship moment written in blood. Simon did not volunteer. He did not raise his hand. He was conscripted, grabbed from the crown, forced to carry the beam of the cross behind Jesus. Don't miss the wording to carry it behind Jesus. This is Luke's way of reminding us that Jesus already said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

You see, Jesus is not asking us to carry a polished, decorative cross around our neck. The king that would die on this day is the Savior that carries or calls us to carry a blood-soaked beam behind a Savior who is marching to his death.

What's interesting in the Gospel of Mark, Mark identifies these sons of Simon. Their names are identified as the father of Alexander and Rufus, that they were actually known by the Christian community.

[8 : 45] This wasn't a one-off experience for Simon, but it seems to have marked a turning point in his life and that of his family. How different it can be for many of us.

We want salvation. We want what Jesus represents, but we don't want to surrender. We're happy with Jesus as our consultant, but as a king, maybe not so much.

We want the Jesus who carries our burdens, but we also want the Jesus who leaves our idols alone. What Luke tells us here so clearly is that there is no crown without a cross.

There is no crown without a cross. I'm reminded of the words of a pastor friend of mine. He says, if we're following a Jesus who's always comfortable, always safe, never confronts our sin, never calls for sacrifice, we're not following the Jesus of Luke 23.

We're following a counterfeit. The second event in this first scene, we see Jesus speaking to the weeping women.

[10 : 05] Now watch this. It says, Jesus has been flogged within an inch of his life. He's dehydrated. He's bleeding. He's struggling to breathe, and yet he still stops to speak. Verse 28, Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

What is he talking about? What kind of king stops on the moment of his execution to warn them? This is not a king who's losing control, but a king who's still prophesying judgment.

If you were with us a few Sundays ago, you would have heard the warning that Jesus wept over Jerusalem. That judgment was coming because they rejected the king.

That he warned them in the fall of Jerusalem would happen in AD 70 when the Roman armies would burn the city to the ground. Jesus sees the fire before it's lit, and even as he walks towards his own death, he calls them to repent.

What's interesting about this story is the road to the cross wasn't just physically agonizing, it's actually prophetically heavy.

[11 : 21] Almost every instant there's a prophecy that is being fulfilled. Every step, every word, every grasp for breath was for us.

See, the cross didn't begin with the nails. the suffering started with the surrender. The surrender of a king who would rather carry a cross for you than to live in heaven without the ones he calls to believe.

So the simple question is, is, are you following him? Not in word, not in theory, but in truth, in sacrifice, in step.

And so closes the first scene of this march on the Via Della Rosa. The second scene begins at a place called the Skull or Golgotha.

The air reeks of sweat, blood, and death. Roman soldiers drive the nails. The beams are hoisted.

[12:26] The beams are hoisted. The crowd gathers and the king of glory is hung between two criminals. Verse 32, two others who were criminals were led away to be put to death with him.

Let this settle on you for a bit. This is the Son of God. This is the one who calmed the seas. This is the one who healed the blind, who raised the dead.

And now he's nailed up like a common thug. and this too fulfills prophecy. Isaiah 53, 12 says he was numbered with the transgressors.

Jesus didn't simply just die for sinners. He died between them. Verse 33, Luke says it bluntly. there they crucified him. No theatrics, no drawn out drama, just brutal, efficient execution.

[13:37] Have you ever wondered why there's so little said about this moment? If you remember his audience is Gentile, not Jew, and to answer your question, crucifixion was a common Roman practice.

Theophilus, a Roman name, would have known inherently what that word meant. He would have known it to be a public spectacle used to deter rebellion and criminal activity among the non-Roman citizens, including the slaves.

Luke could have written that it was one of the most horrendous of deaths. for one didn't simply die on a cross. You suffered and agonized for hours if not days on a cross.

It was supposed to be and meant to be the most excellent of torturing devices. the fact is you actually suffocated as your body grew to be so weak you could not force your chest up in order to take the air into your lungs.

you would agonizingly push against the nail that was your feet were nailed into that beam just pushing against the wounds until you could do so no more and you suffocated.

[15:09] But this isn't what the significance about the death of Jesus is to Luke. The physical means don't matter. The significance is found in the fulfillment of prophecy the spiritual significance.

Within this cross it reveals the innocence of Jesus Christ and it wonderfully accomplishes the atonement. It is the means that God used to buy us back from his wrath.

Some will mistakenly tell you that Jesus needed to die on the cross to buy us back from Satan. No that is not true. It's to buy us back from the righteous wrath that we so deserve.

This cross just simply wasn't a physical torture but it was also public humiliation. Jesus hung there naked, mocked and exposed.

He was elevated not to honor him but to put him up as a display, as a warning. crucifixion wasn't simply death, it was shame.

[16:21] It was designed to strip a man of his dignity, his humanity and his name. And there in the middle of it all, Jesus hangs silently.

He's not fighting for his life. He's laying down his life. in verse 34 we see that he gets mocked.

And he simply says, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. In the midst of his mocking and the agony, he prays. He prays for the very ones driving the nails.

the question we're meant to ask is what kind of love is this? And how do they respond? Verse 34, the soldiers divide his garments, the rulers sneer, he saved himself, let him save himself, or he saved others, let him save himself, the soldiers mock, if you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. They mock him, even the sign, perhaps true, is still meant to mock him. He is the king.

[17:43] He could save himself, but if he did, we could not be saved. In our third scene, we read that Jesus is not alone on this cross.

he is surrounded by sinners, literally, one on his left, one on his right, both men guilty, both men condemned, both men hanging by threads of breath, but only one of them will die forgiven.

Verse 39, one of the criminals who were hanged, railed at him, saying, are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us. My friends, that's the, that is not the voice of belief, that is the bitter voice of unbelief, it's not repentance, it's mockery.

He's not crying for mercy, he's demanding performance. If you're really the Christ, then prove it, he's saying, get down off the cross and bring me with you.

If you know your Bibles, you will know that sounds familiar. It's the same thing that the scribes and Pharisees, even despite the miracles that Jesus was known to do, they still said, show me a sign. [19:11] Even in the middle of the trial, Jesus was delivered to Herod Antipas and he wanted to see a sign. For us, we don't ask for those kind of signs.

We said, if God is real, why doesn't he fix my marriage? If Jesus is alive, why do I still suffer? If Jesus is good, why won't he heal me, promote me, bless me? We seem to all want the same that this thief did and that's a Messiah who performs for us. We want a Savior who serves our agenda.

But here's the good news. Jesus didn't come to take you off your cross. He came to hang on his cross. Then we read about the second thief.

And this is one of the most stunning conversations in all of Scripture. Happens at the last moments of a dying man's life. God's love. But the other rebuked him saying, do you not fear God?

[20:25] Since you are under the same sentence of condemnation. And we indeed justly, but this man has done nothing wrong. Even the thieves acknowledge that Jesus does not deserve to be there.

You see in here we read repentance. He owns his guilt. He defends Jesus. He fears God. And then he turns to Christ in verse 42. He says, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. What a request. He's got no resume. He certainly has no record of righteousness. He doesn't have time to make things right in his life, to clean up his life, and to earn anything.

He does something that is so magnificent in that he simply believes. He sees the bleeding broken man next to him and says, you're a king.

I want in. And what does Jesus say? He says, truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise. Notice in the words of Jesus there's no hesitation.

[21:46] there's no condition, there is no delay. My friends, this is called grace. It's called raw, undeserved, last second grace.

It's the kind of grace that doesn't wait for a better version of you. It's the kind of grace that reaches through the blood and breathes life into this dying rebel.

evil. Now, many people get confused about the timing of this event. This isn't about how late you can come to, how you can come to Christ.

It's about whether you come to Jesus Christ at all. Some of you are the first thief. You're still demanding proof. You want reasons. You're still waiting for Jesus to impress you.

others of you are the second thief. You know you're guilty. You know he's holy. And you're ready to say, Jesus, remember me.

[22:57] Hear this. It's never too late to turn to Christ. But don't wait too long. The fact is, Jesus Christ offers mercy.

but he does not promise tomorrow. We now turn to verse 44 and we find ourselves into the fourth scene.

It is the scene upon which the wrath of God falls and the world goes dark. Verse 44, it was now about the sixth hour and there was darkness over the whole land and into the ninth hour. that's noon to 3 p.m., the brightest part of the day. But the sun stops shining. Some will say this is an eclipse.

I do not believe it's an eclipse. I believe this is judgment. Darkness in Scripture symbolizes God's judgment. If you know your Bible in Egypt before the final plague, darkness covered the land.

[24:06] in the prophets, the day of the Lord is described as a day of darkness and gloom. When God's wrath is poured out, light retreats and darkness moves in.

And now, at the cross, creation itself reacts. The world goes dark and because the Son of God is absorbing the full wrath of God, it's dark.

dark. This is real, cosmic, supernatural darkness. Why? Because the light of the world is being snuffed out.

This is, my friends, the weight of the wrath. Jesus, the sinless one, is becoming sin for us. Not that He commits sin, but that every foul, disgusting, shameful act ever committed is laid on Him, all of Him.

The sin preceding, the sin after. The lies, the adultery, the arrogance, the rage, the abuse, the blasphemy, all of it on Him.

[25:23] Isaiah 53.10 reminds us it was the will of the Lord to crush Him. He has put Him to grief.

Never for a moment pretend that this was easy. Jesus bore the full fury of holy justice so that you do not have to.

Jesus didn't simply die. He drank the cup of wrath until it was empty. and with his final breath he prays.

Verse 46, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. God He's not cursing.

He's not panicking. He's not confused. He's in control. This is the moment of surrender. John 10.18 tells us, no one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

[26 : 35] The king is not killed. The king lays his life down. He entrusts his spirit to the father.

And the text tells us he breathed his last. The work is done. The sacrifice is complete. The veil is torn.

The wrath is satisfied. And grace is unleashed. And this is the moment that changes eternity. the simple question to ask yourself is do you trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ?

Not talking about Jesus plus good works. Not Jesus plus my church attendance. Or Jesus plus my record, my religion, my reputation. No.

Just Jesus. Jesus. Just the cross. Just the blood. In case you missed it, Jesus said it is finished.

[27 : 53] Sadly, too many fools try to finish it on their own. You do not add to the cross. cross. You bow before it.

And on this day's events, it demands a response. And this is where we move to the fifth scene.

Jesus has breathed his last.

The darkness lifts. The veil in the temple is torn. And what happens next reveals the true power of the cross. verse 47. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, certainly this man was innocent.

Let's consider this centurion for a moment. Nowhere do we read that he's religious. Nowhere do we read that he was somehow emotionally attached to the story.

He simply is a battle hardened Roman executioner. This is just another shift in his schedule. The daily execution of the lowest of lows.

[29 : 12] Another criminal, another execution. He's simply here to do a job. But when he watches how Jesus dies, how Jesus prays, how Jesus endures, and how Jesus forgives, something happens.

He's never seen anything like this. There's no rage, there's no resistance. There's only glory in the middle of agony, only worship in the middle of wrath.

And this hardened man confesses certainly this man was righteous. Matthew records, it says, truly this was the son of God.

See, this is what the cross does. It reveals what religion cannot. It melts what sin has hardened.

The cross exposes the truth even to the most unexpected heart.

In verse 48, the crowd goes home beating their breasts. And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, it was almost they were there to be entertained.

[30 : 29] But they returned home beating their breasts. They came to see a spectacle, but yet were left shaken by a Savior. They thought they were here to watch another execution.

Instead, they saw the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world. The beating their breasts was a sign of deep grief, of conviction.

some of these very people would be in Jerusalem 50 days later at Pentecost. Cut to the heart when Peter preaches, you crucified him, but God raised him from the dead.

My friends, even then, the cross was already doing its work. And then verse 49, the disciples stand at a distance. For all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

Some are mourning, some are confused, but they still seem to be watching. It's almost as if there's a holy pause at the end of this text, a breathless waiting.

[31 : 45] Because for the followers of Jesus, it looks like this is the end. God's dead. But we know better. We know the silence of Saturday is not the end of the story.

We know Saturday is coming. We know that the blood that poured out on Friday is about to conquer death forever. And the question still remains, what will you do with this king?

You've heard the accusations, you've seen the rejection, you've stood at the foot of the cross and watched him die, so now is what will you do with the crucified king?

Will you walk away convicted but unchanged like the crowd? Will you stand at a distance confused and afraid like the disciples? Or will you bow and worship and like the centurion say, truly this was the son of God?

You see, my friends, you can't be neutral with the cross. You either reject it or you accept it. The crucified king has made the way.

[32 : 58] The debt is paid, the blood is spilt, the door is open. Now is the time to come to him, bow before him, trust in him.

This is the moment and I implore you, don't walk away from the king who died to save you. Let's pray. Holy heavenly father, holy heavenly father, what is there to say except thank you? Perhaps some of us here need to say more than just thank you. Maybe that this is the day that they need to make a change to accept this truth.

To understand that this is the moment I bow to Jesus and I trust my life to him. No more arguing, no more excuses, no more asking for more reasons, sins, but simply coming, accepting this truth and bowing the knee to the king who died for you.

Father, we know the world is going to throw in all sorts of impediments, excuses, reasons. sins, there's worry of the world, there's sin that we love more than we love God and we're afraid to give it up or we're afraid that we won't be strong enough to give it up and the reality is we're not.

[34 : 45] But maybe this is the time to let Jesus deal with our sin, deal with our past, deal with our rebelliousness, deal with our foolishness. maybe we simply need to respond to the king of kings like the thief on the cross.

Will you remember me in paradise? So God, I ask your blessing upon these people, these friends, these family.

I pray that you would honor the prayers of the righteous who pray for their family members, their kids, their parents, their grandparents, their friends, their employees, their friends.

I pray that they would share this message with them so that they too can understand that there is one who lived perfectly and righteously died for them too so that they could be free from this sin.

we ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen.