



The Essentials: The Gospel of Luke

Session 8: Luke 22-23

Opening Collect

Together: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Read: Luke 23:26-47

Opening Thought:

The four passion narratives all accentuate different components of Jesus' crucifixion. Continuing much of what we have gone before, Luke highlights the favor Jesus shows on the vulnerable and disregarded. As soldiers lead Jesus to Golgotha, Jesus has compassion on the women who weep for him (vv. 27-31). When one of the criminals attempts to defend Jesus and begs to be remembered in the kingdom to come, Jesus assures the criminal that he will also be in paradise (vv. 40-43). And even as he hangs from the cross, Jesus says, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (v. 34). All these details are unique to Luke, and they rightly emphasize an essential component of Jesus' ministry and very heart—his compassion for the broken and repentant.

Discussion:

1. The gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion hold an unending power. Simply share with your group some of the things you find striking in Luke's account.
2. In vv. 28-31, Jesus warns a group of women about the trial to come. This word of caution is likely about oncoming persecution in the first and second centuries, but perhaps it is about more. What difficulties come to mind now that make it difficult to follow Jesus?
3. Our passage includes one of the few places that Jesus' makes a promise to someone specific about their life after death. Here it is a criminal. Why do you think Jesus would promise something so profound to *this* man? What does the criminal do or say?
4. The theological significance of Jesus' death on the cross is tremendous. Consider the fact that it is the Jewish Passover, where they would celebrate the way God rescued his people from slavery. Consider also their whole sacrificial system of cleanliness that made it possible to enter God's presence. Now, in v. 45 it says that the temple veil marking off the most holy place in the Temple was torn in two. What might that say about the crucifixion?

(over)

5. The cross of Christ is the ultimate act of mercy; it is the final statement about God's favor for his people. What might it do for you to fully comprehend and believe that truth about yourself?

Check in and Closing Prayer

Luke 23:26-47

[26] And 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. [27] And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. [28] But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. [29] For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that 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 when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

[32] Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. [33] And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [34] And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. [35] And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" [36] The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine [37] and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" [38] There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

[39] One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" [40] But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? [41] And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." [42] And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." [43] And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

[44] It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, [45] while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. [46] Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. [47] Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"