

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Luke 23:26–49

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## Introduction

- <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2024/february/jeopardy-contestants-ignorant-of-lords-prayer.html> - Seems like an easy question - everyone should know the answer.
- But... everyone doesn't... Even more tragic, regular conversations... “If you were to die today, where would you spend eternity?” “I don't know...” Or, “I hope...”
- Should break our hearts that people don't know the hope of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
- Do you know? Do you know the hope of eternal life? Do you know the Gospel?
- This morning, the story of the crucifixion - the most significant event in all of human history that not everyone knows about but everyone needs to know about.
- yThis is the moment that all of human history waited for, and this is the moment that changed everything. Such a significant moment in history, that it literally changed the calendar (B.C./A.D.).
- This morning I want to recount the crucifixion story, and I want to show you three reasons why the crucifixion of Jesus is so significant.

## Story

- Four Gospels - each give us a different perspective on what happened the day Jesus died.
- All four Gospels use an economy of words - Not much detail about the crucifixion itself. Luke doesn't even mention the scourging that Jesus suffered before He was crucified.
- Gospel writers don't need to give details about how crucifixion was carried out. Original audience knew. They knew exactly how it went down. They knew the horror. Just to say the word *crucifixion* would bring horrific images to the minds of a first century audience.
- Crucifixion was an execution for non Roman citizens who crossed Rome. Thousands were executed by crucifixion in the days of the Roman empire. To a watching world, Jesus just another criminal who had crossed Rome - the world passed by not knowing the very Son of God being executed.
- After being sentenced by death, Jesus forced to carry cross to Golgotha - just outside the city walls. Common for person being executed to carry crossbeam of cross. Jesus so physically weak that He can't. A man from Africa, Simon, forced to carry cross - his son mentioned by Paul ([Romans 16:13](#)). Maybe he became a believer that day and led his family to faith.
- Women follow - mourning and weeping - a few women follow Him to His death ([Zech. 12:10-14](#)). On way to cross, Jesus warns - a final appeal to Jerusalem ([Luke 19:41-44](#)). Jesus quotes [Hosea 10:8](#). Final warning from Jesus that judgment is coming for Jerusalem and their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah.
- The place of the Skull - Golgotha - executed with two other criminals. Luke wants us to know Jesus was innocent (Pilate declares innocent

3xs) yet numbered with criminals ([Isaiah 53:12](#)). Jesus executed outside city limits of Jerusalem.

- Clothes are divided for lots ([Psalm 22:18](#)). “Father, forgive them...” Forgive who? The soldiers who didn’t understand what they were doing - just carrying out orders. The chief priests and religious leaders? The disciples for abandoning? The crowd that shouted “Crucify Him?” Regardless who the words are directed towards, no bitterness or anger in heart of Jesus as He hung on the tree - just mercy, compassion, and grace. Jesus loves His enemies.
- vs. 35-38 - Jesus cries from the cross for the Father to forgive, yet the people continue to reject, mock, and scorn. “If you are the Messiah, save yourself!” Jesus is offered sour wine - not a drink fit for a king - but a drink fit for commoners - inscription - King of the Jews put on the cross - mockery - Jews didn’t want that inscription - wanted it to say that He claimed to be King of the Jews - but Pilate let the inscription stand ([John 19:21](#)). Mockery and scoffing - “Save yourself...” The people do not realize that Jesus is dying on a cross to save them.
- vs. 39-43 - Two criminals - one joining in with the crowd and hurling insults. “Save yourself and us if you’re the Messiah!” Making demands of Jesus. “Prove yourself.” Or, “If you’re really God, you’d do something about this.” Hardened criminal did not realize that Jesus, the God-man, was doing something! He was saving the world! If we’re honest, we’ve all prayed a similar prayer to this mocking criminal. “If you’re really God, get me out of this mess. Then I’ll believe.” Notice, Jesus never responds to this criminal in his unbelief.
- A second criminal - rebukes the first. Something happened in the heart of this criminal. Criminal sees himself for who he is, and He sees Jesus for who He is. “We deserve death. This man has done nothing wrong (vs. 41).” The criminal had carried his cross along with Jesus on the Via Dolorosa. He had seen how Jesus had been mistreated. He heard how Jesus had been mocked. He had seen how Jesus humbly accepted the

suffering of the cross. God opened the eyes of this hardened criminal to see Jesus for who He is: the suffering servant suffering for the sins of people.

- Penitent criminal with a simple but amazing requests: “Remember me when you come into your Kingdom (vs. 42).” This criminal realizes that the inscription that is over the head of Jesus is true. Jesus is the King of the Jews and the King of the world. This criminal sees what no one else saw that day - Jesus is God.
- Jesus would do more than remember the hardened criminal. “Today you will be with me in paradise (vs. 43).” Jesus saves the hardened criminal! The criminal expresses faith, and faith in the Messiah saves him in his final moments. The criminal forever with Jesus. On that day, when we enter God’s Kingdom, we will see the criminal - the one who doesn’t deserve to be there. But, that’s your story too, you don’t deserve to be there. But, because of your faith in Christ, you will be there.
- vs. 45-46 - At noon - the land becomes dark ([Amos 8:9](#)). Judgment of God. Jesus taking the full punishment for our sin. Jesus swallowed up in the darkness - horror.
- Curtain of the temple torn in two - Jesus receives judgement and we receive access. Curtain represented a barrier between God and His people. Jesus, the once and for all sacrifice, has removed the barrier. Because of His death and resurrection, you have full access to the Father ([Hebrews 4:16](#)).
- vs. 46 - In His death, Jesus commits Himself to His Father (vs. 46). ([Psalm 31:5](#)) - Jesus is the fulfillment of Davidic hopes. Jesus fully trusts that the Father will vindicate His death. Jesus’s death not in vain. Three days later - vindication would come when Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus does not die in fear. Instead, Jesus dies with confidence and hope. He knows what’s coming.

- vs. 47 - A Roman centurion - witnessed it all - begins to praise God. He saw how Jesus went to His death with confidence. He saw how Jesus had been mistreated. Perhaps He heard the compassionate words of Jesus from the cross. "Father forgive them. Today you will be with me in paradise, etc." He saw the darkness come over the land. He heard Jesus pray to His Father. Roman centurion became convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. He recognizes Jesus as the righteous one who suffered unjustly. The greatest moment of darkness in the history of the world becomes the greatest moment of light in the heart of this Roman centurion. Luke showing us that the death of Jesus not in vain. His response to the death of Jesus should be your response. Does the crucifixion cause you to glorify God? Are you in awe of what Jesus has done for you on the cross?
- 48-49 Crowd goes home striking chest - Grief? Grief over what they had seen? What they had done? Conviction? Over the course of His ministry, crowds gathered and hung on to Jesus' every word. Now the crowd had crucified Jesus. The women watched in horror - Women that followed Jesus never waiver - with Jesus to the end.

### **Three reasons why the crucifixion is so significant:**

- **You never have to wonder if you are loved.** (Veil in temple torn in two - Because of love, God has given you complete access to Himself. - Every barrier removed - e.g., Western Wall)
  - **God desires to be with you.** This is what God has wanted from the beginning! To be with you! In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve walked with God. BUT, sin caused us to go from friends of God to enemies of God. However, your sin didn't change God's love for you. Adam and Eve rejected God, and all humanity rejected God, but God never stopped pursuing us.
  - **God is for you.** You might feel as if everyone else in this world is against you, but God is not. He is for you, and He wants you to walk

with Him. The cross is the greatest demonstration of God's love for you. ([Romans 5:8](#), [8:31-39](#)). How have you responded to God's love? Rejection? Apathy? Or, joyously embracing God's love for you?

- **You never have to wonder about Jesus' identity.** (Roman soldier's response - vs. 39) Luke carefully showing us who Jesus is - He's one of us - (baptism - identifies with us - crucifixion - dies as one of us.) Yet, at the same time He is God who has come as the fulfillment of all of the OT promises to redeem us from our sins.
  - **Jesus NOT just an example for us to follow.**
  - **Jesus is the King of the world who is worthy of our everything.** You have to settle once and for all who Jesus is. Is He God or not? If not, you owe Him nothing. If He is, you owe Him everything. Some of us claim He is God yet live as if He is not. Luke and the other Gospel writers want us to know that we do not have to question who Jesus is - He is the King of the world who is worthy of everything you have.
- **You never have to wonder why you are here.** Four Gospels - Two by apostles, Mark an associate of Peter, and Luke an associate of Paul. The disciples forever changed by what they witnessed - a perfect man dying unjustly, then rising from the dead, and then ascending to heaven. If you witness a perfect man die and then pulling off His own resurrection, it radically changes you. The death and resurrection of Jesus radically changes us.
  - **God hasn't saved you just to get you out of hell, He has saved you for His purpose.**
  - **You are here to do whatever Jesus says.** The Gospel writers did just that even when it meant it would cost them their lives. They spent their lives proclaiming the Gospel story. He saves you for a purposeful relationship with Him - So that you might know Him and go for Him. How would this world be different if believers lived out our purpose?

- This morning, believe that Jesus died and rose again for you. Turn to Him by faith. Believers, live for His glory. Walk in holiness. Live for His mission.