



BIBLE STORIES EVERYONE OUGHT TO KNOW

Main and Oklahoma Church of Christ ^ Adult Bible Studies ^ Winter-Spring 2010

April 11, 2010

Connecting with Jesus' Love, Luke 22-23

Getting Started

Jesus' ministry on earth is ending. The religious leaders are conspiring to kill. One of the chosen disciples is looking for the time and place to betray Jesus, and Satan is planning to sift another. The stage is set for the final act. God's ultimate gift of love, his Son Jesus will face death, not just any death, but the painful, humiliating death of crucifixion.

What's the story?

The final hours of Christ's life are here. During the final Passover with his disciples, Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper. The bread and wine become lasting memorials. It is at this meal that Christ informs his disciples that one of them will betray him and that Satan will sift another. After the meal, Jesus goes to the garden where he prays earnestly to let this cup pass; yet, only if that is the Father's will. As the prayer ends, Judas arrives with soldiers who seize Jesus and take him away to the house of the high priest.

The Scriptures say that Peter follows at a distance. He enters the courtyard of the high priest where three different people accuse him of being one of the followers. Each denial Peter utters is more forceful. As soon as Peter utters his third denial, a rooster crows. At this moment, Jesus turns and looks straight at Peter. Peter's heart must have broken with that look.

While Luke records several trials, the Jewish leaders have already decided Jesus must die.

The Jewish court, the Sanhedrin, accuses Jesus of blasphemy. Before Pilate, the accusation is subversion. Herod is only interested in a show. Each trial has hidden motives and those in charge are only interested in their own needs. Justice matters not. Each passes sentence or shifts the responsibility and they send an innocent man to die.

As Roman guards lead Jesus and two criminals away for crucifixion, they compel Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross of Jesus. Luke records simply, they crucified him (Luke 23:23). Though enduring pain and insults on the cross, Jesus prays to the Father for those involved. As the final minutes tick away, even nature responds and darkness covers the land. Jesus commits his spirit to the Father, and the Son of God breaths his last. The terrible deed is done.

So, what does this story say about God?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son (John 3:16a). This verse reflects an amazing event! God took the initiative in our reconciliation. The cross reminds us that sin separated us from God's planned relationship with us. The cross shouts to us, "Sin is serious!" Sin is the destruction of that perfect relationship man once had with God. God will not

condone sin. When we see the suffering and pain of the cross, we begin to understand the evil of sin and the terrible price sin demanded. The tearing of the curtain in the temple points to the open access to God provided through the death His own Son. The complete tearing from top to bottom is one more reminder that God is the author of our repaired relationship.

Now, what about our faith?

In our culture, we often see the cross as decoration. It is pristine, quiet, and often aesthetically pleasing. However, the cross of Luke was messy, full of insulting shouts, and the symbol of the death of a criminal. The Son of God—the one in the very nature of God—left heaven and came to earth. He died a savage death for sinners. Yet His death has a purpose and calls to us today. We hear the call and come and receive forgiveness and salvation. The scripture is true—as Christ is lifted up, He draws all men to him (John 12:32).

Monday: Luke 22

1. Jesus says he has eagerly desired to eat this Passover with his disciples. Considering what is about to happen how can this be? Do you think Jesus is eager to meet us at the Table?
2. Satan asked to sift Peter. What do you think that means?
3. How was Peter changed by this sifting?
4. When in your life have you been sifted?

Tuesday: Luke 23

1. Compare the trials of Jesus before these three audiences: Pilate, the Jewish Council, and Herod. Who are the main characters and motives in each?
2. The guards made Simon carry the cross. What do you think he was feeling?

Wednesday: Luke 23:32-end

1. Skim the passage to find words used to describe Jesus.
2. What evidences of Jesus' continued ministry do you see, even in these last hours of his life?
3. Why did Joseph ask for the body? Is this a case of too little too late?

Thursday: Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:20

1. Christ's death brought us peace with God. What do you think it means to have peace with God?
2. What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?

Friday: Philippians 2:8, Romans 5:6-8,

1. What does the cross mean to you?
2. What passages from the Bible express your feelings about the cross?