

Introduction (Luke 23:33-56)

How many of you have ever been in a class and the teacher said that what they telling you was the most important thing that you need to remember? When my father was lecturing, and he got to an important part, he would say, “If you are not paying attention, pay attention. If you don’t hear anything else, you need to hear this.”

In the oil and gas industry, employees must maintain a valid well control certificate. For drilling supervisors, they must renew that certification every two years. When people come to our well control courses, we tell them on the very first day some very important information. We tell them what is most important for them to know in order to pass the difficult tests. The most important thing is for them to understand how to complete a kill sheet. This is a plan for killing a well when a gas influx has entered the well. There will be thirty five to forty points for kill sheet calculations on the test. If they do not master the kill sheet, they will have a difficult time passing the test. Since it is a timed test, they have to be able to fill one out quickly, and it must be done accurately. If they make a mistake on one calculation, that answer will be used for several other calculations, and they can end up missing twelve to fifteen points for that one wrong answer. There are many things that they must learn to prepare for their well control tests, but this is the most important thing.

The second most important section of the test is about gauges. Information will be given to them, and they must interpret the gauges and decide what the appropriate responses are for that particular situation. They must look at the given data and compare it to the kill sheet, and determine if things are going as planned, or if there is a problem. And, if there is a problem, what action needs to be taken to resolve the problem.

The kill sheet and the gauge questions give people the most problems. Students must learn and master these two areas if they want to do well on the test. We tell them that these two things are of first importance.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul makes known to the Corinthians the gospel which he had preached to them in order for them to pass their test. It is not a kill sheet and gauge questions. Let’s read to see what Paul says are the most important things.

(1 Cor 15:1-4) “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, {2} by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. {3} For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, {4} and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,”

The things that Paul delivered to them that are of first importance are 1) that Christ died for our sins, 2) that He was buried, and 3) that Jesus was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

In our message today, which I have called the Gospel Part 1, we will be looking at the first two parts of these most important things that Paul spoke about, the death and burial of Christ. Next week, in Part 2, we will be looking at the resurrection of Christ on the third day. These two passages make up what is most important about the gospel. Let’s read our passage today.

- Gospel Part I: 1) Death of Christ, 2) Burial of Christ
Gospel Part II: 3) Resurrection of Christ

(Luke 23:33-43) "When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. {34} But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. {35} And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." {36} The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, {37} and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" {38} Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." {39} One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" {40} But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? {41} "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." {42} And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" {43} And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

(Luke 23:44-49) "It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, {45} because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. {46} And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last. {47} Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." {48} And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. {49} And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things."

(Luke 23:50-56) "And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man {51} (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; {52} this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. {53} And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. {54} It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. {55} Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. {56} Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment."

1. Death of Christ

As we look at the death of Christ, there are two scenes. In the first scene, Luke tells us that Jesus is crucified with a criminal on His left and one on His right. Luke also tells us about many other people that were there for the crucifixion. We will look at the attitudes and actions of the soldiers, criminals, and others who were there. In the second scene, we are told of the death of Christ, the physical signs that took place, and the responses by the centurion and the crowds. We will look at both of these scenes.

A. Scene One

Our first scene starts with everyone going to the Skull. The King James Version says **that they came to a place called Calvary, (or the Skull)**. The Greek text says that they came to a place called kranion, which means head or skull. When the King James Version was translated, they used Stephanus' text, which was based on the Textus Receptus. Much of this was based on the work of Erasmus. He had six Greek manuscripts and none of them contained the whole Bible. Therefore, he used a number of Latin translations to produce his text. So, the King James has some translations that were based on Latin translations. The Latin word for Skull was Calvaria, which is where the term Calvary comes from. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek. We have now found many older Greek manuscripts, and our newer translations like the New American Standard, New International Version, and others use these Greek manuscripts. These older Greek texts use the Greek word kranion, which means Skull.

(Luke 23:33 NASB) "When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left."

(Luke 23:33 KJV) "And 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."

Our text says when "they" came to the place called the Skull. Who is they? **They includes Simon of Cyrene**, who that had seized, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus. Cyrene is in northern Africa, and is located near the modern day city of Tripoli, Libya. There was a fairly large Jewish population in Cyrene. Mark tells us that he was a passer-by. He was probably in Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. It was the goal of every Jew to make it to Jerusalem for the Feast. Mark also tells us that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

(Luke 23:26) "When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus."

(Mark 15:21) "They pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross."

In Romans 16, we find mention of Rufus. It says that he was a choice man in the Lord. Scholars believe this is the same Rufus as is mentioned in Mark 15. His father was forced to help carry the cross, and it obviously impacted him. It also impacted his whole household. Paul says to not only greet Rufus, but his mother and mine. Simon's wife was well known in the church at Rome, and Paul specifically mentions her in his greeting. Simon's whole family became strong believers.

(Rom 16:13) "Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine."

We also gather from this passage that Simon and his family relocated from Cyrene to Rome. But, before they moved to Rome and became pillars in the church there, they spread the gospel in Cyrene. In Acts 11, we are told that there were men from Cyprus and Cyrene that preached the gospel in Antioch. The hand of the Lord was with them and a large number of people turned to the Lord. Luke does not identify who those men of Cyrene were, but Simon may have been one of them. It may be that Simon's wife, who is Rufus' mother, and Paul became friends at Antionch.

(Acts 11:20-21) “But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. {21} And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.”

“**They**” also included a large crowd of people and some women who were mourning. Jesus took time to address these women and to tell them not to mourn for Him but to mourn for themselves and for their children. Jesus knew of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and He prophetically tells them to mourn in advance.

(Luke 23:27) “And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.”

“**They also included the soldiers**. There was a centurion mentioned later in the text, so we know approximately how many soldiers were there. In the Roman military, there were legions. Each legion consisted of between 3,000 and 11,000 soldier. There was a legion commander, and he was over a cohort. Each cohort had ten units. Each unit had six centuraie or centurions. Each centuraie had ten contubernia. Each contubernia had eight soldiers. So, a centurion was normally over about eighty soldiers. If necessary, they would sometimes put up to one hundred and sixty soldiers under a centurion. But the normal amount was eighty soldiers. So, since a centurion is mentioned, we can assume that there were at least eighty soldiers guarding and supervising the crucifixion of Jesus.

The soldiers were the ones that carried out the crucifixion. When Pilate gave the order to have Him crucified, they were the ones responsible for carrying out those orders. Scholars tell us that the cross was probably a “T” rather than the cross. They were the ones that would have driven the spikes through his hands and feet and hoisted him up. Notice Jesus’ response to being crucified. He said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Jesus forgives the soldiers. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotton Son to die on the cross for us. There was no greater love than for Jesus to lay His life down for you and I. Love does not take into account a wrong suffered. Perfect love forgives people when they hurt you, or even crucify you.

(Luke 23:33-34a) “When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. {34} But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

We find that these soldiers were being opportunistic, casting lots and dividing up Jesus’ garments among themselves. Since they drew lots, there was no fighting over who got anything. Solomon said the casting of lots puts an end to quarrels and strife. Karen and I had the children draw lots for seats in our fifteen passenger van. They drew lots at the beginning of every week for their seating assignment at the table. Using lots put an end to strife and gave us peace and order.

(Pro 18:18) “The cast lot puts an end to strife And decides between the mighty ones.”

(Luke 23:34b) “...And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

We find that the soldiers were mocking Jesus, coming to Him and offering Him sour wine, and saying, “if You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!”

(Luke 23:36-37) “The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, {37} and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" {38} Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

They said this because Pilate had written an inscription about the cross in Hebrew, Latin, and in Greek, which stated, “this is the king of the Jews.” The chief priests had asked Pilate to change the text to say that He said He was the King of the Jews,” but Pilate refused to change it.

(John 19:20-22) “ Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. {21} So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" {22} Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written.”

“They” also included the religious rulers. They were scoffing and sneering at Him. The Greek word literally means they turned up their noses at Him. This speaks of pride and arrogance in addition to the mocking. Arrogant people turn their noses up and look down on people. They have haughty eyes and look down at others.

(Luke 23:35b) “And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.”

“They” also included the two criminals at his sides. One criminal joined in with the soldiers and hurled abuse at Jesus. He told Jesus if He were the Christ to save Himself and to save them. He has no regard for his own sins and the innocence of Jesus. He has no understanding of what is really taking place.

(Luke 23:33) “When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.”

(Luke 23:39) “One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!”

The other criminal is penitent. He rebukes the criminal that is mocking Jesus. He said, “do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?” He tells him that “we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” He acknowledges his sins before God. He understands that he is getting exactly what he deserves. He does not stop there. Believing that Jesus is the Son of God is part of the gospel, but we must also receive Christ. The penitent criminal asks Jesus to remember him when He gets to His kingdom. He believes in His heart that Jesus can save Him, and he sincerely asks Jesus to save Him.

(Luke 23:40-42) “But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? {41} "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." {42} And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!”

Look at Jesus' response. "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise. There is some teaching that Jesus spent three days in hell. The word for hell is gehenna. Jesus did not go to gehenna. Jesus went to Hades, which is the place of the dead. In Acts 2:27, Peter quotes David (Psalms 16:10) and says "You will not abandon my soul to Hades nor allow Your holy One to decay." This was Sheol in the Old Testament. The King James translates both Hades and gehenna as hell. Jesus died and went to Hades. Now, we know from the account of the rich man and Lazarus that there was a chasm between where Lazarus was and where the rich man was. Lazarus was in paradiso, or paradise, not on the side where there was great torment. This thief was going to be with Jesus in paradise that very day.

(Luke 23:43) "And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Our souls are eternal, and our souls will be with Jesus. Paul says in Philippians that to live is Christ and to die is gain. He was hard pressed because of his desire to do kingdom work and his desire to be with Christ, which he describes as the better choice. Like the penitent criminal, when those who have confessed Christ as their Lord will be with the Lord in a very good place.

(Phil 1:21-23) "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. {22} But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. {23} But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;"

Finally, "they" also included a crowd of other people. This crowd of other probably included some of the disciples and apostles. We know from verse forty-nine that it included His acquaintances, and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee. We know from John's account that he was there and Jesus' mother was also there. Jesus gave John the responsibility of caring for Mary while He was on the cross. Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters, and they may well have been watching all of this also. These others stood by and looked on.

(Luke 23:35, 48-49) "And the people stood by, looking on.... {48} And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. {49} And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things."

B. Scene Two

The Events

In the second scene, Luke focuses on the events that accompanied the crucifixion, Jesus' final breath, and the responses by the centurion and the crowds. Let's look at the events. **At the third hour, which is nine o'clock, they crucified Jesus.** He has been on the cross for three hours being mocked. It is now the sixth hour, which is twelve o'clock noon. Luke records that **at the sixth hour darkness fell** over the whole land until the ninth hour, which is three o'clock. He also said that the sun was obscured.

(Mark 15:25) "It was the third hour when they crucified Him."

(Luke 23:44-45) “It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, {45} because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.”

Some people have said that there was an eclipse, which is what caused the darkness. But, that cannot be true. You cannot have an eclipse with a full moon. The Feast of Passover was based on the lunar calendar, and it was held during a full moon. So, there was not an eclipse that caused the darkness. This darkness was caused by God.

There is a term used twenty-three times in the Bible that refers to the return of Christ and His judgment on the unrighteous. While the return of Christ is good for those of us who have received Christ, it will be a terrible day of judgment on those who have not received Christ. Look at what Isaiah says. (See also Joel 2:1-2.)

(Isaiah 13:9-13) “Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. {10} For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light. {11} Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity... {13} Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place At the fury of the LORD of hosts In the day of His burning anger.”

The crucifixion is not the day of the Lord. But, I bring this up because it shows the judgment and wrath of God upon sin. **At the crucifixion, the fury and burning anger of the Lord for our sins was put on Jesus.** Isaiah said that the stars and constellations will not flash forth their light and the sun will be dark. This was not an eclipse. This darkness was from God and it symbolized his judgment that was taking place. In the parable of the talents, Jesus said to “throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” When Jesus spoke about the wedding feast, the man that did not have wedding clothes on was bound hand and foot and thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. We see that darkness is associated with the judgment and sentencing of people to hell. Jesus was taking the punishment of the world for its evil and sins.

(Matt 25:30)(parable of talents) “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

(Matt 22:13)(wedding feast) “Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'”

John says that Jesus was the propitiation or satisfaction for our sins, and also the sins of the whole world. Jesus was punished on the cross for the sins of the whole. He took the fury and burning anger of the Lord while on the cross. That fury lasted from noon until three o'clock, the ninth hour.

(1 John 2:2) “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

Next, **at the ninth hour, the veil of the temple was torn in two.** The sacrifice for our sins had been made, and now the veil is torn apart. In 1 Kings we find that the length of the temple was sixty cubits by twenty cubits by thirty cubits. Historians tell us that the height of the curtain and temple was later

increased. A cubit is eighteen inches, so this veil was at least forty-five feet high. The width of the veil is not mentioned in Scripture, but a first century historian named Josephus wrote that the “veil was four inches thick and that horses tied to each side could not pull the veil apart.”¹

(Luke 23:45) “because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.”

(1 Kings 6:2) “As for the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, its length was sixty cubits and its width twenty cubits and its height thirty cubits.”

In Mark’s account of the crucifixion, we find that it was not just torn in two, but it was torn in two from top to bottom. It was God who tore the veil in two. It was God that took down the divider between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

(Mark 15:38) “And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”

In Hebrews 9, we have an overview of the temple. There was an outer tabernacle called the holy place. There was a veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. The ark of the covenant was in the Holy of Holies. It was there that the presence of God dwelt. **The veil separated sinful man from the presence of God.** Only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies, and he could only do that once a year.

(Heb 9:2) “For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.”

Because the veil was rent in two, we now can confidently enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus. Jesus gave us access through a different veil, His flesh. Because of Jesus sacrifice, the earthly veil was rent, and a different veil is in place. After Jesus had taken the full wrath and fury of God for our sins, the darkness lifted, and the veil was torn in two. We now could come into the holy place through Christ. When we receive Christ, we gain access to the holy place.

(Heb 10:19-20) “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, {20} by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,”

At the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit,” and then breathed His last. I want to make two points about this. First, in Matthew’s account, Jesus had cried out “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani” which translates to “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” From noon until three p.m. Jesus has been taking the fury and wrath of God for our sins. He has been separated from God. And at the end, He cries out My God, My God. It is the only time that Jesus referred to His Father as God. And now that He has paid the penalty for our sins, He goes back to His normal intimate address, “Father.” His relationship with the Father has been restored, and He addresses the Father accordingly.

¹<http://www.GotQuestions.org/temple-veil-torn.html#ixzz3VR2UGW7D>

(Matt 27:45-46) “Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. {46} About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”

(Luke 23:46) “And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last.”

The second thing that I want to mention is that Jesus cries out with a loud voice and then breathes His last. A person who is crucified and is about to breathe His last breath cannot cry out with a loud voice. The lungs fill up with fluid and the person literally suffocates. Jesus is still strong and is able to cry out loudly. This signifies that He gave up His Spirit on His own accord. He was in control. In John 10, Jesus said that “no one has taken it (My life) away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.”

(John 10:18) “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

The Responses

We see two responses, one by the centurion, and the other by the crowds. Luke says that “when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying ‘Certainly this man was innocent.’” The centurion saw that the darkness was supernatural. He felt the earthquake. He observed the attitude and behavior of Jesus. He heard Jesus’ conversations with the criminal on the cross. He heard His conversation with the Father. He saw a supernatural crying out and death. He took it all in, and repented. He and his soldiers were mocking and sneering at Jesus. Now, He understands that Jesus is the King of the Jews. He understands that an innocent man has been put to death. He believes that Jesus is the Messiah and begins to praise God.

(Luke 23:47) “Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent.”

The second response is by the crowds who came together for the spectacle. They saw and experienced the same things that the centurion saw. It says that they began to return. That probably means they began returning to Jerusalem and to their homes. It was three o’clock, and the Jews slaughter the Passover Lamb between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. It is significant that Jesus, our Passover Lamb, died at three o’clock. Now, the people are going to go back to their homes to sacrifice their Passover Lambs.

(Luke 23:48-49) “And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. {49} And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things.”

Next, they began beating their breasts, which was a sign of repentance. They also saw that Jesus was innocent, and that He really is the King of the Jews. They understood that He was innocent, and that they had crucified the Messiah. Now, they are repenting for what they had done. When we are learn of who Jesus is, we have a decision to make. Are we going to believe and make Him Lord of our

lives, or are we going to make a decision not to follow Christ. The criminal on the cross made a decision to repent and confess Christ as Lord. The Centurion and the crowds made a decision to repent and follow Christ. What about you this morning? Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? Have you received Him and confessed Him as Lord of your life?

2. Burial of Christ

The first part of the gospel was that Jesus had to die for our sins. The second part of the gospel is that Jesus had to be buried. In our account, a man named Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. I want to take a minute to look at Joseph.

First, Luke said that he was a member of the Council. He was either a religious leader. Jesus had called many of them whitewashed tombs, hypocrites, and other names. But, Luke said that Joseph was a righteous man, and that he had not consented to their plan and action to put Jesus to death. Joseph is from Arimathea, a city of the Jews. Scholars do not know where the city of Arimathea was. Many scholars believe it was another name for Ramathaim-Zophim, which was in Ephraim, the birthplace of Samuel. Luke also mentions that Joseph was waiting for the kingdom of God.

(Luke 23:50-51) “And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man {51} (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;”

Mark tells us that he was not just a member of the Council, but was a prominent member of the Council. He was apparently a little bit on the timid side because Mark tells us that he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

(Mark 15:43) “Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.”

John gives us more insight about why he had to gather up courage. **Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one.** He was following Jesus, but not openly. Joseph feared the Jews. He had a prominent position. If he publicly declared his commitment to Jesus, he would have been cast out. He would lose his position, status, and income. Therefore, he was a secret disciple of Jesus.

(John 19:38) “After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.”

John tells us something else. He tells us that Nicodemus came with Joseph. In John 3, Nicodemus, also a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, had come to Jesus by night. **Nicodemus was searching for the truth,** but he did not want to let the other religious leaders know that he was considering the claims of Jesus. Therefore, he went to Jesus at night. John tells us that Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. He probably had a donkey to carry the mixture. **Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus down, and buried Him.** They followed Jewish custom and first bound Him in linen wrappings with the spices.

(John 3:1-2) “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; {2} this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

(John 19:39-40) “Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. {40} So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.”

Luke does not talk about it in his account, but Pilate did not just give them the body to bury. He sent the centurion out to verify that Jesus was dead. The centurion went and pierced his side and verified that Jesus was dead. Then, Pilate gave Joseph permission to take Jesus down and bury Him.

(Mark 15:44-45) “Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. {45} And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.”

So, Joseph and Nicodemus took Jesus down, and wrapped in a linen cloth with all the burial spices that they had brought, and laid Him in a tomb cut into a rock, where no one had ever lain.

(Luke 23:53) “And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.”

Our passage ends with the women who had come with Jesus out of Galilee going to the tomb and seeing how His body was laid. Because it was Friday, the day before the Sabbath, they went home to prepare for the Sabbath. Luke tells us that they also prepared more spices and perfumes to take back to the tomb. Finally, they rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.

(Luke 23:54-56) “It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. {55} Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. {56} Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.”

Conclusion

This morning, we have looked at the crucifixion and death of Jesus, and the burial of Jesus. We have spent a lot of time looking at the various people. At the cross, we saw Simon from Cyrene. He was obviously impacted by the event. He and his family became pillars in the church. Let me say this to all of you. God has plans for each one of you. He wants to use you to impact lives and cities, just like He used Simon and his family. When you give your life to Jesus, and begin to follow Him with all your heart, God will use you mightily. It all begins at the cross. That is where it began for Simon. Jesus tells us that we must pick up our crosses and follow Him. Have you picked up your cross? Have you begun to follow Christ? If you have never made that commitment to Christ, let me encourage you to come up right now. We want to pray with you.

We also looked at the criminals on either side of Jesus. One was hurling insults and the other one rebuked him. All of us are like these two criminals. All of us have done things worthy of death. Romans 3:23 tells us that all of us have sinned. Romans 6:23 says that the wages of our sin is death.

All of us deserve to be on that cross. And, all of us are going to die. One criminal did not give any thought to life after death. But, the other criminal asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom. Jesus told him that he would be with Him in paradise this very day. Which criminal are you? Are you wanting Jesus to forgive you of your sins? Are you willing to ask Jesus to remember you in His kingdom? The criminals knew they were about to die. You and I do not know when our time is up. It may be today. It may be tomorrow. It may be thirty years from now. We do not know. But, we can know where we are going to spend our eternity. Would you like to make a reservation in the kingdom of God this morning? If that is you, come up right now. We have people that will pray for you.

While these are coming, let me mention a few others. The Centurion and his soldiers mocked Jesus. I was there. I mocked Christians. But, the Centurion saw that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. When he came to that realization, he began to praise God. That is what I did. I knew I was a sinner. The only thing that I needed to know was if Jesus was really God. When I discovered that, I got on my knees in a hotel in Duncan, Oklahoma and gave my heart to Jesus. If your eyes have been opened this morning and you believe that Jesus is Lord, but have never received Him, let me ask you to come forward now. John tells us that “as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” We must believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and we must receive Him to become children of God. If that is you, let me ask you to come forward this morning.

(John 1:12) “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,”

We also looked at the crowds. They watched from a distance. They were taking it all in. But, when they witnessed the supernatural events surrounding Jesus’ crucifixion and death, they began to repent and beat their chests. The word repent means to do an about face. It means that you are going one direction, and you turn around and begin going the other way. Do you need to do a turnaround in your life? Do you need to make some changes in your life? You do not have to beat your chests. You do not have to make those changes before coming to Christ. The veil has been ripped in two. Jesus paid the price for you sins. He has forgiven all sin, past, present, and future. You can come into His presence through the veil of Christ. You simply need to accept His payment for your life. You simply need to stop going your own way and begin following after Him. If you have been watching from the sidelines like the crowds, but God has removed the veil from your eyes, and you want to receive Christ, let me ask you to come forward this morning. We have people that will pray with you.

We also looked at Joseph and Nicodemus. They were secret followers. But something happened at the cross. They had a coming-out party. They saw what happened to Jesus and they decided to put both feet in. They decided to get off the fence. Are you on the fence? Do people at your work know that you are a disciple of Jesus? Do your neighbors know you are a follower of Jesus? Do you have one foot in the world and one foot in the church? God does not want you to be luke warm. He wants you to be sold out, on fire, following Him with your whole heart. God wants you off the fence. If that is you this morning, let me encourage you to take courage like Joseph. Come forward and make a commitment to follow Jesus whole-heartedly. Come forward now. We want to pray with you this morning.

Let’s pray.

Introduction (Luke 23:33-56)

Things of first importance: (1 Cor 15:1-4)

1. Christ died for our sins.
2. Christ was buried.
3. Jesus was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

1. Death of Christ**A. Scene One**

- They came to a place called _____, or the Skull. (Luke 23:33)
- “They” included _____ of Cyrene. (Luke 23:26, Mark 15:21, Rom 16:13, Acts 11:20-21)
- “They” include a large _____ of people and some women. (Luke 23:27)
- “They” included the _____. (Pro 18:18, Luke 23:34-37, John 19:20-22)
- “They” also included the _____. (Luke 23:35b)
- “They” also included the two _____. (Luke 23:33-43, Phil 1:21-23)

B. Scene Two (Mark 15:25, Luke 23:44-45, Matt 27:45-46)

- At the _____ hour, they crucified Jesus.
- At the _____ hour, darkness fell. (Luke 23:44-45)
- At the crucifixion, the fury and burning anger of the Lord for our _____ was put on Jesus. (Is 13:9-13, Joel 2:1-2, Matt 25:30, Matt 22:13, 1 John 2:2)
- At the _____ hour, the veil of the temple was torn in two. (Luke 23:45, 1 Kings 6:2, Mark 15:38)
- The veil separated sinful man from the _____ of God. (Heb 9:2, 10:19-20)
- At about the _____ hour, Jesus cried out with a _____ voice, and breathed His last. (Luke 23:46, John 10:18)

2. Burial of Christ (Luke 23:50-56, Mark 15:43-45)

- Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but a _____ one. (John 19:8)
- Nicodemus was searching for the _____. (John 3:1-2, 19:39-40)
- Joseph and Nicodemus took Jesus down and _____ Him. (Luke 23:53)

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