

Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws

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Chapter 6 Discussion

Crucified with the Outlaws (pgs. 109-136)

Biblical Foundations Luke 23-24

Opening Prayer

Holy and loving God, as we finish our study of Luke by again standing in awe before your Son's cross and empty tomb, fill us from above with the power of your Holy Spirit, that we may more fully offer and entrust ourselves to you, following the example and for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Three "Last Words" from the Cross in Luke

The Gospels record seven statements from Jesus as he hung on the cross. The three statements Luke records do not appear in any other Gospel. They are Luke's way of helping us understand the significance of Jesus' death on the cross.

Read Luke 23:32-43

- What does Jesus' prayer in verse 34 show about him and the meaning of his death?
- At his crucifixion, Jesus models his own teaching (Luke 6:27-28).
 - Why does Jesus teach his followers to pray for those who cause us harm?
 - When and how do you pray for those who mistreat you?
 - How does doing so make you feel, and what does it lead you to do?
- "We are part of that 'them,'" writes Hamilton (Luke, pg. 125). Jesus came to lift up the lowly, and that includes you and me and all people in the lowliness of our sin and need for forgiveness.
 - How does or how could hearing Jesus' prayer as a prayer *for you* help you when you feel guilt for past sin?
 - How does or how could it shape your present action?
- Hamilton tells the story of Carol Hannah extending forgiveness to Justin Seabon.
 - When and how have you experienced or witnessed the power of forgiveness to lift people up from guilt and bitterness?
- Why does one of the men crucified next to Jesus insult him?
- Why does the other man being crucified respond as he does?

- Which of these two men, if either, do you identify with more, and why (or why not)?
- The man who asked Jesus to remember him was a violent criminal, Hamilton reminds us. But in that moment, Jesus assured him he would join Jesus in paradise. What does Jesus' response to this man show about Jesus and the meaning of his death?
- Hamilton notes that Jesus' prayer in verse 46 quotes Psalm 31.

Read Psalm 31

- Why do you think Jesus thought of this psalm as he died?
- How, if at all, does reading the full psalm increase your understanding of Jesus' death?
- "In your darkest moment, in the midst of the pain, uncertain precisely what will happen next, as the crowd insults him, as his enemies gloat over him, as his body fails him, Jesus prays, "*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*" (Luke, pg. 131)
- When if ever have you experienced darkness so deep it seemed to have the final word?
- Were you able to entrust yourself to God in that moment? If so, how?

The Cosmic Rhythm of Crucifixion and Resurrection

Read Luke 24:1-12

- Why do the women who go to Jesus' tomb react as they do when they find it empty?
- How do they react to the announcement of Jesus' resurrection?
- Why do the apostles react to the women's story as they do?
- With which of these reactions, if any, do you most identify, and why?
- Why do you think the risen Jesus doesn't appear to the women who visit his tomb in Luke, as he does in Matthew (Matthew 28:8-10), or to Mary Magdalene in John (John 20:11-18)?
- How might this detail help Luke develop the special themes and emphases of his Gospel?
- The two men who appear at Jesus' tomb ask the women, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" (Verse 5)

- When, if ever, have you looked-for life in the wrong places?
- What happened?
- How do churches and society look for life in the places where life cannot be found?
- “We all live, at points, a crucified life,” writes Hamilton (Luke, pg. 142).
- What does he mean?
- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What do Jesus’ words in Luke 9:23-25 tell us about what it means for his disciples to live crucified lives?
- When is it appropriate for Christians to seek and avoid suffering and when, if ever, is it not?
- Hamilton shares that he is often asked how belief in God is possible in the face of the terrible suffering and tragedies that happen in the world.
 - When, if ever, have you asked this or a similar question yourself?
 - How would you respond to someone who asked you this question today?
- Hamilton mentions several metaphors of images the New Testament uses to explain the meaning of Jesus’ death: a ransom to buy our freedom, a sacrifice to procure our forgiveness, a punishment taken in our place, a picture of the selfless love to which God calls us all, a defeat over the cosmic powers of sin and evil.
 - Which of these metaphors or images appeals most to you, and why?
 - Why doesn’t the New Testament explain the meaning of Jesus’ death in a single and consistent way?
- “In Jesus’ death and resurrection,” writes Hamilton, “light conquers darkness, love vanquishes hate, and life defeats death. The death and resurrection of Jesus shows us that these powers of darkness and evil, sin, sickness, tragedy, and death will ultimately be defeated” (Luke, pg. 147).
 - When and how, if ever, have you witnessed this cosmic rhythm for yourself?

Before we depart...

Let us read aloud a passage from our book (Pg. 148)

Closing our Session

We thank you God, for the witness of your servant Luke, whose carefully ordered account of our Lord's birth, ministry, death, and resurrection challenges us to respond in greater faithfulness, and encourages us to a greater trust and hope in you. May the ancient words we have read and on which we have reflected become and remain, by your spirit, fresh and living words, burning in our hearts, that we may witness, as Luke did, to the power and love of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.