

Luke 23

If you were not here last week, I will say again today that I don't want to overwhelm you, but we are going to read through the entirety of chapter 23 this morning...and we will cover 24 next week. Why are we covering so much ground?

1. We move from Jesus' pointed teaching into narrative...the story is told of Jesus death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. I don't believe a narrative needs as much explanation as pointed teachings.
2. Most of us are very familiar with the story line. So, we will walk through it quickly and then point out a few applications at the end.
3. I know it is a lengthy chapter to read, but I want to remind you that what we read, is far more important than what I say. This is God's Word. We should stay engaged with it!

I have broken the text into 8 sections to help us see the different key players in this chapter.

1. Pilate

23:1 Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say." 4 Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." 5 But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place." 6 When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. 7 And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.

1. They started out accusing Jesus of things they thought might catch Pilate's attention: misleading "our" nation, forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar.
2. When that didn't work, they told the real reason they were accusing Him: he stirs up the people with his teaching!

2. Herod

8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. 9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. 11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.

1. Herod was happy just for a moment, because the Jesus he had heard about was finally before him.
2. He was hoping to see some sort of miracle or sign...something impressive and entertaining.
3. He was greatly disappointed...so he turned on Jesus mocking Him, shaming Him, and sending Him back to Pilate
4. Herod and Pilate, old enemies, became friends that day. Jesus has a way of making enemies friends...that's just how much he is despised

3. The Jews

13 Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. 15 No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. 16 Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." 17 [Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.] 18 But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" 19 (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.) 20 Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, 21 but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" 22 And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him." 23 But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail.

4. Barabbas

24 And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. 25 And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.

5. Simon of Cyrene and the Daughters of Jerusalem

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.

27 And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him. 28 But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping 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 tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

6. Common Criminals

32 Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him.

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. 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."

7. A Centurion

44 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.

8. Joseph

50 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.

In the midst of all these different people we have met, the most important person we need to see in this text, might not be so obvious at first glance. But, He shows up in power and in judgment.

1. We see here in this chapter Almighty God pour out His wrath on sin as we see Jesus tried, mistreated, and crucified.
2. God's judgement and wrath is exactly what is happening on the cross.
 - a. Matthew 26:39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me
 - b. Matthew 26:42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.
 - c. The cup Jesus is not wanting to drink is the cup of God's wrath
3. Revelation 14:9-10 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

What do we know about the wrath of God? It is something we don't talk much about.

I. God's Wrath is Frightful

Consider how dreadful the judgments of God are in this world, in their little tastes

1. Hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, forest fires, floods, famines, sicknesses...all are a result of sin and are just a taste of His wrath.
2. Can you imagine how dreadful the full wrath of God must be
3. John Owen wrote, *When a few drops or little sprinkling of wrath is so distressing and overbearing to the soul, how must it be when God opens the flood-gates, and lets the mighty deluge of his*

wrath come pouring down upon men's guilty heads, and brings in all his waves and billows upon their souls!

4. His full wrath is frightful.

II. God's Wrath is Full

God's Wrath is full. Jonathan Edwards said,

1. It will be poured out upon the body: The body, which was so tender that it could not bear heat or cold, shall be tormented in the winepress of God's wrath.
2. Those eyes which before could behold beautiful objects, shall be tormented with the sight of devils.
3. The ears, which before were delighted with music, shall be tormented with the hideous shrieks of the damned.
4. The wrath of God shall seize upon the soul, the mind, the will, and emotions of a reprobate.
 - a. The memory will be tormented to remember what means of grace have been abused.
 - b. The conscience will be tormented with self-accusations.
5. There is not one part of our being that will be free from the wrath of God!

III. God's wrath is Forceful

There is no escaping it

1. Rev 14:19-20 *So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.*

2. There is no escaping the wrath of God
 - a. We may oppose God's ways, but not his wrath.
 - b. What are you going to do?
 1. Avoid aging?
 2. Avoid sickness?
 3. Avoid death?
 - c. No you will die! You will stand before God. And you will face his wrath.

3. Rev 20:11-13 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them*

4. God's wrath is forceful

IV. God's wrath is Final

The wrath of God is eternal. It never ever ends

1. In all the pains of this life we can hope for relief: The suffering will not continue forever
2. There will be no such relief under the full wrath of God

3. Rev 14:9-11 *And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."*

Now that we have a little understanding about the wrath of God, we need to go back to Luke 23 and see that this wrath is evident in our text: specifically in verse 44.

44 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

1. There was darkness over the whole land.
 - a. We're not talking about a few clouds rolling across in front of the sun.
 - b. We're talking about pitch black darkness: darkness that can be felt, and darkness at the 6th hour: mid-day, high noon, until 3 p.m.
2. Jesus felt the full weight of that wrath...the onlookers experienced the terrible side-effects and it was traumatizing.
3. Imagine 3 hours of the judgment of God being poured out. Imagine the thoughts of...
 - a. Peter for denying him right after professing him
 - b. Pilate for crucifying him even though he had been warned by his wife
 - c. The disciples for deserting him in his time of need
 - d. The soldiers for mocking and beating, and spitting, and stripping, and gambling, and crucifying
 - e. The Jews for plotting against him and turning him over to the Romans
 - f. Barabbas who should have been hanging there that day.
4. The darkness is overtaking us! God's wrath is coming for us...No, no, no...it is coming for Jesus.
 - a. The wrath of God is being poured out on His Son!
 - b. Isa 53:10 *Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;*
 - c. He gives His Son hell that should have been given to all of them...and all of us.
 - d. And His sacrifice satisfied the Father's wrath!

When the Lord Jesus Christ offered up Himself a sacrifice unto God the Father, and had our sins laid upon Him, He did give more perfect satisfaction unto Divine justice for our sins than if you, and all of us had been damned in hell unto all eternity. For a creditor is more satisfied if his debt be paid him all down at once, than if it be paid by the week. William Bridge

Listen to me dear friend...you might have stolen from Jesus and betrayed Him like Judas, denied him like Peter, condemned him like Pilate, deserted him like the disciples, mocked him like the soldiers, or just plain ignored him like barabbas...you might be the chief of sinners worthy of the wrath of God here today...but listen...

1. The wrath that you deserve...can be taken by Jesus!

2. Romans 5:9 *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*

3. Rom 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Calvary is not just negative though...there is a positive as well.

1. *And the veil of the temple was torn in two.*

2. 2 Corinthians 5:21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

4. All the wrath of God goes on Christ and the way is open for us to approach, pursue, and know God.

5. Heb 4:16 *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*