

Refuge City Church — April 15, 2022
Good Friday: “Can you save yourself?” [Luke 23]

Introduction

- Summary: Triumphal Entry — Betrayal & Arrest of Jesus [Luke 21-22]
 - [After his entry] **Luke 19:47-48**, “And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were *seeking to destroy him*, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.”
 - Jesus continued to preach the gospel, and teach the people in the ways of the Lord.
 - He spoke to His death, but also to His resurrection.
 - He spoke to the signs of the end times, yet still provided hope that He would return again.
- As we spoke to last night, He spent His final moments with His disciples at the Passover dinner, ushering in a New Covenant.
 - Jesus identifies Judas as His betrayer, and prophesies that Peter will deny Him 3 times.
- In so doing, Jesus declares to His disciples that the time had come for everything to be fulfilled.
 - **Luke 22:37**, “For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ [Isaiah 53:12] For what is written about me has its fulfillment.”
 - He went out to the Mount of Olives to pray.
 - While praying, Judas and a crowd of soldiers sought Him out to arrest Him.
 - “Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance.” **[Luke 22:54]**
 - It’s at this initial trial that Peter fulfills Jesus prophetic word, and denies Him 3 times.
 - **Luke 22:70-71**, “So they all said, ‘Are you the Son of God, then?’ And he said to them, ‘You say that I am.’ Then they said, ‘What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.’”
 - So the council sent Jesus to Pilate, and according to **John 18:31**, “Pilate said to them, ‘Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.’ The Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.’ This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.”
 - No matter the circumstance, God is sovereign over all things! Even the things we believe detrimental to our way of life.

Luke 23: Jesus crucified. How does this save us?

- We have to be careful not to get caught up in the details of the crucifixion, and forget the ‘why’.
 - Death by crucifixion was the most severe, humiliating way an individual could be put to death; even by today’s standards.

- Yet, by Dr. Luke's account, he doesn't focus on the crown of thorns, nails, whipping, or multiple beatings Jesus endured.
- He focuses on the compassion and forgiveness of our Suffering Savior, our Sacrificial Lamb.
- **FOCUS:** The only way a sin-filled humanity could be saved was by and through the death of a sinless man.
 - If humanity could save itself, there would be no need for God **[Sin + Sin does not equate to cleanliness]**
- Consider this line of thought through the Israelite experience:
 - During the original Passover in Egypt **[Exodus 12]**, the 'unblemished' lamb was to be slaughtered to save people from the wrath of God's judgment.
 - **[Exodus 14]** Through one man's obedience, the people are saved from the Egyptian army to cross over from certain death and slavery to life and freedom.
 - When sin entered the camp and the people grumbled against God, their sin led to death by snake bites **[Numbers 21]**.
 - God instructed Moses to construct a bronze serpent on a pole to be lifted up, so when the people looked at it in faith, they would be healed.
 - **John 3:14-15**, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."
 - Put this context with John 3:16!!
 - **Mark 15:39**, "And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God!'"
 - **[Exodus 17]** What did the rock do to deserve to split in two? Nothing! Yet it was struck to give the people water to live.
 - **John 7:37-38**, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"
 - **John 19:33-34**, "But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."
- Jesus did not die a torturous death to simply give you a "get out of hell free" card.
 - His death forgives your sins. It provides you justification **[just as if you never sinned]**
 - His death, His blood washes you clean!
 - **Romans 5:8-9**, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."
 - This is why Paul the Apostle would proclaim, "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his

perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.” [1 Timothy 1:12-16]

- **Us:** blasphemer, persecutor, insolent opponent, ignorant, unbelief, sinner.
- **God:** strength, mercy, faith, love, salvation, patience, life.

Luke 23:18-25 — Why we pray that God’s will be done?

“But they all cried out together, ‘Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas’— a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, but they kept shouting, ‘Crucify, crucify him!’ A third time he said to them, ‘Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.’ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.”

- Man’s will, in it’s raw nature, leads to anger & hostility [Chief Priests and Pharisees]
- It desires insurrection & murderous ways, as opposed to peace and love [Barabbas]
- It seeks it’s own way, desiring protection of itself [Pilate]
- Self-will is dangerous, as it can lead to self-righteousness, with no sense of the need for God.
 - [Tower of Babel] **Genesis 11:6b**, “And the Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.’”
- At the trial of Jesus, sinful men coerced sinful man to put to death the only one who could save them from themselves.
 - Jesus came to seek and save the lost.
 - These Jewish people, and many today, seek to manipulate and destroy their only means of salvation.
- Why do we seek and pray God’s will be done? Our will leads to death.
 - But God’s will, committing His only Son death, grants us eternal life, if we so receive that free gift.

Luke 23:32-43 — This is what Jesus does!

“Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!’ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

- Jesus turns the object of sinful man's intentions into something 'good'.
 - It was anger, hostility, jealousy, pride, lies, and manipulation that put Jesus on the cross; even going to the length of mocking Him while He's dying.
 - From that place of death, Jesus presents love, mercy, and forgiveness.
- **Verses 35-39:** Again, those who sought to kill Jesus, mocked Him relentlessly, seeking a sign to prove that He was the Messiah.
 - **Matthew 27:42**, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him."
 - This is what religion dictates: "Prove to me that you're worthy!" "Do something spectacular to earn our favor!" "Do something for me. Satisfy me!"
- Yet in a single moment, one criminal [a sinner], deserving death, came to the realization of who Jesus is!
 - He confesses His sin. He doesn't ask for his charges to be dropped, but only for the grace and mercy of God to prevail.
 - This Is Salvation! Jesus came to provide.
- **Isaiah 53:4-6, 11**, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all... Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities."
- **2 Corinthians 5:21**, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
- **Luke 23:46**, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!**"
 - This is an absolutely beautiful statement.
 - **John 10:17-18**, "...I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again..."
 - Jesus, at this moment, chose to die. He laid down His life, so that we could live!

Conclusion

- **The Good News on this Good Friday.**
 - God's perfect plan was considered 'paradise'.
 - Man brought sin into the world and corrupted the plan, and separated ourselves from perfect glory in the presence of God.
 - But God... [John 3:16] sent His Son to close that gap, and bring us back into His presence, through His death on the cross.
 - We, like the criminal on the cross, dead in our sins, need to realize that without Christ, we are nothing, deserving to die in our sin.
 - In so doing, He welcomes us into Paradise once again!