



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Story of Innocence!

Luke 23:1-25

Message #69 of 70 – S864

Sermon given on October 6, 2019



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

A Story of Innocence!

Luke 23:1-25

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 23**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- Occasionally, I watch a show called Live PD
- Cameras riding along with police officers as they work
- One of the fascinating aspects of the show is how it displays human nature
- One thing I have noticed is that the police rarely pull over someone who is guilty – all seem shocked that the police pulled them over
- But then they do or say something suspicious and the officer discovers they aren't as innocent as they insist that they are
- One of the things that show has done for me is to help me to see just how difficult it is to be a police officer - They need our prayers
- There are many who believe that innocence is not getting caught
- True innocence is to not be guilty, to not have broken the law at all
- Just because you haven't gotten a speeding ticket, doesn't mean you are innocent of breaking the speed limits – maybe just lucky
- But what if you had to pay for every law or rule you have ever broken, even the ones you didn't know about?
- What if someone was keeping track of every wrong thing you have ever done or said, even the wrong things you were thinking about?
- Well, I have bad news – that is exactly what is happening
- Someday everyone will stand before Jesus and give an account for every wrong thing we have ever done, said, or thought
- But there is good news – we call it the gospel – more about that later
- Let's pray and then get into our text
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Story of Innocence!**

- In chapter 22 we looked at the Last Supper and Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Judas betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders and they arrested Him
- Peter follows those who have arrested Jesus and ends up in the courtyard of the High Priest
- A servant girl calls Peter out as one of Jesus' followers and he denies it three times just like Jesus told him he would
- In the morning Jesus is taken to the Sanhedrin, the religious authority of Israel where He is condemned to die because He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God
- But the Jews do not have the authority to execute Jesus because the Romans won't allow it
- **Luke 23:1**
- Pilate is the Roman governor over Israel
- His responsibility to keep the Jews under control
- He hasn't done that great of a job doing that
- He is at risk of offending the Roman emperor and losing everything
- **Luke 23:2**
- Most of the things they say are outright lies
- **Luke 23:3-4**
- Luke's account of Jesus before Pilate is briefer than others
- If you get a chance, read the other accounts – especially John's
- Pilate examines Jesus and finds no justification for executing Him
- This is the first of three times that Pilate tries to release Jesus
- But the Jews are determined
- **Luke 23:5-9**
- This Herod is the same man who had John the Baptist beheaded
- He was half-Jew and held a position of king of a portion of Israel, though he still was under the authority of the Romans
- Here is Jesus standing before Herod, other high officials of Herod's court, the chief priests and scribes – And He says nothing
- First, this is a fulfillment of **Isaiah 53:7**
He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

- But there is something else here – Herod wasn't interested to know who Jesus was – only interested in entertainment **Luke 16:15**

And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

- How lost must you be if God won't talk to you even to condemn you?
- Then things start getting more ugly

- **Luke 23:10-16**

- This is the second time Pilate tries to release Jesus
- To chastise means that He would be beaten with rods
- In Roman law that was sufficient punishment for most offences
- At some point during this process Pilate gets a message from his wife **Matthew 27:19**

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

- Pilate was trying to take advantage of an annual tradition so that he could release Jesus
- **Luke 23:17**
- The Romans would release a prisoner as an act of goodwill toward the people of Israel to pacify them

- Pilate knew they had arrested Jesus for false reasons **Mark 15:9-10**

But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

- Jesus was innocent – Pilate knew it and he knew that the Jews knew it too

- **Luke 23:18-25**

- Jesus was innocent – everyone seemed to know it and yet here He is condemned to die a horrible death on the cross
- Three times Pilate declared Jesus was innocent
- He unwittingly confirmed the theological truth declared by John the Baptist **John 1:29**

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

- For over fourteen hundred years the Jews had sacrificed millions of spotless, innocent lambs to atone for their sins

- Jesus was the fulfillment of what was symbolized by those millions of lambs
- In contrast, Barabbas was guilty – an insurrectionist and a murderer
- He deserved the punishment the Romans had planned for him
- He was condemned and there was no way for him to be saved
- Pilate offers Barabbas, an obviously guilty man as a contrast to Jesus, an obviously innocent man
- Barabbas was guilty and deserved his punishment
- Jesus was innocent and should have been released
- By rejecting Jesus and asking for Barabbas, the Jews are fulfilling God’s plan of salvation
- By being released from the punishment that he deserved Barabbas is a symbol of the substitutionary death of Christ
- Jesus took Barabbas’ place on the cross
- This is the gospel message – innocent Jesus died for the guilty
- Next week, Lord willing, we will look at the crucifixion of Christ
- But before we close this service, I want to look at the gospel
- What is it? Who needs it? What do you do with it?
- The gospel is a transaction between holy God and guilty mankind

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Just as Barabbas was undeserving of Christ’s sacrifice, all guilty people do not deserve to be saved by innocent Christ’s sacrifice
- But God loves us too much to leave us as guilty, condemned sinners
- Barabbas had been condemned – in a way he was already dead – just waiting for his execution

• So also, guilty people are already condemned **John 3:18**

He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- And just like Barabbas would have died guilty if Christ hadn’t taken his place – guilty people also need to be saved from the condemnation their guilt deserves
- And just as Barabbas was helpless to save himself, guilty people cannot save themselves

- Who needs the gospel? Only guilty people need the gospel!
- This is what keeps most people from accepting the gospel – they are not guilty – at least that is what they believe
- To be saved by the gospel, guilty people need to believe that they are guilty **Ephesians 2:8**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...

- We are saved by grace – that is God’s unmerited favor upon guilty people
- ‘saved through faith’ – must believe – believe what?
- Believe what God says about you **Ephesians 2:10**

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- You were created by God to bear His image out into the world – to be the object of His love – to worship and obey Him alone – to be like Him in all our ways
- But we have a problem **Romans 3:23**

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

- Only the guilty can be saved – must believe that you are guilty before God
- Must also believe that you need God to save you – as long as you think you can do something to save yourself; God will let you try **Romans 5:6**

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

- To be saved, believe you are guilty and believe that you need God to save you
- You must also believe in the means that God has chosen to save the guilty **John 14:6**

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

- If you believe there is any other way to be saved apart from Christ, you cannot be saved
- By the grace of God guilty people can be saved through faith – believing they are guilty before God – they need God to save them – only through Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross can they be saved
- And then once we have believed that something miraculous happens **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

- Turn to **Colossians 1**
- Before we conclude today, I would like to challenge you
- Have you believed the gospel? Have you really trusted in Jesus to save you?
- I ask that because there are people in churches all across this country and the world who imagine they are saved but are still guilty before God because they haven't really believed these things
- It is not enough to imagine that you are saved, you must know it!
- Listen to this prayer by the Apostle Paul
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you whether or not these things are being worked out in you
- **Colossians 1:9-14**
- **Pray!**