

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"JESUS ON TRIAL"

For individual study or discussion

Luke 23:1-12 depicts a courtroom scene where Jesus stands accused by the Sanhedrin before Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. **Jesus is on trial**, and against him the religious leaders are leveling false charges of sedition and royal pretension (v. 2). Up until this point, Jesus withstands torture at the hands of the high priest's soldiers (Luke 22:63-65), and in today's text, we see three additional aspects of Christ's suffering: his unwavering innocence, his dignified silence, and the cruel mockery he endured.

The Innocence of Jesus (vv. 1-5)

Luke 23:1-5 highlights the innocence of Jesus as he is brought before Pilate by the Jewish leaders. They accuse him of "*misleading our nation, forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king*" (v. 2). But after examination, Pilate declares to the chief priests and the crowds, "*I find no guilt in this man*" (v. 4). His pronouncement underscores the baseless nature of the accusations levied against Jesus, but that does not stop the religious leaders from relentlessly demanding the death penalty.

- To what extent were the false accusations a distortion of Jesus' teachings? How does this manipulation of truth for political gain reflect the broader spiritual battle against the Kingdom of God? (cf. Ephesians 6:10-20)
- Read John 18:33-40. How does Pilate's recognition of Jesus' innocence, juxtaposed with his subsequent action of appealing to the crowd, illuminate the nature of worldly power versus divine truth?

The Silence of Jesus (vv. 6-9)

The scene shifts to the silence of Jesus before Herod (vv. 6-9). "*Hoping to see some sign done by him,*" Herod peppers Jesus with questions. But he remains silent and refuses to engage with Herod's frivolous curiosity. Jesus' silence emphasizes the spiritual gravity of the situation over mere spectacle. The only way Jesus would get to the cross is if he remained silent. He is determined to do the will of his Father, for our sakes. Luke's narrative continues to echo Isaiah's theme of the *Suffering Servant*: "*Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace...He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth*" (Isaiah 53:5, 7).

- Theologian Herman Bavinck wrote, "*Under Pontius Pilate he made the good confession and in his guiltless and patient suffering left us an example, so that we should follow in his steps.*"¹ Read 1 Peter 2:21-23. How does Jesus' silence before Herod provide for us an example when we suffer unjustly?

The Mockery of Jesus (vv. 10-12)

Despite Jesus' silence and Pilate's initial declaration of innocence, Herod and his men treat Jesus with contempt. They mock him, arraying him in "*splendid clothing*" as a parody of royalty, before sending him back to Pilate. This act of derision, combined with the unlikely reconciliation of Herod and Pilate, illustrates the escalating injustice and absurdity of Jesus' treatment, as he is passed between rulers who, despite their prior enmity, find common ground in their rejection of him.

- As one academic suggests, "*One of the many things this story tells us is that Jesus was not brought down by atheism and anarchy. He was brought down by law and order allied with religion, which is always a deadly mix.*"² Read John 19:10-11 and 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. How do the interactions of Pilate, Herod, and the Jewish leaders with Jesus highlight the conflict between earthly powers and divine authority?

"The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man." – John Stott

DATE: March 09, 2025

SPEAKER: Aaron/Brian

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 23:1-12

RENEW: 31 Days of Prayer

DAY 26: Youth

PRAYER: Sovereign God, we praise you, Lord of the harvest, and thank you for showering us with resources to love the youth of this mountain. We pray for their minds – that they may develop a worldview shaped by both your Word and Spirit, so that they may walk in a manner worthy of you. We pray you would grant them sight to see their need for dependence on that same Word and Spirit, even when all around them shouts for independence. We pray for their hearts to please you, to rest in you, and to have the joy of you, Lord, as their strength. We pray they would have a deep sense of connection within the LMPC family while simultaneously embracing their unique *imago Dei* – the image of God stamped on them. As they are drawn into this Christ-centered community, may they be fully and palpably connected to you. Help them to seek out Christian community in whatever school setting you place them. We lift up the emotional and mental health of our students, and we pray that our community, as we glorify Christ, would offer protection from discouragement and isolation. In whatever "growing pains" you may bring into their lives, may they cling to you and recognize your presence with them. We pray for our youth leadership, that all would be refreshed by your Spirit and constantly renewed in love for students, even as we pray for meaningful partnerships with parents. We pray you would raise up leaders among our students and grant them skill to bear witness of you in their schools. Unify us all in your Spirit. Amen.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS
Lakeway Presbyterian Church,
church plant partner

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS
Viktar, supported national partner

¹ Bavinck, Herman. *Our Reasonable Faith: A Survey of Christian Doctrine*. 1977, Grand Rapids, MI. Baker Book House. 348-49

² Taylor, Barbara Brown. *Truth to Tell. Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter*. 2003, Waldon, NY. Plough Publishing House. 89