

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### “THE INNOCENT FOR THE GUILTY”

For individual study or discussion

As Jesus’ trial unfolds, Luke 23:13–25 presents it as completely unjust. Pilate capitulates to the cries of the crowd, despite knowing the innocence of Jesus, thus setting the stage for his crucifixion. The passage illuminates the moral and spiritual dilemma Pilate faces, the rejection of Jesus by the people, and the substitution for the innocent Savior of guilty Barabbas. As the innocent takes the place of the guilty, Luke’s story is pointing us to the even greater story of Christ’s substitutionary atonement on the cross for sinners.

#### The Dilemma of Pilate (vv. 13–16)

Facing a dilemma, Pilate summons the Sanhedrin to the praetorium, where he confronts their unjust accusations against Jesus (vv. 13–14). Despite his personal conviction of Jesus’ innocence, he is forced into a difficult decision as the religious leaders demand Christ’s execution. As one commentator states, *“The volume of voices made his decision. His reward was calm in Jerusalem and temporary approval of the Jewish leadership. He traded conviction for a bowl of Jewish stew. And every Lord’s Day is a day of infamy for Pilate, as thousands of Jesus’ people stand to confess their faith and declare that he ‘suffered under Pontius Pilate.’”*<sup>1</sup>

- Read Psalm 2. How does the psalm point to the hostility of the Jewish leaders and Roman rulers against Jesus? What is the psalmist’s warning to any who would oppose the Lord’s Anointed?

#### The Rejection of Jesus (vv. 18–23)

The crowd’s response is one of vehement rejection (vv. 18, 21). Their cries of *“Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”* demonstrate the depths of their animosity toward Jesus, as well as the manipulation of the crowds by blood thirsty chief priests and rulers. Pilate capitulates to the pressure from the crowd and hands Jesus over to them, showing his cowardice in the face of political pressure.

- Read Matthew 27:20–23 and Mark 15:11–15. What role did the Sanhedrin play in influencing Pilate’s decision regarding Jesus?

#### The Substitution for Barabbas (vv. 24–25)

In an attempt to satisfy the crowd’s bloodlust, Pilate offers them a choice: release Barabbas, *“who had been thrown in prison for insurrection and murder”* or Jesus. They choose Barabbas. It’s ironic that the false charge of sedition levied against Christ by the religious leaders (v. 2) is the same crime of the man whom they now demand to be set free. As one commentator points out: *“Luke means for us to identify in some sense with Barabbas who so embodies our plight as rebels deserving death and our need for saving. Jesus the innocent is delivered over to the punishment of death; while the guilty, deserving of death, is released and thus given new life. As Jesus’ condemnation leads to the release of a multitude of spiritual captives from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, so also his death sentence leads to the release of the physical captive Barabbas. It’s a foretaste of the grace that will be unleashed at the cross.”*<sup>2</sup>

- The name Barabbas means, *“the son of the father.”* Discuss the irony of his name. How does Barabbas represent all humanity? (cf. Romans 3:9–25a and Isaiah 53:5)
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. In what way does the substitution for Barabbas symbolize the larger narrative of the Gospel?

DATE: March 16, 2025

SPEAKER: Frank/Wil

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 23:13–25

### RENEW: 31 Days of Prayer

#### DAY 27: Adult Discipleship

**PRAYER:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we humbly petition you to make good on your glorious promise to complete the good work you have begun in the lives of your people. Would you teach us more of what it looks like to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? We desire to grow in your grace and experience the fruit of abiding deeply in you. We confess that the distractions of this life often capture our attention, and we neglect the very means of grace that you have given to us – the Scriptures, prayer, the sacraments, fellowship, and serving. Forgive us and help us to return to you as our source of joy, contentment, rest, pleasure, and intimacy. Remind us that you have given us everything we need for life and godliness. Holy Spirit, transform our wandering hearts, that we might invest more in the eternal things of your Kingdom than the temporal things of this world. Fill us with abundant strength to engage in the daily battle against our flesh, the world, and the devil. Grant us perseverance as we seek to grow in the likeness of Christ. As iron sharpens iron, strengthen your body here at LMPC to spur one another on to love and good deeds. Your Son, our Savior said, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...”* Lord Christ, grant us boldness to wisely and winsomely proclaim your Gospel in the lives of those you put before us. We long to be formed into a family of faithful disciples carrying out your mission for the glory of your great name. These things we ask in the name of our righteous elder brother, Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

PCA Administrative

Committee, denominational partner

#### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Annettee & Tim Gulick,

supported missionary partners

<sup>1</sup>Davis, Dale R. *Luke: On the Road to Jerusalem*. 2021, Ross-shire, Scotland. Christian Focus Publications. 202

<sup>2</sup>Mathis, David. *Barabbas and Me*. April 5, 2012. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/barabbas-and-me>