

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

“THE AGONY OF JESUS”

For individual study or discussion

DATE: March 23, 2025

SPEAKER: Chad/John Mark

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 23:26-31

RENEW: 31 Days of Prayer

DAY 28: Senior Adults

PRAYER: Lord and King, we suspect that our perspective on renewal is a bit different than that of those who are older. Some of our elder brothers and sisters have gone, as you have instructed all of us, “to the house of mourning” many more times than either they or we would have expected. They have likely tasted the loss and stood by the sides of those who have lost family and friends to death more times than we have. We pray that they, O Lord, will heed your counsel and “take this to heart.” As life’s limits and losses become a more vivid reality to these more mature servants, we ask that you make your refreshing, reviving, and renewing grace far more defining of their lives than the losses of this fallen world. Savior, please settle their hearts and minds restfully in this foundational truth; there is simply no other person, no practice, and no principle that can even vaguely compare, in any help they might render, to knowing and trusting you. Help them to “cast all of their anxiety upon you because you care for them.” For older saints, renewal and revival are not an idealistic option. Rather renewal is a life and death matter. Mediocre Christian game-playing and superficial spirituality are hardly potent enough to help one face the pains of life, let alone the end of life. Jesus, hear our cry! Renew! Remake! Revive! Reshape the older men and women of our fellowship, and grant them robust and repentant faith that pulses with the vitality of life in Christ! Come, Holy Spirit, and make them into “normal,” not “nominal” Christians. Hear our cry, O Lord. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

House of Refuge, supported partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Beth and Dal, supported missionary partners

In Luke's depiction of Jesus' journey to the cross, Christ's innocence stands in stark contrast to his betrayal and unjust condemnation. As Luke 23:26-31 unfolds, the **agony of Jesus** is palpable as he stumbles under the weight of the cross. In this passage, Luke calls attention to both Christ's physical suffering and his final prophetic warning. As we are confronted by the gravity of Jesus' words, his warning remains a profound question for each of us: *“If the innocent Jesus suffered thus, what will be the fate of the guilty?”*¹

The Imposed Burden (v. 26)

It was customary for criminals to carry their own crosses. But badly beaten and severely scourged, Jesus simply does not have the strength to make the journey. Having traveled a long distance from Cyrene to Jerusalem for Passover, suddenly Simon is pulled from the crowd by Roman soldiers and forced to carry the cross for the suffering Savior. Most commentators agree that the imposed burden on Simon that day more than likely changed his life, and he became a follower of Christ.²

- The experience of carrying Jesus' cross must have been life-altering for Simon. Read Mark 15:21 and Romans 16:13. What do these passages tell us about Simon's family? What could they tell us about Simon?
- Even as the Father prepares to pour out his wrath upon the cross, how does the Father show tenderness toward his Son as he struggles toward the cross?
- Pastor and theologian John Stott wrote, *“Every Christian is both a Simon of Cyrene and a Barabbas. Like Barabbas we escape the cross, for Christ died in our place. Like Simon of Cyrene we carry the cross, for he calls us to take it up and follow him.”*³ How does Simon's carrying the cross underscore Christ's teaching that in order to be his disciple, we must first take up our cross and follow him? (Luke 9:23-27)

The Impending Judgment (vv. 27-31)

No gospel except Luke records Jesus' final warning of impending judgment. As Christ stumbles to the cross in agonizing pain, he shows concern for those in the crowd, specifically the women. Compassionately, he redirects their weeping to an even greater urgency: failure to grasp their own peril. He concludes his admonition of the approaching judgment on Jerusalem with a proverb, *“For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”* (v. 31). As pastor and theologian Kevin DeYoung summarizes, *“In essence, it means: ‘If Jesus is not spared the cruelty of the cross, how will the nation of Israel escape divine judgment?’ Don't cry for the Son of Man doing the Father's will. Cry for those who will face God's wrath if they do not repent.”*⁴

- How does Jesus' warning in this passage connect to the prophecies of Hosea 10:8 and Revelation 6:16 and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD?
- Read Luke 11:49-51; 13:6-9; 13:34-35; 19:41-44; 20:16; 21:20-24. What are some of the sins of the people of Jerusalem that led to their judgment?
- Read Hebrews 2:1-4. Even if you are trusting in the grace and love of Jesus, why is it important to heed Jesus' warnings of divine judgment?

¹⁻² Morris, Leon. *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*. 1988, Grand Rapids, MI. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 355

³ Stott, John. *The Cross of Christ*. 2006, Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity Press. 329

⁴ DeYoung, Kevin. *Do Not Weep for Jesus*. March 25, 2016. TGC.org. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/do-not-weep-for-jesus/>