HOMEWORK: Read Luke chapters 23 & 24

**Main Point**

Jesus died on the cross for sinful mankind but was victoriously resurrected three days later.

Read Luke 23:1-25.

* **Why do you think the crowd selected Barabbas to be freed over Jesus?**
* **How is Barabbas representative of all who have put their faith in Christ?**

In order to placate the Sanhedrin, Pilate was willing to have Jesus severely whipped and set free. It was his custom to release a prisoner in honor of Passover (Jn 18:39). However, the crowd demanded that a dangerous criminal named Barabbas be released instead. Pilate tried two more times to release Jesus, finding no valid basis for the death penalty. But he was repeatedly shouted down by a chorus of crucify Him. Finally, Pilate caved in to the crowd's demand, releasing Barabbas and handing Jesus over to be executed.

Read Luke 23:26-56.

* **What was the focus of the taunts directed at Jesus by the leaders who wanted Him crucified (vv. 35-38)?**
* **Why do you think Jesus did not respond to these taunts? Why did He not need to respond?**

As He did with the leaders, Jesus made no response to this abuse. He let His actions speak for themselves. Obedience to God requires an unselfish determination to follow through on God’s plan. The scoffing alluded to Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah. In His ministry, Jesus performed miracles that saved people from demons, illness, and death. In the view of the leaders, then, if He truly was God’s Messiah, the Chosen One, why did He not save Himself? They mocked what appeared to be true—the helplessness of Jesus. They looked for a Messiah who represented physical power. They failed to realize that they spoke the truth. Jesus was God’s Messiah! He could have rescued Himself from the cross. However, He refused to use His divine power for selfish reasons. Instead, Jesus chose to obey God’s call to a different purpose—to give His life in sacrifice.

Read Luke 23:32-49.

* **Considering verse 34, what do we communicate to the world about Jesus when they see us loving people who are difficult to love?**

From the cross Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.” Jesus’ prayer probably was a reference to those present who were responsible for this event—soldiers and religious leaders. They sinned out of ignorance. Yet Jesus held out hope for a spirit of repentance from them—this emphasized the supernatural nature of a God who could forgive even the most heinous sin.

Jesus’ desire to forgive those responsible for crucifying Him provides assurance that He will also forgive us. Those who crucified Jesus and mocked Him had no idea of the salvation He was providing for sinners. His prayer of forgiveness for His tormentors (v. 34) vividly characterizes this salvation. What greater demonstration of grace could there be than for Jesus to ask His Father to forgive those crucifying an innocent man? With this intercessory prayer on the cross, Jesus practiced what He preached when He told us to love our enemies. This is also an example of His model prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) in action.

Read Luke 24:1-35.

* **Why is it important to recognize that all of the Bible points to Jesus?**
* **What Old Testament passages might Jesus have used to teach about Himself? Read Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22:15-31; Isaiah 53; Zechariah 12:10; and Matthew 17:22-23 for a few examples.**

This text says Jesus taught through all the Scriptures the truth about Himself. The Bible tells one story, and Jesus is its main character. Throughout every book runs a thread pointing to Jesus and His work to redeem God’s people, drawing them back to Him.

Jesus might have started in Genesis and explained the parallel between the first sacrificial Lamb and the work He had come to do. He could have told of baby Moses hidden in the river, who would grow up to rescue his people. He could have reminded them of David, the king of God’s people and the man after God’s heart who defeated the giant who threatened destruction. David and other prophets explicitly foretold that a Messiah would arrive, and die, and come back to life. All through the pages of the Old Testament the stage had been set for Jesus to do exactly what He had just done.

Read Luke 24:36-53.

* **What responsibility did Jesus give to His followers? Was it optional?**
* **Why do we often have difficulty carrying out this assignment?**

Much of Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled in Jesus, but one great task still remained. Repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached to the entire world. True repentance speaks not only to turning from sin but also turning to Christ in faith. The preaching of the gospel would proceed in Jesus’ name, under and by His authority. His followers would be His representatives, living according to His teachings and bringing others to faith in Him.