

THE CROSS PERSPECTIVE | LUKE 23:26-43 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 9/20/2026

I. Carrying the Cross (26-31) | II. Crucified on the Cross (32-48) | III. Consideration at the Cross (39-43)

INTRO: What do YOU see when you look at the Cross? To the Romans, the cross was an instrument of execution. To the religious leaders, it appeared to be the **end of Jesus**. To the disciples, it initially looked like **everything had gone terribly wrong**. But from **GOD'S PERSPECTIVE**—the Cross was not an accident, a defeat, or the end of the story! – **The Cross was the very PURPOSE for which Jesus came!** Jesus said in (John 12:27), *“But for this purpose, I came to this hour.”* Everything in the life and ministry of Jesus has now brought us to **THIS MOMENT**. – Luke moves us all from the **Courtroom to Calvary**, where we will examine today's sermon: **THE CROSS PERSPECTIVE**.

I. CARRYING THE CROSS (26-31) —**READ:** Jesus has been scourged, beaten, and condemned. He is now being led through Jerusalem toward the place of execution. But along the way, Luke introduces us to an unexpected man...

A. A Compelled Man (26): *“...they laid hold of a certain man, Simon...”* – Simon was from **Cyrene**, a North African city with a significant Jewish population. He probably came to Jerusalem for Passover. He came expecting to **celebrate a feast—not carry a cross!**

1. Simon was **SEIZED** unexpectedly! – *“On him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.”* The Romans could compel anyone into service. Simon was simply passing by when suddenly **his plans**—and **his entire day**—were **interrupted**.

2. Simon was **COMPELLED** to follow Jesus! – Luke emphasizes that **Simon carried the cross “after Jesus.”** > **What a powerful picture of discipleship!** – Jesus had already declared in (Luke 9:23), *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”*

- Simon's interruption became an Invitation: **He literally took up the cross and followed Jesus.** – Sometimes, things that disrupt our plans may be **The Things** what draws us closer to Christ.

P/A: Following Jesus will sometimes take us places we **NEVER** planned to go! – We like Christianity *when it fits our schedule*—but **Discipleship Begins** when Jesus becomes more important than our comfort. > **You cannot follow a crucified Savior without eventually encountering a cross!**

B. A Compassionate Savior (27-28): A **Great Multitude** followed Jesus, including **Women** who were mourning and lamenting Him. – Yet remarkably, while Jesus is suffering—**He is thinking about THEM!** *“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”*

1. Jesus does not say, **“Look what they have done to Me!”** – Instead, **He warns them** about what was coming upon Jerusalem. – (tt. Luke 19:41-44) – *Even while carrying the Cross...*

2. **Jesus was concerned about LOST PEOPLE!** – This is consistent with His entire ministry. *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:10)

P/A: Pain often makes us turn Inward—but **Jesus remained Outwardly compassionate**. – One of the greatest demonstrations of spiritual maturity is **being able to care about others** even while hurting.

C. A Coming Judgment (29-31): **Jesus furthers His Prophetic Warning.** – Days were coming when conditions in Jerusalem would become so horrific that *people would consider those without children fortunate*. Jesus says: *“For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”* (31)

1. The imagery is powerful: **GREEN WOOD** represents something living and undeserving of burning. > **DRY WOOD** represents something ready for judgment! – In other words: **If innocent Jesus suffered like THIS—what would happen when judgment came upon guilty Jerusalem?**

2. There is a **YET an even greater judgment still** coming to all mankind, **(Heb 9:27) “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”**

P/A: The Cross reveals BOTH the seriousness of sin and the greatness of God's mercy. – If God gave His Son to save us from judgment—we **dare not treat salvation casually!**

SEGUE: Simon carried the Cross **BEHIND JESUS**... But **Simon could only carry it so far!** Because there was **ONE PART** of that Cross **ONLY JESUS COULD BEAR**. Simon could carry the **WOOD**... But **only Jesus could carry our SIN!** → **But now they REACH Calvary!** The cross is no longer being carried... **It is being Raised!** Now everyone must confront what is happening...

II. CRUCIFIED ON THE CROSS (23:32-38) — **READ:** Luke now brings us to the place called **CALVARY**. – The Greek word is *kranion*—meaning “**SKULL**.” – **At Calvary**, Luke mentions **THE CROSS PERSPECTIVE** *of many here*. – In **(vv.32-33)** he notes that **Jesus was crucified between two criminals...** between two guilty men > **The innocent** among the guilty > **The righteous** among sinners.

- Jesus is not merely crucified beside sinners... **He is crucified for sinners!** – *At Calvary...*

A. Jesus Forgave from the Cross (32-34): As Jesus is nailed to the Cross... **Luke's records Jesus' astonishing statement:** “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*” – **Think about WHO Jesus is praying for!** > **The soldiers** had beaten Him. > **The religious leaders** had rejected Him. > **The crowd** had demanded His crucifixion... And yet Jesus prayed: “**FATHER, FORGIVE THEM!**”

1. **This reveals the heart of Jesus toward sinners.** > He didn't call down judgment... **He instead PRAYED FOR MERCY!** – **(Isa 53:12) FORETOLD** that the Messiah would make “*intercession for the transgressors.*” > His prayer request wasn't merely fulfilling prophecy... **It revealed His CARE!**

2. **FORGIVENESS** was exactly **WHY** He went to the Cross! **(1 John 3:5) He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin!** – **The Cross makes forgiveness possible!**

- **P/A:** If Jesus could **forgive those who nailed Him to the Cross**—what right do **WE** have to hold tightly to bitterness? > Forgiven people should become **FORGIVING PEOPLE!**

B. Jesus was Mocked at the Cross (35-38): Luke describes several people surrounding Jesus: The rulers **sneered** > The soldiers **mocked** **(vv. 35-36)** – One criminal **blasphemed** **(39)**. – Their **RIDICULE** was basically the same: “**SAVE YOURSELF!** ...*He saved others; let Him save Himself...*” **Ironically**—they spoke more truth than they understood! > Their **Cross Perspective** allowed them **to witness the Gospel being accomplished** before their eyes.

1. **Jesus could NOT save Himself AND save us!** **If Jesus came down, ALL would remain condemned!**

2. Jesus operated on a **Whole Different Level** because **He was Empowered by** a **Whole Different Motive**: It wasn't the **NAILS** that kept Jesus there... **LOVE kept Him there!** – Jesus said in **(John 10:18)**, “*No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.*”

- The crowd thought His refusal to come down **denied His identity**—**but it confirmed it!**

3. Jesus' **Superscription was Accurate (38)**. The words written above Him were: **"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."** – Pilate wrote it as an accusation... but **God turned it into a proclamation!**

- The crowd looked at Jesus remaining on the cross and saw weakness. But Heaven looked on and saw obedience. (Phil 2:8) says: *"He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*
- **The Man on that Cross really IS the King!** – No golden throne > No royal robe > No earthly army. > **Instead, a Crown of Thorns and Blood-stained Cross!** – Yet through that Cross Jesus was accomplishing the greatest victory in history.

P/A: Everyone saw the same Jesus, but not everyone saw their Savior! – Jesus died in my place to forgive my sin, restore me to God, and change my eternity.

SEGUE: Luke NOW sharpens our Cross Perspective through two criminals...

III. CONSIDERATION AT THE CROSS (39-43) —**READ:** *Something changes within one criminal.* While one continues mocking Jesus, the other *begins to consider Him differently.* > Same Cross > Same Jesus > Same Opportunity... **but two different responses!**

A. One Criminal Continued in Rejection (39): He *"...blasphemed Him..."* – He said: *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."* – Notice what he wants: He wants Jesus to change his circumstances... He does not want Jesus to change his Heart. > He wants **Relief...** Not **Repentance!**

- **People STILL approach Jesus this way...** "Lord, get me out of trouble!" – God certainly cares about our circumstances... **but our Greatest Problem is deeper. Our greatest problem is SIN!**

P/A: **Do not Reduce Jesus to someone who simply fixes your problems!** Jesus came to do something far greater. **He came to SAVE US!** ... A changed situation is temporary... a **Changed Heart is Eternal!**

B. One Criminal Came to Recognition (40-41): The second criminal says: *"Do you not even fear God?"* – Then: *"We indeed justly..."* – He Recognizes: **God is Holy, he is Guilty, and Jesus is Innocent!** He says: *"This Man has done nothing wrong."*

- This is **REPENTANCE** beginning to form. – The Greek word *metanoia* carries the idea of: **a change of mind that results in a change of direction.** – **His PERSPECTIVE changed!** He stops defending himself... He stops blaming others... He admits: **"I deserve this."** **And suddenly he sees Jesus differently!** – This is **THE correct CROSS PERSPECTIVE!** – *People must learn that...*

P/A: **GRACE flows... when we stop defending ourselves!** – As long as I am *explaining my sin*, I am not confessing it. The Gospel becomes powerful when I can finally say: **"Lord, I am guilty... I need mercy!"**

C. ONLY One Criminal Called Upon the King (42-43): He says: *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."* **That is incredible faith!**

1. Look at what he **PERCEIVES:** Jesus is bleeding, dying and appears powerless. Yet the thief says: **"You have a kingdom."** → **He sees BEYOND the Cross... HE SEES A KING! (cf. Heb 11:1) "Faith..."**
2. He **CANNOT** see **Resurrection Sunday** > He cannot see **an Empty tomb** > He cannot see **Jesus Seated at the right hand of the Father...** **BUT HE BELIEVES!** – Once Again... **incredible faith!**

3. Notice HOW Jesus Responds to this Sinners Faith: ***“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in PARADISE.”*** {Greek: *paradeisos*} speaks of a garden—a place of blessed fellowship. –

- Notice Jesus' Promise: ***“Today”*** ...it's immediate; then: ***“You will be”*** ...it's certain; then, ***“With Me”*** ... it's Personal! > Jesus offers this same salvation to every repentant sinner who believes!

P/A: (Eph 2:8-9a), ***“By grace you have been saved through faith...not of works.”*** – This man had no time to EARN anything! No time to prove himself. He simply trusted Jesus's PROMISE of salvation!

- This thief shows us: **No one is too far gone for GOD'S SAVING GRACE!**
- But the other thief shows us: **You can be close to Jesus and STILL REJECT HIM!**
- Both were beside Him... Only one believed. Proximity doesn't save, Only Faith in Christ saves!

P/A: The CROSS becomes personal when I stop saying: ***“Jesus died for the world.”*** And begin saying: ***“Jesus died FOR ME!”*** – The Cross forces us to Recognize Substitution... i.e., **He took MY place!**

FINAL PERSPECTIVES to CONSIDER: Everybody in this text had to decide what the Cross meant:

- Simon saw a Cross to carry....
- The Women saw a Savior to mourn...
- The Rulers saw someone to mock...
- The Soldiers saw another criminal to execute...
- One Thief saw someone to reject... The other thief saw **A KING TO TRUST!**

These prompt us to CONSIDER: WHAT DO YOU SEE? **WHAT IS YOUR CROSS PERSPECTIVE?**

1. The CROSS declares something about **YOU**: YOUR SIN WAS SO SERIOUS THAT JESUS HAD TO DIE!
2. The CROSS declares something about **GOD**: HIS LOVE IS SO GREAT THAT JESUS WAS SENT TO DIE! (cf. John 3:16). – *This places all mankind at...*
3. **The CROSS ROAD**: Don't merely stand at a distance and admire the Cross... **COME TO THE CHRIST OF THE CROSS!** – (1 Cor 1:18) ***For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.***

If you have NEVER trusted Jesus—respond like **THE THIEF**: ***“Lord, remember me.”*** – You don't have to repair your entire life before coming. You don't have to earn forgiveness. You simply come guilty... and TRUST the INNOCENT ONE who died in your place!

And if you're a BELIEVER—remember **SIMON the CYRENE**. – Jesus still says: ***“Take up your cross daily, and follow Me.”*** Maybe you've been watching from a distance... **Keep Following Jesus!**

THE CROSS-PERSPECTIVE changes how we see EVERYTHING. > So when you look at CALVARY, don't simply see HOW Jesus died... **SEE WHY HE DIED!**

THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST (cf. Rom 5:8) — **THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD!**