

Luke 23:26-24:1-6

Mount Calvary

Image Church // Mountains Week 7

Intro

Happy Easter!

If you're a guest with us, we're so glad that you're here to celebrate Easter with us!

- I want to invite you to **StartingPoint** right after the gathering off to my right and your left, I would love to get the opportunity to meet you and take a few minutes to tell you just a little bit about who we are!

Alright, if you have your bibles, grab them and turn to Luke 23...

We've been in a series called **Mountains** over the last *six weeks*, where we've been looking at the different mountains in the Bible and what happened on them to help us see who God is and what He's done for us...

- Each Mountain we've looked at has been building to the one that we're going to be looking at today...
- And so if you're new here with us, you're jumping in at the end of our series, but it's the best part of our series...
- In fact, ***my hope is that the end of this series would be the beginning new life for you!***

Build the tension...

There was a show that recently came out called **1883** with *Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, Sam Elliot, and LaMonica Garrett*...

It's a show about what took place in the late 1800s here in America, representing the many people who sought new life ***in the American West in the 19th century...***

And what you have is a group of people from all walks of life. There's immigrants, cowboys, individuals, and families who all have their sights set on embarking on a new life in unsettled territories out west...

They had packed up whatever they could carry or whatever they could fit in a wagon, and they joined together to form a large caravan led by **Virgil** and **Thomas**, played by **Sam Elliot**, and **LaMonica Garrett**...

- Everyone who joined in on this caravan had high hopes and big expectations...
- They were filled with hope, excitement, and anticipation for what was to come...
- Each of them thought this was the answer for them to find the life they had always wanted and longed for...

The problem is many of them had no idea how hard this journey would be...

And you watch this raw and real journey of a group of people destined and determined for new life suffer and dwindle down little by little...

- Wagons break and get stuck... A man dies after being run over by a wagon trying to fix it...
- Crossing the rivers...
- The weather...
- Wild animals...
- Sickness...
- Raids and robbers...

And in the midst of all this, there's one determined family, **James and Margret Dutton**, played by **Tim McGraw and Faith Hill**, along with their two kids, **Elsa and John**...

- Their daughter, Elsa, almost 20, had been the most excited about the journey...
- And yet she's watched the heartache and gruesome reality of this journey unfold in front of her eyes...
- And yet she's continued to believe that this journey is going to end in a new and exciting life for her...

And then, around **episode 5 or 6**, there's this powerful moment where Elsa is with a Native American mom who's holding her baby, and Elsa asks to hold the baby, and the Native American woman says, *no, he's very sick*...

- And Elsa says *what's wrong with Him?*
- And the Native American woman says, *he's very sick, he's going to die*...
- And Elsa says, *no, no, no he's not, I'll take care of him, he's going to be ok*...
- And then the Native American woman looks at her and says: ***This is not your heaven***...

IOW: *the life you're looking for isn't found here*...

And what you see is that by the end of the show, what started as a large caravan was now down to just a few people...

- And tragically, Elsa, the one who was so hopeful of a new life, dies and never experienced the life she'd hoped out west and the few other that made it found that it wasn't the life they had dreamed they were beaten up and had to begin another struggle to establish their lives in this new place...

**For many of you, you're on a quest for new life, and you have your eyes set on something that you think will bring that for you...*

- Maybe it's personal or professional changes?
- Maybe it's physical or material things that you're set on?

- Maybe it's circumstantial changes?
- Maybe it's more financial income or stability?
- Maybe it's a degree that you're pursuing?
- Maybe it's a relationship that you want?

And you're looking, thinking, anticipating this experience of new life...

And yet the problem is that, like in **1883**, the journey is harder than you thought... And the ending will not be what you expect...

Because the reality is that none of the things that you're after this morning can give you what you ultimately want and what you ultimately need...

The world tells us that the life we dream of is found in what we can obtain, but the bible shows us a kind of new life that's found in what's been obtained for you!

Luke 23:26-49

Pick up in Verse 26:

²⁶ As they led him [Jesus] away, they seized Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, and laid the cross on him to carry behind Jesus.

This is the moment when Jesus is heading up **Mount Calvary** to be crucified...

- He has been betrayed...
- He has been beaten...
- He's been mocked...
 - A crown of thorns pressed down on His head!

And yet he's also **been declared innocent**...

- Just before this, Jesus went on trial, and there was no fault found in Him...
- No one could bring an accusation against Him...

- He's actually brought out in front of the people because of His innocence because the governor wanted nothing to do with him... (freeing a prisoner happens once a year from Rome).
- And the people yelled for Jesus to be crucified in exchange for a man named **Barabas**...
- **Jesus was innocent and had to be swapped out with a guilty man for this to move forward...**

And so Jesus, who's innocent, is on His way to die a criminal's death on a cross... We're going to see **why** in just a little bit...

Now, I know some of you are like, hold on, I thought we were going to talk about the resurrection...

Here's the thing: we can't talk about the beauty of the resurrection if we don't understand the brutality of the crucifixion...

Jump to verse Verse 32:

³² Two others—criminals—were also led away to be executed with him. ³³ When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left.

Jesus, barely recognizable and barely able to make it up to Mount Calvary because He's been beaten so much...

He's laid on a rugged cross... Arms stretched out... 5-inch nails hammered into each of His wrists... And a 5-7 inch nail through both of His feet...

The cross would be lifted up where all of His weight would rest on those three nails...

- And to breathe, He would have to pull up on His hands and push up on His feet...

And after He's lifted up and hung between 2 criminals, and here's Jesus' response...

³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing."

What Jesus does right here is wild... *He's interceding for His enemies!*

As He's hanging on the cross, struggling to breathe, He aims His **love** at the very ones who are responsible for killing Him...

- His desire is for them to experience the **grace** and **mercy** that his death would accomplish for them!

Here's what I want you to understand in this... ***There's nobody that's so far gone that they don't have access to the grace of God!***

- And there's nothing that you've done that the grace of God isn't sufficient to cover... If grace is an option for the people who physically put Jesus on the cross, then grace is an option for you!

Let's keep reading...

And they divided his clothes and cast lots.

³⁵ The people stood watching, and even the leaders were scoffing: "He saved others; let him save himself if this is God's Messiah, the Chosen One!" ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him. They came offering him sour wine ³⁷ and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!"

³⁸ An inscription was above him: This Is the King of the Jews.

³⁹ Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

⁴⁰ But the other answered, rebuking him: "Don't you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Jesus is hanging between two criminals... With **two very different perspectives**...

The **first criminal** taunts Jesus in disbelief and then sarcastically says, *If you're really who you say you are, save yourself and us!*

- There's some of you here this morning with that same mentality... You just don't believe in this whole Jesus thing...
- Maybe you've used similar sarcasm...
 - If Jesus is real, then why doesn't He show up for me in the way I want Him to?
 - Why doesn't He prove it by doing something for me?!?

The problem is that you want Jesus to come to you on your own terms...

- Here's the thing though, if Jesus came to you on your terms, that would make you God, and Jesus would be just revolving around you...
- This is the battle of the heart... At our core, we want to be the lord of our lives...
 - ***We don't want to see Jesus for who he is because it means that we have to come to grips with the reality of who we are...***
- That we are sinners in need of a Savior!

Then we have the **second criminal**, but this man has a different perspective...

- He sees his sin, and he owns his sin...
- And he turns in **faith** to the one hanging on the cross who is without sin...
- And **seeing Jesus for who He is**, he says, *Remember me when you come into your Kingdom...*

And Jesus response?!? **Salvation granted!** *Today, you will be with me in paradise!*

- What we get a picture of is the power of **raw and simple faith**...

Illustration: *Alistair Begg... talks about how amazing this is!*

- He said He would love to meet this guy in heaven one day to ask him, *how did all this shake out for you?!?*
- You never went to church, you were never in a Bible study, you didn't get baptized, and yet, you made it!!
- How did you make it?!?

I mean, can you imagine how this played out in heaven?!?

The angel at the gate looks at this guy when he shows up in heaven, and the angels are like *what are you doing here?!?*

- And the guy's like, *I don't know?!?*
- And the angel says *what do you mean you don't know?!?*
- And he says, *Well, cuz I don't know?*
- And the angel says *what!?* And then He says go and *get the supervisor angel...* Chaotic moment in heaven here, a traffic jam!
- And the Supervisor angel says, ok, let me ask you a few questions:
 - *OK, are you clear on the doctrine of justification?*
 - And the man says: *Never heard of it in my life!*
 - *Well, what about the doctrine of scripture?*
 - Nothing...
 - *What about atonement do you understand that?!?*
 - The guys just stand there staring at the angle...
- Frustrated, *the angle asks, Ok, then on what basis are you here?!?*
- ***The man on the middle cross said I could come!***¹

Here's the thing, there's only one answer that gets you into Heaven, and it's **the man on the middle cross said I could come!**

It's not about how good you are, how religious you are, or how many good deeds you've done... None of that!

¹ Allistair Begg, *The man on the middle cross*.

What we see is that the criminal's entry into **Heaven isn't based on his works**... *The criminal didn't have any- he couldn't have any!*

- It's based on simple faith in Jesus, the man on the middle cross...

Listen to me, Jesus extends salvation to **anyone** who turns to Him in **faith**...

- It's never too late, and you're never too far gone!
- This criminal is an example of that- this guy has been sentenced to death!

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is patient... And He is willing that none should perish but all to come to repentance...*

The man on the middle cross is extending you an invitation this morning- *the question is, what will you do with it?*

And here's the thing for those of you who say you are a Christian...

- Let me let you in on a little something... The key to the Christian life is that you never get past the answer that **the man on the middle cross said I could come!**
- This is the answer that shapes you and the answer that sustains you...
 - It changes the way that you live and gives you hope in the midst of your failures!

Let's keep reading Verse 44:

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three, ⁴⁵ because the sun's light failed. The curtain of the sanctuary was split down the middle. ⁴⁶ And Jesus called out with a loud voice, "**Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit.**" Saying this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ When the centurion saw what happened, he began to glorify God, saying, "This man really was righteous!" ⁴⁸ All the crowds that had gathered for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, went home, striking their chests.

⁴⁹ But all who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Powerful series of events right here...

- A **centurion** (*name means he supervised 100 soldiers*) sees all that's taken place... After all that he's seen, he declares that Jesus really was the innocent Son of God (*Matt. 27:54, Mark 15:39*). And begins to worship God!
- **One of the ones who kills Jesus is one that validates Jesus for who He is...**
 - *Could you not have figured this out a day or so ago?!?!?*

Now Jesus is dead... There's an air of confusion, shock, disbelief and sadness... This doesn't make any sense- why would the innocent Son of God be killed?

Illustration: When my brother was little... Practice balls vs. real ones... My brother hit a hard ball through the neighbor's window...

- On one hand, proud of my brother for hitting a line drive, but frustrated he hit the wrong ball...
- My dad goes over there to make things right...
- He knocks on the door, my neighbor takes him to the room where my brother had smashed the window...
- My neighbor was **Hindu**. And turns out my brother had hit the ball through the window in his prayer room...
- And to make it worse, He was in there praying when it happened... *Bet he that was a divine moment!*
 - *Quiet and calm, incense, and then CRASH!*
- My dad cleans up the glass, looks at everything, and then gets his window replaced and paid for...

See, at the end of the day, someone had to pay for that broken window...

- The problem is that my brother didn't have the ability to... He had some toy cars and some change in his wallet...
 - *Dad's anyway!*

- My dad stepped in and took care of it all, even though he wasn't the one who did it...
- He stepped in and did all the work to fix it and pay for it...
- My brother contributed nothing. *How could he? He couldn't even have a conversation with the guy...*

That is a picture of what Jesus did for us... He stepped in when we couldn't, to do what we couldn't do for ourselves...

The reason Jesus went to the cross was to pay for our sin...

Sin is when you choose your way over God's way... The word for that is rebellion...

- This has been the pattern of humanity... And it's our problem today!

I think the challenge is we don't really see how bad this problem is...

- *Flesh out...*
- *We can't even follow our own rules...*

Appeal for the perfect justice of God...

- Need for payment...
- Righteous for the unrighteous...

Illustration: Playing in a golf tournament with Trey...

- His score gets written down... I have to remember that every hole esp. When I shank one in the woods... *Oh no! Thank goodness!*
- I can play horribly, but the score that goes down is His!

So God comes down to deal with sin... *But the story doesn't stop there...*

Luke 24:1-5

1 On the first day of the week [Sunday], very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared.

²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³They went in but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. ⁵So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground. "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" asked the men.

Verse 6: ⁶"He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, ⁷saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'"

The angel says remember, this is all part of the plan! All of this was for a purpose!

Jesus would come and be our **perfection** and take on our **punishment** in His death... **But He wouldn't stay dead He would bust out of the grave by His own power, proving that He is God and offering us new life in Him!**

- New life now and an incredible hope later...
- **2 Cor. 5:17**...
 - No longer sinner, but son or daughter... Future hope!
 - Part of God's family, One day, Jesus will make things new!

Some of you walked in like the folks of 1883 on a quest for a new life, if you can just get that new job, get that promotion, find the right relationship, sign that new client, and buy that new house...

- Then you will finally get what
- **This is not your heaven...**
- Everything else will ultimately let you down...
- The resurrection won't!

Jesus said in **John 10:10** *I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance... Appeal... (to the complacent...)*

- The gospel of Luke ends in Worship...

Conclusion [VAMP]

The resurrection changes everything...

Call to repent and believe... **Card... Pray**