



Luke 23:1-24 - Christ's humbling for us should cause us to live humbly.

Opening Discussion: Have you ever seen *The Passion of the Christ* or any other movie or play that depicted Christ's death and resurrection? What was your experience like? What struck you the most? What made you uncomfortable?

- His Kingship was questioned.
 - Luke 23:3 [3] And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." (ESV)
- His Kingship was mocked.
 - Luke 23:11 [11] And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. (ESV)
- His Kingship was punished.
 - Luke 23:16 [16] I will therefore punish and release him." (ESV)
- His Kingship was traded for preservation of the guilty.
 - Luke 23:25 [25] He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will. (ESV)
 - We are all born into the crowd that cancelled Jesus. That very crowd cried out "His blood be upon us and our children!" Ironically, that is exactly what is required to be saved.¹
 - We were also born as Barabbas, guilty criminals who have been offered the opportunity of exchange to freedom for the death of the innocent Savior.

Discussion Question: why are the crowd and Barabbas such poignant pictures of the Gospel? Explain in your own words.

¹ Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Matthew 27:25; Romans 5:12-14

- It is easy to see this attitude in the world, but it is important as believers that we see and observe that this attitude also arises in the fleshly struggles of believers until the day we die.
- We question his kingship.
 - Every single one of us is born with an authority issue.
 - This is very visible very early. (Illustration of my daughter at 2.)
 - Jeremiah 17:9-10 [9] The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? [10] “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” (ESV)
 - We are all born unbelievers who question his kingship, but the sad reality is that we become believers who still struggle not to question Christ’s kingship.
 - Hebrews 3:13-15 [13] But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. [14] For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. [15] As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” (ESV)
 - Sin is always a challenge against the authoritative position of Christ as King in our lives.

Devotional Question: Where is the biggest struggle with God’s authority in your life?

- We mock his request for allegiance.
 - Nobody is mocked more in culture than Jesus. Society uses his name as a curse word in frustration or exclamation. Think about it though, if he wasn’t significant, no one would be doing that! (I literally saw a man dressed like Jesus walking around at a heavy metal festival last week!) Nobody yells “Bob Marley!” when they hit their hand with a hammer.
 - Society is largely always working at casting off God’s authority because society is built of people who have authority issues with God!
 - One of the ways this is happening is the movement of school and sports taking over Wednesday nights and even moving in on Sundays as well. This has been an inch by inch shift over the last 2 decades. I was a Youth Pastor in

Florida about 20 years ago, and back then there was no homework or sports or after school programs on Wednesday nights because even the public school system wanted kids to be able to go to church. My how things have changed, not just in public schools but even in Christians schools. Why do we accept this without push back?

- Psalm 2:1–3 [1] Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? [2] The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, [3] “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” (ESV)
- Don’t think that God does not care about this shift, but also remember that sometimes God allows a culture to experience the result of erasing God from it’s culture.
- Galatians 6:7 [7] Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. (ESV)
- Believers, please remember that we can also struggle with an inch by inch loss of God’s authoritative presence in our lives. Let me just name a couple of ways we can see this in our church culture today (watch your toes):
- Mocking Christ’s request for allegiance can look like prioritizing societal obligations over scriptural mandates.
 - (When you prioritize anything over church, you actually communicate in honestly your true priority of allegiances. Sometimes you are right to do so, but often it is allegiance mis-alignment.)
- Mocking Christ’s request for allegiance can also look like choosing to easily discard your church family for a new family for the sake of avoiding conflict, guilt or relational investment.

Discussion: allowing space for disagreement, when do you feel it is okay to skip church or even leave it a church based on how you interpret Hebrews 10:25?

- **We punish him with hatred and rebellion.**
 - Psalm 14:1[1] The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. (ESV)

- Every act of deliberate rebellion against God is an attempt to live as though we have the authority to overrule the One who made us. We may not say with our mouths that God is unworthy of obedience, but our actions can declare it for us.
- There is a very clear character study about what this looks like in 1 Samuel 15 when Saul disobeyed God and kept back certain spoils of war and animals he wasn't supposed to keep. He justified his actions by offering them as burnt offerings. Samuel told Saul his rebellion was like witchcraft against God and that he would no longer be acknowledged as king of Israel by God.²
- We often convince ourselves that what we are doing is either good for God or at least good for us. One of the dangerous phrases we use today is "Giving myself permission". Example: "I'm giving myself permission to disconnect from all relationships in this season of my life because..." We have to be careful what we give ourselves permission to do because what we want to do might actually be an agenda of rebellion against God's authority in our heart.
- This is why it is important that we test our feelings in order to trust God, or we will test God's authority as we trust our feelings.³

Discussion Question: where do you see the greatest compromise and excuse making in the church in the "Bible Belt Culture"?

- **We do all this after he has already offered us an inheritance in His kingly family.**
 - Our inheritance as heirs of Christ is an oft repeated theme in the epistles. ⁴
 - **1 Peter 1:3-5 [3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living**

² 1 Samuel 15:20-23 [20] And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. [21] But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." [22] And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. [23] For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king." (ESV)

³ Jeremiah 17:9-10 [9] The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? [10] "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." (ESV)

⁴ Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 1:11-14; Colossians 1:12; Hebrews 9:15

hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (ESV)

- Jesus secured our inheritance in a glorious exchange of places. He took on our sin debt payment plan, and we were deemed in good standing before God!⁵ (Again, Barabbas is an incredible picture of this.)
- It is precisely the knowledge that we are loved and accepted and kept by God that makes it so temptingly easy to disrespect God.
 - Parents, you understand that no one will disrespect you more quickly than your own children. What do they have to lose?! They are your responsibility and they know you are legally bound to them and responsible for them. Your provision and care of them creates a sense of entitlement in them. And I'm speaking about this from the perspective of a healthy home, not even an unhealthy home. We do the same to God.
 - One of the dangers of the doctrines of Grace (and there are some dangers believe it or not) is the disregard for and abuse of God's grace. Grace, by nature of being gracious, will be abused. That's how we know it is indeed grace. But Paul had a warning for believers who treat God's grace through Jesus in this way.
 - **Romans 6:1–4 [1] What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [2] By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? [3] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (ESV)**
- What we need in our struggle with perspective is to remember that we were once dead, belonging to an entirely different family. That helps us remember the privilege of belonging to Christ's family!
- That determined desire to remember our Gospel story is how we honor Christ as king in our lives.

⁵ 2 Cor. 5:21

Discussion: take a moment to remember your own Gospel story. Share with each other the biggest ways you are different from the “old you”. If you were saved at a young age, how might your life been different if you hadn’t been rescued by Christ at an early age.

- This is why the Carmen Christi is so important!
 - Carmen Christi is latin for “the song of Christ”. ⁶ This passage was fashioned into an early hymn that was repeated in gatherings and stuck in peoples minds. (This is why Wade does the music for the kids!)
- **Philippians 2:1–11 [1] So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, [2] complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. [3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (ESV)**
- This is a song that should get stuck in your head, because it reminds us both of the indicative truth that Christ was humbled for us, and the imperative command to live humbly.
 - Everyone has a song that tends to become an “ear worm”. Mine happens to be dancing queen because it is the same beat as my natural walking pace.

Fun Question: what is your ear worm song?

⁶ <https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/the-form-of-god>

- The Gospel is the song we should walk in rhythm with wherever we go.
- The song of Philippians 2 should challenge us to live humbly. How do we do that?
 - Micah 6:8 states: [8] He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (ESV)
 - Humility is all about perspective. The word “humbled” means to be leveled or reduced to a plain.⁷ It was a word that communicated the idea of a bowing servant in the presence of more important people.
 - Jesus, in humbling himself, was assuming the posture of a servant to kings and governors, even though he was the rightful King of kings. Philippians asks us to have that same posture.
 - **To be “humble” is to take the posture of a servant to everyone you meet.**
 - Jesus Christ did not need to be humbled, for he had already chosen humility. But in choosing humility, he was able to respond throughout his trials and execution with meekness and obedience to His Father’s will.
 - Jesus is now exalted to His rightful place. Our future will be in glorious exaltation beside him in the New Earth. That should give us the courage to accept our role of servant in our current lives.

Application Question: what does humbly serving others in allegiance to our King of kings look like from a practical perspective. Include ideas for your work community, neighborhood, family and spouse and church body.

⁷ tapeinoō (ταπεινός Strong’s G5013), the root of the word (ταπεινός) means “not rising far from the ground”