

“Good News”: A Series in the Gospels (Part 4)

The Gospel of Luke tells the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The companion to the Gospel account Luke wrote was Acts, which retells the work of Jesus' Spirit after His ascension, and the story of the movement of people He inspired.

Luke Chapters 19-23:

The final week of Jesus' life culminated in a controversial week in Jerusalem during Passover. In this message we'll explore the Gospel of Luke chs. 19-23, and how it came about that the innocent Jesus ended up being executed as a revolutionary rebel against Rome. We'll also see how Jesus was not at all surprised, because he believed that his death would open up a new future for Israel, and for all humanity.

-The same crowds that will soon be shouting “Crucify Him” are praising God and singing “Hosannah” as Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey.

-Not everyone is celebrating however as all the while, the Pharisees are scheming and Jesus is weeping as He enters Jerusalem, for He knows what's to come- the people's soon coming disregard and rejection of His “Good News” message.

-Jesus enters the temple and drives out the moneychangers as He prophetically protests, “My house is to be a house of prayer, but you have turned it into a den or robbers and rebels.” Jesus is standing in the same spot that the prophet Jeremiah was over 600 years prior, announcing his prophetic utterance.

-This of course infuriates the Pharisees and other religious teachers of the Law and they begin to plot how they will catch him away from the crowds and frame him to the authorities in order that he will be arrested and even killed, so that His message and methods will be stopped for good.

-Jesus knew all this would happen and at the time it was happening as well, the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread or, Passover. This was a weeklong feast festival that commemorated Israel's escape from Egypt and acknowledged God's provision in liberating them from slavery while also forming a new covenant promise with them.

-So Jesus uses the symbols of Passover to explain the meaning of His soon coming death. The broken bread was to be His body and the cup of wine was to be His blood, that would establish a new covenant relationship between God and Israel. Jesus was going to willingly die for His people to create a new way forward.

Luke 22:24-30 (TPT)

24“The disciples bickered over which one of them would be considered the greatest in the kingdom. 25Jesus interrupted their argument, saying, “The kings and men of authority in this world rule oppressively over their subjects, claiming that they do it for the good of the people. They are obsessed with how others see them. 26But this is not your calling. You will lead by a different model. The greatest one among you will live as one called to serve others without honor. The greatest honor and authority is reserved for the one who has a servant heart. 27The leaders who are served are the most important in your eyes, but in the kingdom, it is the servants who lead. Am I not here with you as one who serves you? 28“Because you have stood with me through all my trials and ordeals, I give you your destiny: 29I am promising you the kingdom realm that the Father has promised me. 30We will celebrate in this kingdom and you will feast with me at my table. And each of you will be given a throne, twelve thrones in all, and you will be made rulers on thrones to judge the tribes of Israel.””

-How many times have we missed Jesus and partnering with Him in His Kingdom work of Salvation through His Holy Spirit because we're off on the side arguing with one another about who's greater? Sure, maybe it doesn't sound that obvious but it's easy to get caught up in surface-level things like that. Sometimes it seems like we can care more about the carpet color of a building or the sound level of worship on a Sunday morning than the fact that there are countless people whose souls are going to hell for eternity if we don't do something about it! The kind of stories that we all need to hear more of are stories where we encountered God's presence in such a powerful way that He drove us to our knees and then, we were so impacted, that our knees actually drove us to where the people were and we shared the Good News of Jesus and His love to them! Amen?

-So Jesus goes off to a garden to pray- the Garden of Gethsemane at the Mount of Olives- as this was a daily occurrence for him. He would lodge at the mount each night and then arrive to the temple early in the morning to preach His message of the “Good News” of the Kingdom. It's here where Jesus struggled with the choice of living vs. dying and the very human desire of wanting to live instead of dying as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He struggled so much that Luke writes, “His sweat dripped off of him like drops of blood.” Ultimately, Jesus overcame this temptation as again, He willingly chose to sacrifice his life for the world. It's also here at the garden that we find Jesus being apprehended by a crowd of people including the religious teachers of the

law, some Roman guards and Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' own disciples, leading the way.

-Israel at this time is occupied by Rome so the temple leaders couldn't execute Jesus without permission from the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. So they make up this bogus charge and falsely claim that Jesus is a rebel-king leading a rebellion to overthrow Rome. Pilate finds no fault in Him and ships him over to Herod, a Jewish king who also finds no fault in Him, so he sends him back to Pilate who again says, "let's be done with this, just let me beat him and send him on his way." But the religious leaders are not satisfied and they convince Pilate to release an actual rebel and murderer named Barrabas in the place of Jesus. And so the innocent is handed over in place of the guilty.

-So Jesus, grouped with a pair of actual criminals, was still beaten and then tortured in the most gruesome ways possible. He was led off to die as he was nailed onto a Roman execution device and left to hang there on that cross until he suffocated to death. Jesus' last moments were still some of His finest as even though the crowds and soldiers mocked Him, He chose to love His enemies to His dying breath. He even committed to one of the criminals that they would be together in Paradise and actually prayed for His executioners stating, "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing." Jesus was still contending for sinners to His last breath.

-And then the sky darkened, The Bible says it was about the sixth hour (noon) and that it didn't lighten up until the ninth hour (3pm), as an innocent man died the death of a rebel. Then Jesus breathed his last as He cried out with ancient words found in Israel's Psalms, "Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit." And then, Jesus died, innocent and alone.

-Explain why this can still be considered "GOOD NEWS?!"