

Luke 23:26-56 – 8 October 2023

“Handling The Hardest Of Days”

Introduction

*Jesus has been arrested and sent to die on a Roman cross at the hands of the Jews and Romans

*Even on the walk to Calvary and on the cross itself, there are STILL many more people to be influenced by the grace and love of Jesus Christ

*Today we'll examine the cross from the perspective of the different individuals or groups of people there

*This is clearly the hardest of days for Jesus, but for many of them it's also the hardest of day

***Today, we'll learn 6 lessons for handling the hardest of days as seen thru the eyes of the people at the cross**

#1: Thru an interested bystander: Be available and God will use you (Vs 26)

Read Vs 26

1. Cyrene has a large Jewish population, & he's there for the Passover Feast
 - a. Seems Simon became a believer as his sons are mentioned by Mark & one of them is in Rom 16:13
 - b. Simon was "just passing by"
 - i. God knows how to give everyone a chance to see and receive Him
2. Crossbar would be about 80 lbs; Jesus was already beaten & scourged – this is torture

#2: Thru the concerned Jerusalemites: Understand the times to act properly (Vs 27-31)

Read Vs 27-29

1. Being barren was accepted reason for divorce, & He's saying it'll be a good thing to never be born rather than face the coming destruction

Read Vs 30

1. Christ's death at least has some joy in it (Read Heb 12:2), but the Jew's coming destruction has no benefit to them or anyone else
 - a. All people suffer to an extent & then pass, but not all truly live before they pass
2. Jesus is alluding to mass destruction of 70AD
 - a. Titus will lay waste to Jerusalem
 - b. Ultimately Jesus is speaking of future Trib

Read Vs 31

1. Green tree = innocent, dry tree = guilty
2. He's *still* helping others by pointing out sin
 - a. This IS loving / helpful; not rude / judging

#3: Thru the forgiving Savior: Offer love, grace and forgiveness (Vs 32-39)

Read Vs 32-33

1. Calvary; the place of the skull, for Golgotha's hill was shaped that way

Read Vs 34a

1. This was the 1st of 7 statements from the cross
2. Being nailed up, He's offering grace & love
 - a. There are times & people that we're limited in reaching, yet we can still pray for them
 - b. You say, 'Oh He can do this b/c He's God'
 - i. Stephen did same thing as he's being stoned
 - c. See the masses as lost sheep, not as vipers

Read Vs 34b-37

1. Even while He's asking forgiveness for them, they're mocking Him
2. If Jesus had saved Himself, then He couldn't have saved you and me...and them
3. He would rather die, then leave us in the dark

Read Vs 38

1. Question always comes to, Who is Jesus?

Read Vs 39

1. The comfortable way is not often God's way
 - a. God wants our character more than our comfort
 - b. He wants our righteousness > our relaxation

#4: Thru the repentant thief: It's never too late to change (Vs 40-43)

Read Vs 40-42

1. This man has received the bad news, that he's a sinner being sent to judgement and needs a savior
2. But he's also received the good news; Jesus is the Lord & Messiah who will have a Kingdom
3. This is the belief that leads to eternal life

Read Vs 43

1. So both of the 1st two sayings of Jesus from the cross are to have compassion on someone else!
2. What is paradise?
 - a. Tree of Life is in the midst of it (Rev 2:7)
 - b. 3rd heaven - presence of God (II Cor 12:3-4)
3. Paradise is not Abraham's bosom (Luk 16:23)
 - a. Temp til Jesus descends to set captivity free
 - b. Jesus says "today" b/c time is different when you die

#5: Thru the miracle witnesses: Behold the might of God (Vs 44-49)

Read Vs 44-45

1. Even a great earthquake occurred that opened grave for some to come out
2. These signs from God demonstrate the significance of Jesus death
 - a. Power over heaven displayed by darkness
 - b. Power over the earth displayed by a quake
 - c. Power over religion displayed by torn veil
 - d. Power over life itself displayed by new life
3. The tearing of the veil was a miracle
 - a. It separated the Holy from the Most Holy
 - b. 4" thick, 60' tall – 30 team of oxen to rip
 - c. Reason many priests got saved (Act 6:7)
4. 2 reasons God tore the veil
 - a. H.P. ripped garments at blasphemy; this is the real blasphemy
 - b. God is showing completion of old covenant & that now we have entrance into God's presence (Read Heb 4:16, 10:19-20)

Read Vs 46

1. This is 7th & final saying showing
 - a. Jesus was fully willing
 - b. Jesus knew He had relation w/ the Father
 - c. He knew His Spirit lives forever

Read Vs 47-49

1. Many different reactions, how do you reaction?
2. Even this Roman soldier has been brought to God

#6: Thru the rich worshipper: Take a risk in worshipping & serving Jesus (Vs 50-56)

Read Vs 50-52

1. John tells us plainly that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus & that Nicodemus helped with all this
2. Joseph's ministry for Jesus looked different than the 12 disciples but very much valid
 - a. Joseph trying helping from within Judaism, disciples from without
 - b. Joseph spent money, disciples didn't have it
 - c. Serve where you are, w/ what God's given

Read Vs 53-56

1. They are rich w/ money AND worship
 - a. They know they'll receive nothing on earth for this service yet they do it – that's worship
 - b. They took great risk in doing this publicly
2. Where are the 11 disciples?
 - a. Their faith is faltering and therefore they're not available in service to the King
 - b. We're all blessed w/ measure of faith, use it

Conclusion

I think we all have some things to learn today

1. **Thru the interested bystander, Simon: learn to be available & then God will use us**
 - a. He was just hanging around doing what's right & finds himself right in the middle of God's master plan

2. **Thru the concerned Jerusalemites:**
understand the times we're in to act properly
 - a. We're in the last days, let's reach to souls
3. **Thru our forgiving Savior, Jesus: we learn to offer love, grace and forgiveness**
 - a. People don't care that you know, until they know that you care
4. **Thru the repentant thief on the cross: we learn it's never too late to change**
 - a. Do it today! It can change everything!
5. **Thru the witnesses of the miracles: we behold the might of God**
 - a. He can change our hard circumstances in a flash and knows that path we need to take
6. **Thru the rich worshippers, Joseph, Nicodemus and the women: we learn to take a risk to worship and serve Jesus**
 - a. If we honor Jesus among men, He'll honor us before His Father in heaven!