

⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

1. Luke goes out his way to describe Joseph, what are a few things he highlights about his character?
2. While the nation of Israel as a whole was hostile to Jesus and the purposes of God that were being fulfilled in and through him, Luke wants us to know that there were some very real exceptions.

At Jesus' birth we are introduced to Zechariah and Elizabeth (John's parents) and Simeon who greeted Mary and Joseph in the temple.

LUKE 1:5–6 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly.

LUKE 2:25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.

At his death he is entrusted to the care of Joseph of Arimathea, who is described as "a good and upright man."

- a. What do these people tell us about the nature of faith among God's people throughout the ages?
 - b. Why is it important for us to know that righteousness through faith has always been the foundation of God's grace in the lives of his people?
3. What does the fact that Joseph had free access to Pilate tell us about the kind of man he was?
 4. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the faithfulness of Jesus' followers (both Joseph and the women) to the Old Testament law?

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2023



LUKE

A PROMISE KEPT

HE BREATHED HIS LAST | LUKE 23:43-56

Luke is less interested in the details of the crucifixion than he is the people who surround Jesus in his final hours.

There were the Jewish leaders who unceremoniously arrested Jesus under the cover of darkness, and presented him to Pilate under a series of trumped up charges. They not only demanded that Jesus be crucified, but led out in the derisive ridicule at the foot of the cross. There were Herod and Pilate, both of whom found Jesus innocent but gave in to the demands of the crowds. There were the crowds who joined in the chorus of "crucify him," adding their voices to the demands of the ruling council. There were the soldiers who beat him, mocked him, led him away, who would later taunt him as he hung on the cross. To add insult to injury they cast lots for his clothing. There was Simon, a pilgrim from North Africa who was compelled to carry his cross. There were the women who openly mourned for Jesus as he made his way to the place of execution. There were the two criminals who were crucified on either side of Jesus. One joined with the crowds in their insult and mockery, the other cried out to Jesus for mercy and received it.

As Jesus draws his final breath, we will also witness the response of the Father to the grave injustices committed against his Son and the Son's final appeal to the Father. A Roman Centurion will recognize Jesus for who he is, the crowds will mourn his death, the disciples will observe the events from a distance, and a dissenting member of the ruling council will gently gather Jesus' body and lay it in his family tomb.

THE DEATH OF JESUS (vv. 44-49)

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." ^j When he had said this, he breathed his last.

⁴⁷ The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."

⁴⁸ When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away.

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

1. The divine response to the injustices of the cross are an pronouncement of judgment and an invitation to mercy. God covers the land in a shroud of darkness and rips the final barrier between God and man from top to bottom.
 - a. When the jewish leaders arrested Jesus, he told them, "This is your hour —when darkness reigns (Luke 22:53)." The prophet Joel had forewarned, the people of Israel,

JOEL 2:1-2, 31 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand— ² a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness... The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

 - i. What is great about the day of the Lord?
 - ii. What is dreadful about the day of the Lord?
 - iii. How are these opposing truths embodied in the cross?
 - b. The temple consisted of a series of barriers (or dividing walls). Gentiles could enter the outer court, but dare not venture any further. There was a court for women, that allowed them to venture a bit closer. Men of course were allowed to draw even closer. There was the Holy place which only priests could enter, and then the Most Holy place where only the high priest could enter one day each year for a matter of moments. The curtain in front of the Most Holy Place in the temple, was the final barrier between a sinful people and a holy God.
 - i. How does the fact that it was torn in two represent what Christ had accomplished on the cross?

- ii. How should the fact that we have been given free access to God shape our lives and worship?

2. Jesus once again responds with words of the psalmist on his lips.

PSALM 31:1-5 In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. ² Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. ³ Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. ⁴ Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. ⁵ Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.

- a. What does the fact that Jesus faces his darkest moments (his temptation and the cross) with the words of Scripture on his lips tell us about the role of Scripture in Jesus' life?
 - b. Of our need to be saturated in the truth of Scripture and the role of Scripture in our lives?
 - c. While David cries out to his "Lord," Jesus cries out to his "Father." What does this tell us about the depth and nature of Jesus' relationship to God?
 - d. What does it tell us about the depth and nature of the relationship Jesus has secured for us?

3. Jesus has already said of another Roman Centurion "'I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel (Luke 7:9)."

- a. What does this Centurion recognize in Jesus?
 - b. How is his response a model for us?
 - c. How does the response of "all the who knew him" pale in comparison?
 - d. Does our response to Jesus more closely resemble that of the Centurion who recognized Jesus for who he was and "praised God," or those who "stood at a distance watching...?"

THE BURIAL OF JESUS (vv. 50-56)

⁵⁰ Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God.

⁵² Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. ⁵⁴ It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.