

Black Friday
Luke 23:1-49
Notes

The death of Jesus satisfied the punishment for sin, making salvation available to all and applicable to all who believe

INTRODUCTION

He is God. The perfect, holy, righteous, and sinless heavenly Lord.

He is eternal and never ending. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present. He knows the beginning from the end.

He is creator of all that is seen and all that is unseen.

He knows no sin and has never entertained a sin.

Yet, this holy, righteous God desires a relationship with you.

He knows your thoughts, your faults, your sins, and your hidden secrets. He knows the lies you told and the bitterness in your heart. He sees the slight glances you take and the jealousy on your brow.

He knows those things you would never reveal to anyone else.

He is intimately familiar with all your weaknesses and shortcomings.

He knows that in and of yourself, there is not an ounce of you worth redeeming.

Yet, he, in his grace and eternal love for you, he provided a way for your sins to be completely removed, forever forgotten, never counted against you.

This way, this means of your salvation is free to you this morning, but it cost God an enormous sum-his very own Son.

A perfect sacrifice was offered as a payment, for sin. Sin requires a penalty, and that penalty is death.

God does not desire your death; he desires a relationship. To have this relationship, there had to be a substitute for sin, your sin.

No ordinary substitute would do, for you see, the offering, the sacrifice, must be perfect, no spot, no blemish, no sin of any kind.

The only suitable sacrifice is Jesus.

Today, as we discuss the sacrifice that occurred on Black Friday, we will discuss how we respond to Jesus, and we will discuss the importance of the crucifixion.

As we prepare our minds and hearts for God's word this morning can I ask you a few questions:

Have you been forgiven of your sins through Jesus?

If you are forgiven, have you been living in this forgiveness?

Are you sharing this forgiveness with others?

Christ has come to pay a debt we could not pay so we can experience a freedom we could never earn.

THE THREE TRIALS OF JESUS (Luke 23:1-25)

As we arrive on the scene with Jesus on this Black Friday, we must remember what has taken place.

The night before, Jesus and his disciples were in the upper room. It is in this room where Jesus modeled servant leadership by washing the feet of the disciples. Jesus gave us the elements of communion during this time.

It is also the night in which Judas betrays Jesus.

Jesus leads the disciples from the upper room, across the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus prays for the Father to remove the cup of death from him but submits his will to the Father.

Jesus is arrested in the Garden, taken to the Sanhedrin in a Kangaroo Court hearing.

His disciples have abandoned him, and Peter has straight up denied him.

Now on this Friday morning, the priests have brought Jesus to the Roman authorities to be executed.

It is here that Jesus will face three trials, one before Pilate, one before Herod, and then another trial before Pilate.

In these three trials we will note three truths.

Some people will never believe in Jesus

Some people will come to Jesus for personal gain

Some people will avoid Jesus because of the crowd

Some people will never believe in Jesus-priests (23:1-5)

Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate.² And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."³ So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say."⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."⁵ But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."

The religious leaders of Jesus' day had no use for Jesus. Jesus threw a wrench in the gears of their religious hierarchy.

While they looked forward to the Messiah, they did realize that all the religious functions they did pointed to the Messiah and that the Messiah, that is Jesus, would come to fulfill their works and therefore the Temple and its functions would no longer be needed.

But what happened? Did they not know the Scriptures? Did they not see the signs of Jesus? The miracles? Did they not hear the Word of God? Did the Spirit not convict them of sin?

This passage shows us that there will be people who will not come to Christ.

This does not mean that Jesus does not love them; this does not mean the cross is not enough; this does not mean the Holy Spirit does not convict them.

This means that there are those individuals who are so consumed with self, self-righteousness, and sin that they will not respond nor submit to the Word of God or the Spirit of God.

Does that mean we give up on them? Do we stop sharing the gospel with the person who doesn't believe, or who is belligerent to us? No, for we do not know if or when they may be made alive by the Spirit and respond to the gospel in faith.

Some people will come to Jesus for personal gain-Herod (23:6-8)

⁶ When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷ And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸ Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.

If we remember, Herod loved to entertain Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, but had him beheaded at the request of his wife.

Herod, by nature, was not interested in the saving power of Jesus, but in Jesus' ability to bring him happiness; or move his mind from the business of his daily tasks; or the fact that Jesus was somewhat a miracle worker, he might benefit from Jesus in some way.

Sadly, this is the Jesus that has been preached to many over the years.

"Come to Jesus and have all your problems go away." "Give your life to Jesus and you won't suffer from depression or anxiety." "Accept Christ and you won't know financial issues." "Jesus will fix your family if you just come to him."

How many of us in this room right now, faithful followers of Christ have some major problems; battling anxiety; making it week to week; or having family struggles?

Jesus comes and provides for you strength, peace, wisdom, and even joy in the midst of all these struggles, but as sinners living in a sin-filled world, we will still battle with these issues.

Yes, there are those who would come to Christ for what Christ may give them, but this is not those who truly find Christ.

Only those who come to Christ in humility and repentance will receive Christ's gift of forgiveness and redemption.

Some people will avoid Jesus because of the crowd-Pilate (23:18-24)

18 But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" 19 (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.) 20 Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, 21 but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" 22 And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him." 23 But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. 24 And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. 25 And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Pilate, oh Pilate. The man who knew full well the innocence of Jesus. Three times he declared Jesus' innocence. He knew in the depth of his heart the innocence of Jesus, yet still sent him to die. Why?

Pilate was moved, not by justice, but by the crowd.

Why is this important for us to note this scene? Pilate gave into the popular vote of the crowd so as to keep favor with the crowd.

The crowd was and is fickle. Once the crowd realized Jesus was not going to give them everything they wanted; he wasn't going to endorse their sin; he was not going to give them unlicensed freedom; they wanted nothing to do with him.

The same is true today. The crowd of the American public of the 1950's religious conservative America is gone. It is now replaced by the post-modern, existential radical reconstructionist view of humanity where relativism and materialism rule the day.

And a Jesus that does not support that is a Jesus who must be put aside and shut down, and with him all who claim to follow him and uphold his word.

There will come a time when each of us will face in very real ways the push of the crowd to deny Jesus. What will you do when that time comes? Will you, like Pilate, know Jesus and yet still give way to the crowd? Or will you like so many throughout history, stand for Christ and his word regardless of the consequences?

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS (Luke 23:32-49)

Luke does not record for us what happens between Pilate's sentence of Jesus and his taking his cross to calvary.

Matthew tells us in Chapter 27 that after Barabbas was released Jesus was scourged (27:26), led to Praetorium (27:27), stripped and wrapped in a purple robe (27:28), had a crown of thorns placed on his head, reed in his hand, and mocked as king (27:29), then beaten with the reed and spit upon (27:30) before being led away.

Before we even get to the cross, Jesus has been violated in every way a person can be violated.

What Jesus underwent from his fellow man was unconscionable. Yet, even as horrific as this abuse was, it would pale in comparison to the horrors of the cross.

Luke tells us that as Jesus was led away,

³² Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him.

³³ When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. ³⁴ But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. ³⁵ And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" ³⁸ Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" ⁴³ And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." ⁴⁸ And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things.

There are at least three things that are vitally important for us this morning, when we consider Jesus' death.

Jesus shows us forgiveness is not dependent on our righteousness (23:32-34)

Luke does not dive into the detail. But from the other gospel accounts we know and can imagine in our hearts and minds the horrendous pain of the cross.

Thrown to the ground, with all your strength gone. Your arms are stretched across a thick wooden beam. As you lay there utterly exhausted, you feel the gut-wrenching pain of having thick, long nails driven through your hands, securing to the beam.

Once secured you are then hoisted up the main beam. After the cross beam is secured, your feet are then crossed and nailed into main beam.

After Jesus is nailed to the cross and hoisted up to the point, Jesus utters some of the most important words we can hear.

He looks at the criminals beside him, the conspiring priests below him, the soldiers who mocked him and nailed him to the cross and Jesus says, "*Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*"

This verse has so many theological and practical applications.

Theologically, this verse shows us the nature and breadth of the atonement.

Jesus is asking the Father to forgive and even apply the atonement to those who are killing him.

Jesus is interceding for those who he knows will not come to faith in him.

The cross shows us the breadth of the atonement of Jesus, meaning that the forgiveness Jesus' death offers is available to anyone.

Now, before we get worried about universalism, we need to understand that availability does not equal applicability.

The atonement of Jesus' death is available to all, but only applicable to those who place their faith in Jesus.

When Jesus utters the words, "forgive them" he is not only asking for all those present, but all who are not present as well.

And to know this truth, that as much as it was the priests who conspired against him, Pilate who failed to stand up for him, the guards who mocked and nailed him to the cross that were responsible for this wretched scene, it is also you and I who bear this great responsibility.

You say, "How is this possible?"

When Jesus says "forgive them" he is also asking for you and me. For your lies, your anger, your jealousy; he is asking for your laziness, your pride, your lusts, and your envy; he is asking for your selfishness and idolatry.

How could Jesus want to our forgiveness when we are so sinful?

The reason this is vitally important for us is that forgiveness is not dependent upon us or our righteousness.

There is nothing we can do, nothing we can offer, no way to amend our salvation outside of the grace of God.

Our salvation is only through God's forgiving grace.

There is something quite wonderfully beautiful about Jesus uttering the words, "Forgive them."

The word 'forgive' in this passage is in the imperfect tense. We tend to think it is in the present tense and that Jesus prayed this prayer once and then moved on.

The imperfect tense in Greek means that the prayer is not said once but continuously, through the scourging and the crucifixion as he approached death. When Jesus was falsely accused by Pilate, he was praying, "Father, forgive them..." When they beat him, taunted him, and stripped

him, he was praying, "Father, forgive them..." When they drug him into the courtyard and whipped him with a cat of nine tails ripping the flesh from his back, he was praying, "Father, forgive them..."

When they put the cross on his back and made him carry it walking on cobblestone streets in bare feet to his death, he was praying, "Father, forgive them..." When they nailed him to the cross and hung him high, he was praying, "Father, forgive them..." When they were taunting and jeering at him, he was praying, "Father, forgive them..." And for 20 centuries, echoing across the centuries, we hear the words of Jesus as he continues to pray, "Father, forgive them..."

So, the question for you today is, "Have you been forgiven by Jesus?"

You may think that such an awesome display of grace by Jesus, offering up his life for your life would require a complex set of requirements for his forgiveness to be applied to your life.

But the opposite is true.

Jesus shows us the simplicity of salvation (23:39-43)

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" ⁴³ And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Mark's gospel tells us that both criminals were hurling insults at Jesus (Mark 15:32).

These criminals, more than likely Jewish zealots who wanted to take down Rome and were looking for a conquering Messiah, were mad that Jesus was not who they wanted him to be.

They were bitter and angry. They were hardened criminals who expressed no thoughts for God or their sin. They carried no guilt and were seeking no repentance.

While one criminal kept shouting at Jesus, one criminal grew quiet, even contemplative.

This criminal began to put the pieces together. He observed Jesus' meekness and quietness. He listened to Jesus' prayer for those who were hurting him.

His ears and his heart perked up when he heard Jesus refer to God as "Father" with an intimacy he never observed from anyone else.

He knew there was an obvious difference between his own crimes and Jesus' crimes.

All these brought together within his heart an awakening, a spiritual awakening. He knew at that moment he was a sinner.

He owned his crucifixion as just.

He knew he had no merit, no cause, no reason to appeal to Jesus for mercy or help.

Most people live in a cloud of relativism. We talk ourselves out of conviction of sin and worry about right or wrong.

We hide in the dark contours of our lives, convincing ourselves that our sins are not as bad as we originally thought they were. We justify our sins and qualify our sins.

There was no such doubt or fuzziness to this thief. He recognized his own sin.

He knew he would face not only man's judgment, but also God's judgement.

The cross had brought him humility and this humility, as promised by Jesus in Matthew 5:3, brought him to a place to experience the forgiveness of Jesus.

He realized Jesus as the Messiah and simply asks, "Remember me."

How astonishingly simple!

Notice what the thief did not say. He did not say, "Remember my works." "Remember my partnership with you."

The thief simply asked for mercy from Jesus.

What does Jesus do in response?

Does Jesus give him a specific prayer to pray? Does he give him a checklist of things to do to ensure his salvation?

Jesus does what Jesus does-Jesus saves!

Jesus turns his head toward this criminal and says, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

This was a miraculous promise to an undeserving criminal.

Jesus says, you will be with me, and you will be with me today.

Jesus gave life to this wretched thief.

And you know what? He can give life to you today as well.

In this intimate and simple exchange, Jesus shows us the simplicity of salvation.

Romans 10:13 tells us, "*For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.*"

What does this mean? How do you call upon the name of Jesus?

It is as simple as the thief made it.

Like the thief on the cross, we recognize we are sinners worthy of death. We recognize that Jesus died in our place. We believe the Word of God that tells us that all we must do is believe in this and in this belief, we ask for God's forgiveness through Jesus, and you know what the Bible says?

"That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).

You may be here today, and you know you are a sinner. You may think you have no hope; you are too far gone; you have done too much?

This is not a concern for Jesus. Jesus died for everything you have ever done and everything you will do.

We learned he had atoned for the sins of the world and that includes you.

Would you be forgiven today? The Spirit of God is working in your heart right now, convicting you of sin, drawing you Christ? Would you surrender to him today? Be forgiven today?

Jesus shows us the evilness of sin (23:44-46)

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last.

By the time of Jesus, the Romans had crucified some 30,000 men in Palestine alone, and none of them are mentioned in the pages of history. What makes this man so special that we remember his name?

Jesus was not crucified as a criminal, nor was he being punished for anything he had done. Unbeknown to the Jewish leaders and the Roman government Jesus was being placed upon that cross as the supreme, once and for all sacrifice for all of humanity.

We read in verse 44, that darkness covered the land *from the sixth to the ninth hour*. Jesus was on the cross for a total of 6 hours, a short time in comparison to others.

He was placed on the cross @ 9am, darkness fell @ 12pm, and Christ died @ 3pm. Darkness covered the earth from 12-3pm.

The cross was a place of immense divine judgment, where the sins of the world were poured out on the sinless, perfect Son. It was therefore appropriate that great supernatural darkness express God's reaction to sin in that act of judgment.

The darkness represented God's judgment for the sin of all mankind, past, present, and future.

During those 3 tense hours of deep darkness, God was punishing Jesus for all sins.

He was punishing Jesus for all the murders, all the rapes, all the robberies, all the break-ins.

He was punishing Jesus for all your sins too; all of mine. He was punishing Jesus for all our lies, our unfaithfulness, our greed, our envy, our anger, our pride, all our bad attitudes, all of our behavior, all grievances to his Word.

Jesus was undergoing the most devastating punishment the world has ever known.

Jesus died as the substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world; the righteous heavenly Father had to judge Him fully according to that sin.

The Father forsook the Son because the Son took upon Himself our transgressions and our iniquities.

Jesus did not only bore man's sin, but actually became sin on man's behalf, in order that those who believe in Him might be saved from the penalty of their sins.

2 Cor. 5:21 declares this truth, *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

Did you catch that? Christ became sin on your behalf, suffering the wrath of God that should have been yours. Christ took your sin, and you took His righteousness. When God looks at you now, in Christ, He sees not your sin, not your guilt, but He sees the righteousness of Christ on and in you.

When Christ was forsaken by the Father, their separation was not one of nature, essence, or substance. Christ did not in any sense or degree cease to exist as God or as a member of the Trinity. He did not cease to be the Son. But he did for a while, during those dark hours, cease to know the intimacy of fellowship with His heavenly Father.

In that moment when the weight of the world's sin fell upon the heart and the person of Jesus, that moment was the moment when *"him who knew no sin became sin for us."* And the penalty which He bore was the separation from the Father.

Jesus' last words before his death teach us the Gospel within the Gospel. They tell us that Jesus took on our abandonment, our questions, our feelings of God's betrayal, our most agonizing experiences, and still believed in the God he could not feel.

I want you to understand two very important facts from this point.

That sin causes a separation from God. God cannot look upon sin or treat it kindly, even when it is in his own Son. Sin must be dealt with; a punishment must be given.

Jesus underwent your punishment. He took the punishment for your sin, my sin, the sin of the very world that hates him and he bore the very wrath of his Father. Your payment has been made. Your gift has been given. Will you now go through life without accepting the gift that Jesus has given you? Will you allow his punishment to be in vain?

In verse 46 Jesus cries out, *"Father into your hands I commit my spirit."*

Man no longer must suffer through this world alone; no longer has to pay the penalty for his own sin.

This is a cry of a man who has completed his task; it is the cry of a man who has won through the struggle; it is the cry of a man who has come out of the dark into the glory of the light.

Jesus conquered the evilness of sin. We now are left with a question; Do I see my sin as evil? Will I ask and trust Jesus for forgiveness?

CONCLUSION

Oswald Chambers once said, "We trample the blood of the Son of God if we think we are forgiven because we are sorry for our sins. The only explanation for the forgiveness of God... is the death of Jesus Christ... There is absolute reinstatement into God by the death of Jesus

Christ and by no other way, not because Jesus Christ pleads, but because he died. It is not earned, but accepted... The atonement is a propitiation whereby God, through the death of Jesus, makes an unholy man holy.”

This message for us is both painful and praiseworthy.

For in one act, we see the absolute disgusting nature of our own sin. We see our pride, lust, and self-centeredness on full display as Jesus is nailed to the cross.

We see the full penalty for our sin.

In the same picture though, we see the absolute beauty, majesty, and full range of the love of Jesus.

For Jesus willingly laid down his life so you would not have to bear the weight of your sin.

You may be here this morning and you are feeling and experiencing the full weight of your sin. Beloved, there is no need to live like this.

Come to Jesus today. Be forgiven today. Come. Trust. Ask Christ to forgive you, place your faith in him and the promise that you will be forgiven and made new.

Christian. You may be battling sin in your life. It may have you knocked down right now.

Don't despair to darkness. Christ's death on the cross was not just to benefit you in a moment, but for a lifetime.

Run to him now, today. Call out to him while you are low. Allow his gentle hand to wash you clean this morning.

For you, that may mean you come and rededicate your life to Christ. You have been far off for too long and you want to come home. Come. Jesus is waiting.

Know the healing power of Christ.