

## Luke 23:26-56 – What Wondrous Love is This?

- 1) Today's lesson describes the death of Jesus, beginning with the "Via Dolorosa" – "The Way of Sorrows": that is, the walk from Pilate's Court to the cross
- 2) Each verse is worthy of a sermon of its own
- 3) 23:26: As recorded in Matthew and Mark as well, Jesus, weakened by the scourging and from experiencing an emotionally draining 24 hours without sleep, stumbled under the weight of the crossbeam which condemned men were forced to carry, and the Roman soldiers "conscripted" a passer-by to carry it
- 4) 23:27: Not everyone celebrated Jesus' death sentence – there were many who grieved for Him, both men and women (from verse 49 it is reasonable to conclude Jesus' disciples were there)
- 5) 23:28-31: Jesus addresses the women specifically
  - a) They suffer the most cruelly in times of injustice
  - b) Jesus is foreseeing the suffering of the Jewish people that will come following the Roman takeover of Jerusalem in AD 70 and continuing on today
  - c) The "green wood" refers to the nearness of God's Kingdom in Jesus (the "fig tree" in full leaf: Matthew 21:19)
  - d) The "dry wood" refers to the centuries of abuse while the people of God would be scattered and "lifeless" – a nation without a land – a "valley of dry bones" (Ezekiel 37)
- 6) 23:32-33: "The place called 'The Skull'" – in Hebrew called "Golgotha", in Latin rendered "Calvaria" from which we get "Calvary" – similar to our own "Shikellamy Hillside" scenic view at the north end of Sunbury, this was a hill whose outline looked like a skull (see the bulletin cover)
- 7) 23:34: Although this verse is not included in many ancient copies of Luke, it is present in some important ones, and is consistent with the character of Jesus, who came this time not to judge but to save (John 12:47)
- 8) 23:35: In contrast to verse 27, many who gathered ridiculed and belittled Jesus, starting with the guards who "threw dice" for His clothes, then including the crowd who taunted Him and even both criminals hung with Him (Matthew 27:44 and Mark 15:32)
- 9) 23:40: Eventually one of the thieves had a change of heart – his willingness to accept responsibility for his actions and submit to the penalty is the essence of repentance (Luke 18:9-14)
- 10) 23:41: His request reveals familiarity with Jesus, a belief in His role as Messiah and, like Abraham, his belief in a God whose promises are not defeated by death (Hebrews 11:19)
- 11) 23:42: He believes in a coming kingdom – whether on earth or only in heaven we do not know – but a kingdom where life reigns
- 12) 23:43: Since this promise from Jesus refers to Paradise as a place they will be in together that day it's obvious that 'paradise' is not Heaven:
  - a) Jesus does not ascend to Heaven until after the resurrection (John 20:17, Acts 1:9-11)
  - b) In the imagery of the first century, 'paradise' is where the souls of the righteous go at death ('paradise' means "a park")
  - c) It is used in the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament for "garden" (of Eden) – see also Luke 16:22-31)
- 13) 23:44-45: Matthew and Mark specifically state it was torn "from top to bottom", signifying it is God who removes the barrier between us and Him, not we ourselves
- 14) 23:46: Jesus 'lays His life' in God's hands (John 10:15-18)
- 15) 23:47: The centurion believes in the innocence of Jesus (one meaning of the phrase "God's Son" – sharing God's righteousness; he is the fourth in this chapter to declare Jesus innocent (Pilate, Herod, the thief, he centurion))
- 16) 23:48: Does the crowd regret their cry of "Crucify Him!"?
- 17) 23:49: Does "acquaintances" include His apostles and family? (compare with Matthew 26:58)
- 18) 23:50-54: Details of Jesus' burial; All four Gospels name Joseph
- 19) 23:55-56: Again Luke draws attention to the service of these women, who complete the devotion of Mary of Bethany (John 12:1-8)
- 20) What are we to learn from this account of Jesus' death?
  - a) Jesus demonstrates the love of God (Romans 8:31-32)
  - b) Jesus was fully human (see 1 John 4:2)
  - c) He truly died (Mark 15:43-45, John 19:34)
  - d) He died for anyone who will believe (verse 34, 43, 47)
  - e) He came to save us from the sin in the world (verse 28: "Weep for yourselves")
  - f) He came to save us from the sin in us – the cross we must bear (verse 26, 9:23, 14:27), as Jesus set His will aside to do the will of the Father (22:42)
  - g) That we too might die to self and rise to life (next week)