

4-9-25 –Witness in the Darkness

Dark times. The crucifixion & torture was the darkest time in life of Jesus. Yet even then – Jesus was true to who He was. Witness more powerful.

Luke 23 – be clear – they **accused** Jesus of claiming to be the **Messiah**.

Matt. 27 – “¹¹ . . . Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “You have said so,” Jesus replied. ¹²When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” ¹⁴But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.”

- Jesus is silent. No protesting. Not defending. Nobody else did either.
 - **Prophecy** – **Isaiah 53:7** – “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”
 - This prophecy has to be known... what’s in their minds?
 - Impressed **Peter**: “*When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins & live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”* – **1 Pet. 2:23-24**
 - **That’s not like most people. We moan, groan, complain, rant...**
- Pilate ordered Jesus flogged, then crucified. Why both??
 - A legal preliminary. Intended to weaken. Hasten death.
 - Jesus was weak; Simon from Cyrene carried is cross.

Matt. 27 - ²⁷Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. ³⁰They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”

- Still not a word recorded that Jesus says. **He is different.**
 - Jesus is turning the other cheek. Being obedient; fulfilling mission.

“But to you who are listening I say: ‘Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, / bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. / If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone takes your cloak, do not withhold your tunic as well.’” – **Luke 6:27-29**

- Not just words, Jesus lived them. Walked the Talk.

³⁴ There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

- God doesn’t save us from every problem. Remove all pain. We ask why? We blame God for the choices of men. **He may not remove it, He’ll use it.**

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). This is **Psalm 22:1**.

... ⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, ⁵² and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. ⁵³ They left the cemetery after Jesus’ resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people. ⁵⁴ The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, “This man truly was the Son of God!” **Luke 23:47** indicates the Centurion said it.

Luke 23:48 - “And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow.”

- Many went away **sad but unchanged**. Hours before, so excited, celebrating His crucifixion. They got what they wanted, not satisfying.
- But - **Centurion** & soldiers were impacted – saw Jesus for who He was.
 - Oversaw many deaths . . . but this **was different**. **Jesus was**.
 - Some refused to see Jesus as the Messiah, even w/ empty tomb
 - Centurion sees truth; reasoned conclusion from a seasoned veteran.
 What did this man see?

- **Dignity of deity**. He rose above the chaos, crowd, curses.
- **Mercy**. When Jesus spoke - forgiveness, not hate.
- **Compassion** for others, not anger. John: look out for Mother.
“Don’t weep for me, weep for yourselves.” Luke 23

Jesus’ last hours on cross were **not about Him**. His whole life wasn’t. God.

- So in His **darkest hour, He was still a light for the world**.
 - **Jesus’ last hours were His greatest witness**.
- The last hours are no surprise. Jesus was different:

○ W/o sin, criminal death.	● A man rejected is accepting.
○ Mocked & taunted, but silent.	● Hated, but still loving.

2 became believers at Calvary: criminal & centurion.

“The ground is always level at the cross.” Has **Calvary changed you**?

What is our witness in our darkest hour? Will it point to us, or to God?