




Theme: The Art of Salvation – Jesus in the Gospel of Luke ***“Salvation in the Celebration”***


Weekly Memory Verse:

³⁸ ***“Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!”*** – Luke 19:38

During Lent, the 40 days and 7 Sundays before Easter, the Meditation Moments will lead us to read the entire gospel of Luke. To reach that goal, some daily readings are longer than usual. Have an extra cup of coffee, or maybe use your lunch break, to make the time to read the whole gospel with us.

Monday, April 11 – Read Luke 21:5 to 22:6. Jesus had bad news—destruction awaited the Temple, the place where Jews met with God. Great hardship and persecution would follow the Temple’s destruction. The Roman army destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D. Despite the sad state of this world, Jesus urged his listeners to keep faith through all hard times. His central message in verse 21:9 and 28 was, “Don’t be alarmed...raise your heads, because your redemption is near.”

 The worldwide COVID-19 crisis has been the worst situation in almost all our lifetimes, followed by the tensions around world peace with the invasion of Ukraine. That’s what the Temple’s destruction sounded like to first-century Jewish ears. Jesus told his hearers this unthinkable event would happen yet told them to keep their faith because their “redemption was near.” What do you believe he meant by “near”? What makes it hard to keep your faith during hard times? How can trusting that God is near help you “weather the storm”?

 The life of faith is not always easy. Scholar N. T. Wright wrote in his commentary *Luke for Everyone*, “This is what it’s about: not an exciting battle, with adrenalin flowing and banners flying, but the steady tread, of prayer and hope and scripture and sacrament and witness, day by day and week by week.” When crisis has disrupted your daily routines, how do you seek to maintain the “steady tread” of your faith journey? Are there any models of living with patient faith you can draw on?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I trust you even when life gets difficult. Give me the strength and patience I need to deal with life’s struggles, the ones I am facing now and any others in the future. Amen.

Tuesday, April 12 – Read Luke 22:7-30. The annual Passover meal was part of the weeklong Festival of Unleavened Bread, reminding Hebrews of God’s great act rescuing them from Egypt in Exodus 12:1-18. It was, and remains, their defining story. As Jesus and his disciples shared the Passover meal, with the cross just ahead, Jesus added meaning to the meal. From then on, he said, the bread and wine would point to his even greater act in giving himself to deliver us from sin and death.



The Passover celebrated God’s great act in the past. Jesus’ expansion of it into the Lord’s Supper didn’t just recall the cross, but also pointed forward. The CEB Study Bible notes that “until it is fulfilled,” in verse 16, “is a promise to Luke’s readers that the kingdom truly will come.” Do you trust that God’s promises are not just pious words, but offer a future you can count on? How can taking part in Communion (even online) reinforce your trust and hope?



Scholar William Barclay in his *Daily Bible Series: The Gospel of Luke*, noted of verse 10 that in Jesus’ day, “To carry water was a woman’s task. A man carrying a jar of water would be as easy to pick out as, say, a man using a lady’s umbrella on a wet day. This was a pre-arranged signal.” Jesus prepared carefully for this important meal. In what ways can you intentionally prepare your heart to get the most out of being at Jesus’ table?

Prayer: *Living Lord, I rejoice in your saving acts in the past. But even more, I eagerly look forward to the day when you fully establish your kingdom. Keep me faithfully on track until that day. Amen.*

Wednesday, April 13 – Read Luke 22:21-62. “Lord,” Peter said, “I’m ready to go with you, both to prison and to death!” Ancient Christian tradition said Rome executed Peter around 64-65 A.D. But on the night before Jesus’ crucifixion, he wasn’t, in fact, “ready” for that. Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. After Jesus’ arrest, as bystanders said he must have been with Jesus, Peter hotly denied it three times. Then a rooster crowed, and Peter “went out and cried uncontrollably.”



Of all the disciples, only Peter walked on water in Matthew 14:28-29. He was first to say flat out that Jesus was the Messiah in Mark 8:27-29. He was no coward—just a human being under pressure. Has pressure ever led you to be ashamed of and to hide your allegiance to Jesus? Jesus told those who arrested him, “This is your time, when darkness rules.” Was there anything Peter might have done to keep the darkness from seeping into his soul as he says in verse 46?





All four gospels tell of Peter’s shattering failure. Yet by the time Luke and the others wrote, Peter was remembered as a great apostle, a brave church leader. It seems likely that Peter had openly shared his failure, and the forgiveness and hope he’d found in its wake. When have you grown through a failure that you were able to face openly and learn from by God’s grace?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, like Peter, I keep learning things about myself, finding a need to grow in areas I thought I had mastered. Thank you for your ongoing grace, for nudging me to grow even when I’m comfortable. Amen.*

Join us in person for our Maundy Thursday service at 6 p.m. either in person or online. Also, consider inviting someone to our Easter Services celebration the Resurrection this weekend <https://www.summitdurango.org/easter/>

Thursday, April 14 – Read Luke 22:63-23:12. Throughout most of his public ministry, Jesus’ enemies had dogged his footsteps. They claimed he was a false teacher, perhaps even demonic in Luke 11:14-16. But when they had him in their power, the contrast was striking. Jesus remained calm and in control of himself. The leaders, who claimed great “righteousness,” were frenzied, unfair and cruel, showing a spirit tragically filled with hatred and evil.


 Luke said in verses 62 and 66 that Jesus’ guards taunted and beat him BEFORE the council met for the trial. This was a classic Alice in Wonderland “trial,” with, “verdict first, evidence later.” Pontius Pilate, a cynical Roman career politician, saw through their charges, saying in verse 4, “I find no legal basis for action against this man.” Has anyone ever treated you unfairly? In what ways can you grow toward having the spirit with which Jesus endured this mockery of a trial?


 The religious leaders loathed tax collectors for working with Rome. Now they readily set aside that “principle” to insist that the Roman procurator help them kill Jesus. Have you ever seen (or been) a person willing to use bad means to achieve a desired goal? From God’s point of view, who was really on trial—Jesus, or Pilate, or the religious leaders who refused to even consider that Jesus might be who he claimed?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I wasn’t part of that awful “kangaroo court” trial. But fear or prejudice can blind me, too. Forgive me, cleanse me and give me a clearer vision of how my actions can heal or harm. Amen.*

Our Good Friday prayer stations will be set up in the Sanctuary from Noon to 8 p.m.

Friday, April 15 – Read Luke 23:13-46. Verse 22 tells us that three times Pilate asked Jesus’ accusers why they demanded his death. He got no clear answers, yet we read in verse 23 that “their voices won out.” Jesus was nailed to a cross by a public road. He asked God to forgive his executioners, promised a crucified thief eternal life, and prayed Psalm 31:5 as he died. On that bad Friday, Jesus absorbed and converted human evil into God’s central saving act, turning the day into what we call “Good Friday.”

 Pontius Pilate was a somebody—Rome’s highest official in Jerusalem. Jesus seemed a nobody—a poor, traveling rabbi rejected by the leaders of his own faith community. Luke’s gospel pointed to how God values the world’s nobodies. To remain a somebody, Pilate agreed to a gross injustice. Have you ever had to choose whether to do something you believe is right even if it will make people upset with you, maybe even turn them against you? How did you decide?

 We know many Jewish mothers used the words of Psalm 31:5, “into your hands I entrust my life,” as a bedtime prayer for their children. Jesus as a boy may well have learned the verse from Mary. John 19:25 tells us that Mary was there as he repeated those words on the cross. Imagine her feelings hearing her dying son repeat the trusting bedtime prayer she taught him so many years earlier. What does it mean for you to entrust your life fully into God’s hands?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, your example of trust, at a moment of pain and death, shows me again that in your kingdom “the worst thing is never the last thing.” Into your hands I entrust my life. Amen.*

Saturday, April 16 – Read Luke 23:47-56. Luke reported two unexpected actions after Jesus died. The Roman centurion who oversaw the crucifixion, “praised God, saying, ‘It’s really true: this man was righteous.’” That testimony might have meant a lot to a “most honorable” Gentile like Theophilus, who according to Luke 1:1-4, was part of the writing of this Gospel. The Romans

wanted crucifixion to create humiliation and fear, so they often left crucified corpses in the open. Belatedly, Joseph of Arimathea, a council member and silent dissenter at Jesus' mock trial, went public to give the body a decent burial. No one expected the resurrection, but Joseph's generosity unwittingly made Easter more powerful. Jesus' friends knew exactly where his body had been laid.



Scholar N. T. Wright in his commentary, *Luke for Everyone*, summed up today's passage: "It really happened. It wasn't a mistake. We didn't get it wrong. It's true. You can rely on it. This is the main point of Luke's account of Jesus' death and burial. He began his book telling Theophilus he could rely on these facts, and now that the most vital one is before us, he presents his witnesses one by one. The centurion saw.... The crowds standing by saw.... Jesus' followers, not least the women, stood at some distance, but they too saw.... Then the burial: again, the women saw what happened.... Evidence. Eyewitnesses. This is what Luke promised, and this is what he's now giving us." Every witness, every fact was vital. Jesus had really died and been laid in a tomb. That was what made Easter an incredible, one-of-a-kind event. How different would Jesus' impact on your life be if he didn't really die, or if he stayed in that tomb?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, you walked into the deepest prison I know of – the prison of death. But you went there to break the doors of that dark place wide open. Thank you for bringing light into darkness, life out of death. Amen