



LUKE: WEEK 4

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LUKE – SMALL GROUP SERIES

WEEK 4: THE DEATH & RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Bottom Line: The Son of God died to save us while refusing to save Himself.

Bible: *“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”* **Luke 22:42 (NLT)**

INTRODUCTION

We've come to the end of the series on Luke. Over the past three weeks, we have learned a little about the author, Luke, who he was writing to, and why he was writing. As the only Gentile writer in the New Testament, Luke brings a different perspective to his gospel.

Universal salvation is the theme flowing throughout the Book of Luke. Christ did not come for just one group of people, oh, He came to save us all.

Theophilus is the recipient of this letter. In week 1, we learned that Luke's primary purpose for writing this letter is to provide a detailed, accurate account of Christ's life and ministry.

He wanted Theophilus to have a certainty about the things he has been taught and to know that Jesus is the Son of Man.

In week 2, we learn more about who Jesus is. Jesus was not just a great prophet; He was the Messiah sent to save the world. In this lesson, we saw the beginning of His ministry which took place in Nazareth, and the unfortunate rejection that He met there.

Last week through the parable of the lost son, Luke reinforced his theme of Jesus coming to seek and save those who are lost.

Week 3 also brought us to Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, the moment that Luke has been building up to throughout the book. Jesus' time and kingdom had finally come as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as humbly as he came into the world in a Manger.

In each lesson over the past three weeks, Jesus has predicted His death and attempted to prepare the disciples for what was to come.

These lessons should help us to see the love Christ has for mankind, how we are to interact with and love each other as His children.

LESSON

Read Luke 22:1-23:56.

At the start of **chapter 22**, Luke is in full narrator mode. He begins telling the story of Jesus' death and resurrection.

At the beginning of **chapter 22**, the setting is the approaching Passover. Jesus is the main character as always, and the antagonists in the story are the priests and teachers of religious law, who are now plotting to kill Jesus.

In **verse 3**, another adversary comes on the scene. The Adversary enters into Judas Iscariot, leading him to meet with the priests to devise a plan against Jesus. Judas is promised payment for his help and begins to seek out ways to betray Jesus.

By **verse 7**, the Passover has arrived, and Jesus gives Peter and John specific instructions to prepare for the Passover meal He is planning for the disciples. That meal is what we have come to call The Last Supper.

The disciples followed His instructions and when they arrived in the city “they found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal” (**verse 13**).

Verses 17-20 give the account of the communion that Jesus has with the disciples. Each element is symbolic of what is about to happen on the cross.

Verse 21 Jesus reveals to the disciples that one of them will betray him; He reiterates to them that the Son of God must die and speaks judgment on the man who betrays him. Hearing this, the disciples begin to question who would ever do such a thing.

Despite everything that they have just witnessed and heard from Jesus, the twelve begin to argue about who would be the greatest among them.

This interaction reminds us that the disciples are not perfect. Even though they walk closely with the Lord, they still have flaws and fall victim to jealousy and inflated egos. Like many believers today, we are not perfect and still fall victim to the thoughts, ways, and cares of this world. In **Verses 25-27**, Jesus helps clear up their misconceptions about the greatest and the least.

By the time we reach **verse 31** we have got into what is known in the literature as the rising action. It is here that Jesus predicts Peter's denial of him:

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat, but I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith might not fail. And when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

True to his character, Peter tells Jesus that he is ready to go to jail and even died with Jesus. Peter wants Jesus to know he is, in today's terms, "ride or die."
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But as good as that sounds, Jesus knows the truth.

As good as our words or promises sound, Jesus knows the truth.

Jesus lets him know in **verse 34** that before the rooster crows tomorrow morning Peter will have denied him 3 times. And not just deny that he is a disciple, he will deny that he has ever known Jesus.

In another personal moment of preparing for his death. Jesus tells the disciples what they will need when they go out to preach the good news.

In contrast to the first time, when he told them not to bring anything with them, this time he tells them to take their money and their bags; if they don't have a sword, to buy one. The time for the prophecy to be fulfilled was here and being His followers meant they would be met with opposition.

This is also a message for us to be prepared as we carry out the Great Commission and anticipate opposition from the world.

Jesus then makes his way to the Mount of Olives, also known as The Garden of Gethsemane, to pray. He directs his disciples to pray continually so that they will not give into temptation.

Jesus begins to pray a well-known prayer: "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me; yet I want your will to be done and not mine" (**verse 42**).

An angel from heaven was sent to strengthen Him as He prayed intensely. The scripture tells us His spirit was so grieved that His sweat fell like blood.

Upon His return to the disciples, He finds them asleep. He cautions them again to get up and pray so that they would not fall into temptation.

We should be continually in prayer so that we do not fall into temptation by the enemy. **Verses 47 - 53** reveal Judas has planned to betray Jesus. Judas brings the officials to the Garden to confront Jesus. Because Jesus is fully God and knows His purpose—to fulfill the prophecy—there is no surprise when Judas greets Him with a kiss. Jesus asks, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (**verse 48**).

In almost a comedic style, Luke records the reaction of the disciples when they saw what happened. They asked Jesus if they should get ready to fight because they had brought their swords. Before Jesus could answer, Peter struck the slave of a high priest and cut off his ear.

There are two things worth noting here. The first is that the disciples were ready. They had followed the instructions that Jesus had given them. Second, it can be dangerous and harmful when we act before receiving a response from God.

Jesus intervenes and restores the man's ear. Isn't that just like Jesus? Even in the face of His own destruction, He shows compassion for the man.

Jesus questions the priest and the temple guard who had come for Him, asking why they waited until this moment to arrest Him. Why didn't they take the chance they had so many days ago?

He then acknowledges this is their moment where the power and authority of darkness belong to them (**verse 53**).

Although it is not a pleasant thought, it is a reality that we must face as believers. There are moments in time where the power of darkness reigns, and we will be faced with trials and tribulations.

Once Jesus is arrested, they lead him away to the priest's home. Peter, being true to his word, follows—at a distance.

Peter is first noticed by a servant girl and then by someone else in the crowd who says, "He must be one of them." Finally, an hour later someone else says that he must be one of Jesus' followers because he is Galilean.

By **verse 60** Peter has whole-heartedly denied knowing Christ twice. With his third denial, the rooster crows.

At that moment, Jesus looked at Peter. The words of Jesus came flooding back to Peter, causing him to leave weeping and in distress.

When we look at the word of God, we are also looking at Jesus. Like Peter, our hearts should be heavy with the knowledge of our sins against Him.

As **chapter 22** closes, the fulfillment of the prophecy continues. Jesus begins to be mocked, beaten, and ridiculed.

Chapter 23 opens with the whole assembly bringing Jesus before Pilate. They bring the charges against Him, but to their disappointment, Pilate finds no wrong with Jesus. He absolves himself of responsibility and sends Him to Herod.

Next, Jesus is taken to Herod (**verses 6-7**). Some would say it is a coincidence that Herod was in Jerusalem at this time.

However, we as Christians know there are no such things as coincidence. All things work as God plans them to and just like all the other events that have led up to this

point, Herod being in Jerusalem was necessary for the prophecy to be fulfilled (**verses 8-17**).

Halfway through **chapter 23**, we reach the climax in the story and Jesus is on the way to be crucified. Just as it happened in His preaching ministry, a large crowd followed, which included women who wept for Him.

Even in His death, Jesus cautions the women of Jerusalem and gives a warning of the punishment that is to come (**verses 27-31**).

Luke continues to highlight the compassion that Christ has for all humanity.

By **verse 33**, they have reached Golgotha, and Christ's crucifixion has begun.

Christ finds Himself hanging between two completely different people. One criminal rejected and mocked Jesus, asking Him to save Himself and them, too.

The other recognized that his punishment was deserved but that Christ had done nothing wrong.

Even in his final breath on the cross, Jesus had compassion at this second man's acknowledgment of his own sin. Jesus tells him, "I assure you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (**verse 43**).

Finally, the time has come for Jesus to die. The veil in the temple has been torn and with a loud voice, Jesus commits His Spirit into the Father's hands (**verse 46**).

The officer overseeing what happened began to worship, and the crowd began to weep. This is the proper response to the gospel. It should create worship inside us. It should humble and break our hearts that Jesus, who knew no sin, took on the sins of the world on our behalf.

After the crucifixion, a man named Joseph of Arimathea requested Jesus's body from Pilot and took it to be buried.

Luke provides specifics about who the man is, his position, and his stance on what took place with Jesus. Staying true to the promise he made at the beginning of the letter, Luke provides readers a detailed account of who was there and what happened.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there anything you learned about the events of Jesus' death that you didn't know before? If so, what are they?
2. Think about the instances of the slave who had his ear cut off, the women of Jerusalem, and the thief on the cross.

What does it tell you about Jesus that, even in the face of death, He was still healing and saving those around Him?

3. What is the significance of Peter's denial of Jesus? Have there been times in your life that you have denied Jesus?

If so, take time to repent of those moments and ask for forgiveness.

Read Luke 24:1-53.

Luke 24 begins the second climactic moment on this journey through Jesus's life. After the crucifixion, comes the Resurrection.

Here we see in **verse 1 of chapter 24**, the women who followed Jesus continue to play a crucial role in His ministry.

They come to the tomb to anoint His body with the spices they prepared but they never expected to find what they found—or shall we say what they did not find. The Scripture goes on to say, *“So, they went in, but they didn’t find the body of the Lord Jesus. As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them clothed in dazzling robes” (verses 3-4).*

The question posed to the women in **verse 6** is one of the most famous and prophecy-fulfilling in the resurrection story: *“Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here. He is risen from the dead” (verses 5-6).*

The women went back and told the disciples and all around them what happened, but even now the disciples thought it nonsense and they did not believe them. Even after Peter goes to the tomb and looks for himself he goes away wondering what happened.

Many of us face a similar situation today. Even though we have the promises and truth of God's word, we still walk around wondering is this real. Does it sound like nonsense? And we struggle to believe.

Verse 13 of chapter 24, Luke continues the pattern he has followed in previous chapters by telling accounts of interactions with Jesus and the significance of those events.

Luke is now recording post-Resurrection events, beginning with the road to Emmaus, where He appears to two men. After that Jesus appears to the disciples.

At His appearance, the group becomes frightened, despite the fact Jesus had told them what would happen, how it would happen, and that He would return. Sadly, the disciples were in disbelief.

In **verse 44**, Jesus opens their minds so that they might understand the scriptures.

He goes on to tell them that He will be sending the Holy Spirit just as the Father promised and instructs them to stay in Jerusalem until they have been fully equipped. We also need the Holy Spirit to help us understand the meanings and messages in God's word. Looking back to week 2 when Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus told him that flesh and blood did not reveal that knowledge to him but that it came from the Father, who is in heaven.

The falling action in this story centers around the Ascension of Jesus in **verse 50**. He leads the disciples out to Bethany and blesses them.

He was taken up to heaven and the disciples worshipped Him. Then they returned to Jerusalem and continued in the temple praising God (**verses 50-53**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the disciples receive the message of the resurrected Jesus that Mary delivered?
2. Why is the resurrection important to Christians and their faith? How has the resurrection of Jesus changed you?
3. If you're still considering whether to trust and follow Jesus, how has what we've discussed in these lessons helped you with that decision?

Summary of The Book of Luke

Luke is a letter like many other books of the New Testament.

It is one of the synoptic gospels, along with Matthew and Mark. And a part of the first four books of the New Testament also known as the gospels.

From the detailed narratives throughout this book, we see that Luke is true to the purpose he declared in chapter 1 verse 1.

Luke gives the most comprehensive record of Jesus, including His ancestry, birth, development as a child, and ministry.

Consistent throughout all 24 chapters is the theme of all-inclusive salvation. On numerous occasions, Luke highlights that Jesus is the Messiah who has come to save the world.

Another common thread we see in Luke is the humility of Christ. From a humble birth in the manger to His entry into Jerusalem, Christ the King has always been the King of the average person.

This idea is a model for believers around the world today. Christianity is not about elevating ourselves over another person but being humble servants on a mission for the kingdom of God.

Luke also carefully emphasizes the need to repent, and the cost that comes with repentance and following Jesus.

Christianity comes with rejection, sacrifice, commitment, and trust.

These are the messages Jesus conveyed through parables with the hope that followers would truly understand who He is, why He came, and what it means to follow Him.

The strong emphasis on salvation for all could be because Luke himself is a Gentile. The good news that runs throughout all of Luke is the same good news Christians have today.

He came not just for one group, not just for the Jews or the nobles in society. He came for the least of these: the poor, the tax collectors, the destitute, the untouchables that no one else will interact with.

Luke reminds us throughout his book that Jesus came for all mankind and desires for everyone to be in a relationship with Him.