

Seeing Jesus: Loving Under Pressure
Luke 23:18-29
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Jesus said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” In his final hours, more than at any other period of his life, we encounter the deep appeal of God to our hearts.

I) What do we discover about Jesus in his final hours?

A) He is innocent

- Of all civil charges
- Of all spiritual charges

B) He is aggressively good

- Grieving over the Daughters of Jerusalem
- Praying over his executioners
- Welcoming the criminal

C) This is what God is like

Hebrews 1: He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature

D) Responding to this God

II) Why all the suffering?

A) Luke’s question:

If God’s Son was so innocent and so good, why didn’t God act on his behalf?

- *v. 35: He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his chosen One!*”
- *v. 39: Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us*
- *Ps 2.7: You are my Son...I will make the nations your heritage...You shall break them with a rod of iron.*

Consider the impact of all the taunting and savagery upon the Father

- Had silenced Peter at the transfiguration: *This is my chosen One: listen to him!*
- Now silence

B) God’s love for us required it

III) Learning from the criminal

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) If you were God and wanted to persuade reluctant human beings to trust and follow you, what would you do?
- 2) Luke repeatedly assures us of Jesus' innocence (both civic and spiritual) in Luke 23. List at least three demonstrations of civic innocence and at least two instances of spiritual innocence. Why is he so eager to do this (concerning civic innocence consider the audience for whom he is writing—see Luke 1:1-4)?
- 3) More than innocent of any crime, civic or spiritual, Jesus is also aggressively loving in at least three ways in Luke 23. What are those ways (not counting the choice to submit to crucifixion)?
- 4) Jesus tells us, "He who has seen me has seen the Father," and Hebrews 1 confirms this: "He is the radiance of the glory of God—the exact imprint of his nature." Reflect on the particular things that Jesus says and does beginning with his walk to the place of execution. What does each of them reveal about the heart of God? Spend some time thanking God for what you discover.
- 5) How does God respond to Peter's effort to equate Moses and Elijah with Jesus at the transfiguration (Luke 9:35)? Why? Why, by contrast, does God say and do nothing when at the crucifixion Jesus' beloved identity is repeatedly thrown in his face?
- 6) How must it have felt to the Father to say and do nothing on behalf of his Son on Good Friday? Why according to Luke 24:46-47 did God make that choice?
- 7) Reflect on the words of the criminal in vv. 40-42. What do they reveal about the things that he has discovered about himself and about Jesus? What would it look like for you, in your own language and context, to respond to Jesus as he does? Spend some time doing so.