

MIDWEEK OF LENT 5: PARTICIPANT
WEEK 6: WEEK OF APRIL 7
THE TRIAL
Luke 22:63–23:25

OPENING

O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession,
What dark transgression?

What punishment so strange is suffered yonder!
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander;
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him,
Who would not know Him.

—“O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken” (*LSB* 439, vv. 1, 4)

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:63–23:25), Luke relates the trial and condemnation of Jesus. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between the changing will of humans, seen in the condemnation of Jesus, and God’s eternal will, seen in the fulfillment of prophecy.

As we meditate on this section of the Passion Narrative, Luke reveals how, in the midst of our changing, sinful human will, God’s eternal saving will is done.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luke’s account of the trial directly follows Peter’s denial of Jesus. In Peter, we see the sinful power of a changing will. Peter desired to follow Jesus “to prison and to death” (22:33), and yet he ended up denying Jesus to save his own life.

This theme of the sinful changing human will continues throughout the trial. Identify the ways in which different people manifest a sinful changing human will.

2. In this midst of such changing human wills, God's eternal will is done. Luke opens with the guards mocking Jesus as a prophet. How is this theme of Jesus as a prophet significant to discerning God's eternal will in these events?

3. To all of the changing wills in this text, Luke gives us a hint of one more change that will occur—the repentance of God's people. How does the threefold denial that occurs at the end of this section (Luke 23:13–23), when read in light of Jesus' prophecy of Peter's denial (22:31–34), offer hope for the repentance of God's people and offer hope for us today?

CONCLUSION

Earlier in Luke, Jesus wept over Jerusalem (19:41–44). He lamented that they were blind to “the things that make for peace” and did not know “the time of your visitation.” The hopes of Israel were being fulfilled in Jesus, even though no one in Israel could see the reign and rule of God that had come in Him.

By grace, we now see the wonderful patience and mercy of God, working for the salvation of people who had turned away from Him. That patience is still present among us today, gathering us as His people around His Word, whereby He reveals His work of salvation until He comes again (2 Peter 3:1–9).

CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, Your faithfulness endures throughout all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or the sea was formed or the earth was filled with Your creatures, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

In grace, You sent Your Son to a people of changing wills that He might accomplish Your eternal will and bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Comfort us now with Your eternal love. Forgive us our sin and fill us with Your Holy Spirit that we might live in unchanging love of You and willing obedience to Your commands, bringing Your message of salvation to the ends of the earth.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.