

3 Days that Changed the World Thursday – A Perversion of Justice – Luke 22-23

If you had to pick the 3 most influential days in the history of the world
3 consecutive days that had the most impact on civilization as we know it
At the top of your list would have to be the last 3 days of Christ's life (death)
The 3 days covering his death, burial, and resurrection

Whether you believe in him or not, those days have changed the world more than any
other days in history – more changed lives, more wars, more economic impact, more
personal sacrifice, more love, more hatred, more everything because of them

If you're like me – it wasn't until 5 years ago that I knew anything more than the basics
Jesus came to earth, died on a cross, was buried, and rose again
If I *did* know anything else, I couldn't put it all together
I had little to no idea what he did when, how, or why
When the gospels themselves spend a third of their pages on the last week of his life –
that's a shame; we're missing something

Spend the next 3 Sundays looking at Christ's last 3 days
My desire is that by knowing his life better, we'll know him better
By understanding his experiences, we'll understand him
That's the goal – to know him more, to deepen your relationship with him

To that end, I want to start with a timeline of the last week of Christ's life
Most scholars agree that Jesus was crucified on Friday, April 7th AD 30

Timeline of Christ's last week

April 2-9, AD 30

- Sunday, April 2 – Palm Sunday as Jesus approached Jerusalem (**map of Jerusalem**)
- Monday to Wednesday – Jesus taught in the temple
Started by clearing it on Monday
- Wednesday Night – Judas plotted to betray Jesus
- Thursday
After 6 p.m. – Last Supper (Passover meal)
Night – Last words on way to Garden of Gethsemane (John 15-16)
(1 mile)
Late night – Prayer in temple en route to garden (John 17)
Midnight – Prayer and agony in garden
- Friday
Just after midnight – Betrayal in garden
(Starts a whole series of examinations, interrogations, inquisitions)
1 a.m. – Examination at house of Annas
(1 mile; Former high priest; Denials of Peter)
2 a.m. – Mock trial before religious leaders
(Council chambers in temple; ½ mile)
4 a.m. – Jesus sentenced; Judas commits suicide
5 a.m. – 1st appearance before Pilate
(Herod's Palace; ½ mile)
6 a.m. – Questioned by Herod Antipas
(Palace 1/4 mile east; Son of Herod the Great; Governed area of Galilee)
7 a.m. – 2nd appearance before Pilate and angry crowd

8 a.m. – Carried cross to Golgotha
9 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Jesus crucified
Before 6 p.m. – Jesus buried
(before the Sabbath started at 6 p.m.; Stone in place)

- Saturday – Tomb sealed by Pilate
- Sunday, April 9th, AD 30 – Christ arose

When combine all the gospel accounts – those are the events and approximate times of
Christ's last days
This morning – focus on the events of Thursday night and Friday morning in **Luke 22-23**

Want you to see . . .

1. The perversion of justice in these events
2. That it was *intentional* on God's part
3. That if God can use such a messed up, wicked process like this to accomplish his
purposes in *Christ* – he can use anything to accomplish his purposes in *you*
Even things that man intends for evil

Start with the fact that God intentionally used a perversion of justice to accomplish his
purposes in Christ – read **Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28**
Which is why we can say that God *used* a perversion of justice to change the world
Doesn't mean he *caused* the perversion of justice
It means he used the evil intent of lawless men for good

Started with the influence of Satan

God used the influence of Satan to betray his Son (22:3-6; 47-48)

Read Lk 22:3-6; 47-48

Loyalty was obviously the furthest thing from Judas' mind
Greed was on the front burner (Matt – 30 silver coins)

When Judas entertained the temptation of getting something for nothing . . .
Gave Satan an opportunity to influence him (Eph 4:27)
Ending with his suicide by hanging, and his body bursting open in the field of blood

When you entertain temptation, people get hurt, including yourself
In this case, Judas received his due penalty
While Jesus bore the brunt of a perversion of justice – closest followers betrayed him
Fortunately, God used it for a greater purpose

God used the hatred of men to abuse his Son (22:63-65)

Read 22:63-65 – other gospels add . . . spit in his face; struck him w/ fists; slapped him
Blaspheming him – swore at him and cursed his beliefs
Painful to read and think about for anyone, let alone Jesus
Let alone the One who loved them and was about to die for them; Hard to imagine

Only intense hatred, combined w/ absence of accountab., could account for such treatment
History is filled with such accounts, especially during wartime
Lone ranger soldiers w/ no accountability, take their frustrations/hatred out on prisoners
When hatred is present and accountability absent – cruelty and abuse are the result
That's a perversion of justice

In this case – God used it not only to bring about the death and suffering of his Son
But as an example for us – I used to wonder why all the suffering
So that when you encounter difficulty in your life, you can . . .
*Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you
may not grow weary or fainthearted.* (Heb 12:3)
When you think you have a bad day, when you think you’re suffering more than you
can handle – you can look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith
God used the hatred of men to pervert justice, abuse his Son, and provide an example of
perseverance in the face of suffering

God used the self-interest of leaders to convict his Son (22:1-2, 66-71)

Read Lk 22:2

Lk 19:47-48 – leaders were *seeking to destroy him*, but hands were tied because the
people were hanging on his words
Matt – feared the people would riot if they killed Jesus without just cause
If they rioted, they might lose their position and power

So their self-interest (desire to preserve their power and position) led them to find an
“acceptable” reason to execute him

Needed to convict him of a crime punishable by death – ya, that’ll do it

So they paraded a pathetic cast of false accusers before him to trump up charges and
manufacture evidence

Eventually convicting him of blasphemy (religious irreverence) by his own testimony
that he was the Christ – the Son of God (God in the flesh)

And that he would rule with God and come again in power and glory

Blasphemy – that was their ticket

Blasphemy according to OT Law was punishable by death – *Whoever blasphemes the
name of the Lord shall surely be put to death.* (Lev 24:16)

Perfect – So they sentenced him to death (Mk 14:64)

There was only one problem – according to Roman law, they *couldn’t* put him to death

Only the Roman appointed rulers could do that, which is why they took him to Pilate

It was there, risking Pilate’s wrath at 5 a.m., that . . .

God used the weakness of rulers to punish his Son (23:1-17; 24-25)

Look at the change in charges – read 23:1-5 (insurrectionist, no taxes, king, tyranny)

Pilate could have stopped the whole thing at v4; End of story

But his convictions were weak – especially in the face of pressure from the religious
leaders, crowds, Rome, and even his wife

He was more concerned about keeping the peace and preserving his job, than doing
what was right no matter what the outcome

So he jumped at the chance to avoid the situation by passing him off to Herod (rd 23:6-7)

That’s going from bad to worse

At least Pilate had some *weak* convictions – Herod didn’t have *any*

Same guy who married his brother’s wife; Beheaded John the Baptist to save face

This was a great big show; Entertainment; Big joke

In true form (23:8-11) – mocked him, made a spectacle of him (purple robe/royalty) . . .

Sent him back to Pilate (read 23:12) – isn’t that special

A weak friendship between weak rulers, forged at the expense of the Son of God

Pilate calls them all together and tries to *reason* with them, and appease them with some
punishment – read 23:14-16

Doesn’t work; Eventually he caves – releasing him to the will of the people (23:25b)

God used the weakness of rulers to punish his Son and determine his death

In the process, he provided a crystal clear picture of what Jesus was about to do

Barabbas was a guilty criminal destined to die for his sin (23:18-19)

Instead, Jesus took his place to die the death he deserved

That’s the gospel – him for me

God, in his perfect plan, used the weakness of rulers to bring it about

God used the madness of crowds to condemn his Son (23:18-23)

Read Lk 23:18-23 – their voices prevailed

Mad crowds carry a lot of weight/risk; They’re cause for concern

All it takes is a spark, and looting, rioting, loss of life

Often times, in the midst of the hysteria, the crowd loses sight of why they’re even mad

They just love to be mad

Once the spark is lit, there’s no going back

That was the fear of Pilate – a riot, an uprising

Very real risk at that time – especially with the backlash of an occupying force

Pilate knew that more than one governor had been de-throned due to riots in Judea

This one was about to get out of control

Famous investment book called “Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of
Crowds” – Charles Mackay, 1841

Recounts several outlandish investment bubbles (well before beanie babies) and the
ridiculous prices people were willing to pay in order to participate . . .

Only to find their investment disappear when the bubble burst

It’s a study in herd mentality – the lengths people will go to when caught up in the
madness of a crowd

He says in his preface – *Religious manias have been purposely excluded as incompatible
with the limits prescribed to the present work; a mere list of them would alone be
sufficient to occupy a volume.*

But had he included them, surely the madness of this crowd would have been at the top

It’s exactly what God used, in his sovereignty, to condemn his Son to death

Summary

Truly, God’s ways are not our ways; None of us would ever use . . .

The influence of Satan to betray our Son

The hatred of men to abuse our Son

The self-interest of leaders to convict our Son

The weakness of rulers to punish our Son

The madness of crowds to condemn our Son

None of us would ever intentionally use a perversion of justice to sacrifice our son

But thanks be to God that he did – otherwise, where would we be?

Hope you see God's perfect sovereignty in these events

Hope you love Jesus more because of what he endured

Hope you understand that if God can use such a messed up, wicked process like this to accomplish his purposes in *Christ* . . .

He can use the messed up circumstances of your life to accomplish his purposes in *you*

Pray

Only a God like you could do something like that

Only a God like you is worthy of our praise

Close

Friday – An Unthinkable Death

How it fits with Passover

What it meant physically/spiritually