

Weekly Study Guide

08/25/24 - The Cross of Redemption

Read Luke 23:13-25

13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. 15 Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. 16 Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.” 17 (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). 18 But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” 19 Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder. 20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” 22 For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have him punished and then release him.” 23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25 He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Questions:

1. What stands out to you in the verses above? What is the main focus? Is there anything that catches your attention?
2. Describe these verses with a word or phrase or suggest a chapter title or news headline for this passage.
3. How are Barabbas and Jesus similar? In what ways are the two being contrasted in this narrative? What are the major differences between them?
4. Why did a guilty man go free while an innocent man died? Why is this relevant? What is the central truth here?
5. Share a few takeaways from this passage. How can you apply this to your life? How can it strengthen your relationship with God? Is there anything you've believed in the past that needs to change?

References: [Luke 23:13-25, 34](#); [John 18:39-40](#); [Matthew 27:15-16](#); [Mark 15:6-7](#); [John 8:41](#); [Matthew 3:16-17, 4:1-3](#); [John 1:12](#); [Romans 3:23, 6:23](#); [1 Corinthians 5:7](#); [1 Peter 1:19](#); [1 Peter 3:18](#); [Galatians 2:20, 5:24](#); [Romans 6:6-8](#); [Luke 9:23-24](#)

For later: What about you? What side of the cross are you on? Prayerfully consider how this lesson relates to you. What will change in view of this lesson? How will you ensure that you don't waste your cross?

Lesson Key:

1. Jesus, an innocent man, was unjustly sentenced to death while a guilty man went free. The focus seems to be the exchange or substitution, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty. Like Barabbas, we are guilty and without excuse. We deserve to die, but Jesus took our place. He was punished for us.
2. Injustice. Unfair. Forgiven. An Unrighteous Verdict. A Heavenly Substitution. The Swap! Unjust Scales. A Righteous Exchange. When the Good Are Silent. Mob Rule. Redemption. Paid in Full. Bought Back!
3. Both were accused of insurrection. Both were seen as rebels. Both were on trial. Barabbas means "son of a father." Barabbas didn't know his father. He was illegitimate. He was of the world. Barabbas though guilty was set free. Jesus was God's only begotten Son. He was from and the true Son of God. He had legitimate claim to God as His Father. Though innocent, Jesus is sent to the cross to be punished. The guilty one is released, while the innocent one is sentenced to death by crucifixion.
4. Through the stressing of Jesus' innocence and Barabbas's guilt, Luke is leading us to identify with Barabbas. The release of a guilty criminal named Barabbas is a foreshadow of the grace that was unleashed through Christ's death on the cross. We are all guilty before God. [Romans 3:23-24](#) says "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Through this exchange, as Pilate releases Barabbas the guilty, and delivers over to death Jesus the innocent, we have here a picture of our own release effected by the cross through faith ([Romans 6:23](#)). Christ, the sinless, spotless Passover Lamb of God is the sacrifice for our sin ([1 Peter 1:18-21](#) and [1 Cor. 5:7](#)).
5. We are given a choice. Good or evil. Murder and violence or peace and love. The world or heaven. The legitimate Son of God or any number of illegitimate alternatives. Our choice is the difference between life and death. Christ's death on the cross paid for our sins and restores our relationship with God. By receiving Christ, we can be forgiven and set free from our sin.