

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 26: The Last Supper, the Cross, and the Resurrection -- Luke 22:1–24:53

Everything in Luke has been moving toward this. From the moment the angel told Mary she would bear the Son of the Most High, from the hour Jesus stood in the synagogue at Nazareth and announced that the Scripture was fulfilled in their hearing, from the day He set His face toward Jerusalem knowing what waited for Him there, the whole Gospel has been leaning forward to these three chapters. Now the borrowed upper room is prepared, the bread is on the table, the cup is poured, and the Lord who came to seek and to save the lost is about to give Himself for the very people who will abandon, deny, and crucify Him. This is the climax of Luke, and it is the climax of human history. Read it slowly. Do not let familiarity rob you of the weight of it.

Watch how tenderly and how deliberately Jesus moves through His final hours. He takes bread and a cup and gives His disciples a memorial they will keep until He comes again, telling them, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (22:19). He kneels in Gethsemane and prays until His sweat is like drops of blood, surrendering His will to the Father: “not my will, but yours, be done” (22:42). He heals the ear of a man who came to arrest Him. He looks at Peter across a courtyard the moment the rooster crows. At every step the Son of God is in command of His own self-giving, laying down His life because no one could take it from Him unless He allowed it.

Then comes the cross. Two criminals hang beside Him, and one of them, in the last hour of a wasted life, turns and says, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom,” and hears the astonishing answer, “today you will be with me in Paradise” (23:42–43). Jesus commits His spirit to the Father and breathes His last. The curtain of the temple is torn in two. A hardened Roman centurion looks at the dead man on the middle cross and confesses, “Certainly this man was innocent” (23:47). For one dark Sabbath it seems that the story is over, that hope has been sealed in a tomb with a stone rolled across the door.

But it is not over. On the first day of the week the women come to the tomb and find the stone rolled away and the body gone, and two men in dazzling apparel ask them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen” (24:5–6). The risen Christ walks with two heartbroken disciples on the road to Emmaus and opens the Scriptures to them. He stands among the eleven, shows them His hands and feet, eats a piece of fish to prove He is no ghost, and declares that everything written about Him in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled, that He had to suffer and rise, and that “repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (24:47). Then He lifts His hands, blesses them, and is carried up into heaven. The empty tomb is the hinge on which

everything turns. As you finish this study of Luke, do not merely admire the story. Let the risen Lord ask you what He asked the first disciples: will you believe, and will you follow?

Group Discussion: On the night before He died, Jesus gave His church a memorial, taking bread and a cup and saying, “Do this in remembrance of me” (22:19). Why do you think Jesus chose a simple, repeated meal of bread and cup, rather than a monument or a holiday, as the way His people would remember His death? What does it say about Him that, facing betrayal and the cross, His thoughts were on giving His disciples something to hold onto?

Personal Reflection: In Gethsemane, with the cross before Him, Jesus prayed, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” (22:42). Where in your own life right now is God asking you to pray that same prayer, to honestly name what you wish were different and then to surrender it to His will? What makes “not my will, but yours” so hard to mean, and what would it look like to pray it this week?

Read Luke 22:1–24:53

Study Questions

1. On the night He was betrayed Jesus took bread and a cup and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me,” and “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (22:19–20). What does the Lord’s Supper teach about the meaning of Jesus’ death and the new covenant, and what does it mean that He commanded His church to keep this memorial until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)?
2. The disciples argued about “which of them was to be regarded as the greatest” on the very night Jesus was preparing to die for them, and He answered, “let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves” (22:24–27). Where do you still measure your worth by status, recognition, or being served rather than serving, and what would it look like this week to take the lower place the way Jesus did?
3. In Gethsemane Jesus prayed in agony, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” (22:42), and an angel came and strengthened Him. What does this scene reveal about who Jesus is, about the real cost of the cross, and about what it means that He chose to drink the cup of God’s wrath in our place?
4. After Jesus told Peter he would deny Him three times, Peter insisted he was ready to go to prison and death, yet by the firelight he swore he did not know the man, and when the rooster crowed “the Lord turned and looked at Peter” and he “went out and wept bitterly” (22:61–62). When have you been more confident in your own loyalty to Christ than you should have been, and what does the Lord’s look of love rather than condemnation stir in you about how He meets you in your failures?
5. Jesus stood trial before the council, before Pilate, and before Herod, and though He was found innocent again and again (“I find no guilt in this man,” 23:4), He was condemned while Barabbas, a man guilty of insurrection and murder, was released in His place (23:25). What does this exchange of the innocent for the guilty teach about the meaning of Jesus’

death, and how does the silence and innocence of Jesus before His accusers fulfill the Scriptures?

6. As the soldiers nailed Him to the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (23:34). Who in your life is hardest for you to forgive, and what does it do to your heart to watch the sinless Son of God extend forgiveness to the very men driving the nails, even before they ask for it?
7. One of the criminals crucified beside Jesus turned to Him and said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom," and Jesus answered, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (23:42-43). Some use this dying thief to argue that baptism is unnecessary for salvation today. How should we understand this man's salvation in light of when he lived and died, and why is he not the pattern for how people are saved under the new covenant after the resurrection (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4)?
8. On the road to Emmaus two grieving disciples walked with the risen Jesus without recognizing Him, until "he took the bread and blessed and broke it," and "their eyes were opened," and they remembered how "our hearts burning within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures" (24:30-32). When has Jesus felt distant or hidden to you in a season of disappointment, and how does this story encourage you to keep walking with Him and listening to His word even when you cannot feel His nearness?
9. On the first day of the week the women found the tomb empty and were asked, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (24:5-6), and the risen Jesus later showed the disciples His hands and feet, ate before them, and declared that the Christ had to suffer and rise and that "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (24:46-47). Why is the bodily resurrection of Jesus the foundation of the whole gospel, and how does the risen Lord's own commission tie the cross, the new covenant, and the plan of salvation together as the climax of everything Luke has been telling us?
10. We have now walked all the way through Luke, from the angel's announcement to Mary, through the ministry, the parables, the journey to Jerusalem, and now the cross, the empty tomb, and the ascension. The same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem now reigns at the right hand of God, and He calls every person who hears His story to respond. Looking back across this entire study, name one specific way the Lord Jesus has formed you through the Gospel of Luke. What is the one truth from these final chapters, and from the whole book, that you most need to carry forward, and how will you answer the risen Christ who stands before you today?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Paul's account of the Lord's Supper as a proclamation of the Lord's death until He comes; Acts 2:22-41, the resurrection preached at

Pentecost and the answer to “what shall we do,” repent and be baptized; Romans 6:3–11, buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life; 1 Corinthians 15:1–22, the resurrection as the foundation and certainty of the gospel; Acts 20:7, the church gathered on the first day of the week to break bread.