

Rising from the Grave

A music student visited Beethoven's grave soon after the great composer's death and sat quietly. He heard music faintly, muffled, rising from the grave; it sounded familiar in a way but not quite right. The student asked the caretaker what it might be.

"Yesterday it was Beethoven's sixth symphony and today it's the fifth. You're hearing them backwards."

"Backwards? Why backwards?"

"Beethoven's dead and buried, so now he's de-composing."

We have a savior who himself lives on. Jesus conquered sin, death, even decomposition. And he offers us eternal life with him as well, a better life than we can ever hope to achieve on our own. Let's spend this week learning about the death he died for us, and the life he offers.

Monday – Arrested and Alone

"There are places and moments in which one is so completely alone that one sees the world entire." Jules Renard, 19th-20th c. French writer

1. Please read Luke 22:39-46. What was the purpose of Jesus' prayer request? How would you have responded to him?
2. What did Jesus pray for himself? Why do you think he did so, when he already knew his purpose that night? How did God the Father answer Jesus, God the Son?
3. What did Judas do in Luke 22:1-6 and 22:47-53? How did Jesus handle being arrested? What might you have thought if you were there with Jesus that night?

Making it Personal: Pray that God will guide and strengthen you in following his will.

Tuesday – Mockery

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." Galatians 6:7

1. Please read Luke 22:31-34 and 22:54-62 and describe what happened to Peter.
2. How did Peter's actions make a mockery of his relationship with Jesus?
3. Compare Peter's actions with those of the soldiers in Luke 22:63-65. What is the practical difference between Peter's attitude and that of the soldiers?

Making it Personal: When do your actions mock your relationship with Jesus? What can you do about it?

Wednesday – Trial after Trial

"Do not test the LORD your God." Deuteronomy 6:16

1. Please read Luke 22:66-71. What did Jesus admit to? Why was this so offensive to the religious leaders?
2. In Luke 23:1-7, why do you think the religious leaders did not bring charges of blasphemy against Jesus in Pilate's presence? What did they appeal to instead?
3. What sort of trial did Herod conduct in Luke 23:8-12? How did it differ from Pilate's inquiry?

Text Insight: The religious leaders considered Jesus' claim to be blasphemy, a crime punishable by death under their laws. However, they did not have the authority under Roman rule to carry out the death sentence themselves so they took Jesus to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. The Romans didn't really care who claimed to be God, since their religion assumed there were lots of gods in the world.

Thursday – Judgment

"Men of ill judgment oft ignore the good that lies within their hands, till they have lost it." Sophocles, 5th c. BC Greek playwright

1. Please read Luke 23:13-25. What was Pilate's initial judgment upon Jesus? Why did this change?

Text Insight: "Barabbas" is a Hebrew name and roughly translates to "Son of the Father". The irony here is that Jesus truly is the one who is the Son of Father God.

2. Who came to support Jesus in Luke 23:26-43? How did he respond to them?
3. How did one of those sentenced to death with Jesus honor him in his final moments?

Making it Personal: The criminal on the cross offered Jesus the only thing he had left, his full trust. Pray for God to guide you in trusting Jesus so that you too can honor him with all you have.

Friday – Dead and Gone

"The day which we fear as our last is but the birthday of eternity." Seneca, 1st c. Roman philosopher

1. Please read Luke 23:44-56. What was the last thing Jesus said? How does this compare with the request from the thief in verse 42?
2. What did the women in Luke 24:1-12 expect to find? What did the angel remind them to have expected?

Text Insight: In Jewish culture at that time, a portion of a day counted as a day itself. The first day of Jesus' death was the day he was crucified (sometimes called Good Friday), the second was the next day (Saturday, the day of Sabbath rest), and the third was the day of his resurrection (the Sunday we now call Easter).

3. What is the significance of Peter being the one to get up and run to the tomb while the others thought the women were speaking nonsense?

Digging Deeper (optional): In John 12:15-19, we see a scene occurring after Jesus' resurrection. How does it balance Peter's actions in betraying Jesus after his arrest?

For the Weekend: Read Luke 24:13-53, and put yourself in the shoes of the disciples Jesus walked with on the road and ate with in Jerusalem. What parts of their actions and words can you most identify with?