

SIX HOURS

Group Reading Plan

Week 1: Luke 23:34

Get the big picture of Sermon Series: Over the next 7 weeks, we will be focusing on Jesus' Crucifixion and his last words spoken from the cross. This sermon series will coincide with the historical church's season of Lent. Depending on your background, you may have heard of the forty-day season of Lent or even practiced things like fasting during this season. The overall purpose of the sermon series and the Lenten season is to focus on Jesus' sacrifice and prepare our hearts for the celebration of His resurrection. If you want to learn more about Lent, check out these blogs by "[Crosswalk](#)" and "[Cru](#)". We have also prepared a Forty Day Forest Hill Bible Reading Journal with Devotional Questions that follows along with the "Six Hours" sermon series. You can find it [digitally here](#) or pick up a printed copy at any of our five campuses.

Talk through these questions with your Life Group, your family and friends or others who are walking through this season leading up to Easter with you:

- For the next seven weeks, we will be considering Jesus' crucifixion and the last words Jesus spoke on the cross as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Sometimes we are so familiar with these accounts that we skim over them rather than consider each word and phrase carefully. Begin by reading Luke 23:32-49 slowly and picture the scene in your mind. Who is there witnessing Jesus' death? What would each of them be thinking and feeling?
- In Luke 23, who are Jesus' first words from the cross addressed to? Why do you think Jesus' first words are to Him? When you are in pain or danger who do you usually talk to first?

- Read Luke 23:34 and consider again the various people who are witnessing Jesus' death. Who do you think Jesus was talking about when he said "they do not know what they are doing"? What do you believe it means that they "didn't know what they were doing" when they crucified Jesus? Do you think Jesus asked the Father to forgive them because they were innocent or not responsible for his death?
- Look at Isaiah 53. This prophecy about the Messiah was written hundreds of years before Jesus' crucifixion and foretold his life and death. Look at all the times it says "us" or "we" in this prophecy. In what ways are these statements true about you? Read Isaiah 53:11-12 again. How does it directly connect to Luke 23:34? What does it mean to intercede for someone? Does this change or widen who you think Jesus was asking the Father to forgive?
- In 1 Peter 2:19-25, Peter connects Isaiah 53 directly to Jesus. How does he also connect Jesus' crucifixion to the way we are to live as Christians? What is an area in your life where you are suffering, perhaps unjustly, and can respond like Jesus? Like Jesus asked the Father to forgive, are there people who harmed you that you need to intercede for like Jesus did on the cross?
- Close by reading Matthew 6:7-15. How does Jesus' forgiveness of us relate to how we treat or forgive others? Why do you think Jesus included forgiveness as part of his teaching on prayer? Describe a time your acceptance of God's forgiveness for you or your forgiveness or unforgiveness for someone else affected your prayer life. Conclude by praying the prayer Jesus modeled (Matthew 6:9-13).



Week 2: Luke 23:43

Talk through these questions with your Life Group, your family and friends or others who are walking through this season leading up to Easter with you:

- Begin by slowly reading Luke 23:32-43 again this week. Did you notice anything new that you missed last week?

- Look at Psalm 22:6-18. Where do you see Luke 23:32-43 echoed in this prophetic psalm? Why is it important to know that Jesus' crucifixion, including many particular details, was foretold in the Old Testament?
- The conversation between the robbers and Jesus while they were being crucified is unique to Luke's gospel account. Compare the two men's reactions to Jesus in Luke 23:39-43. What do each of them ask Jesus to do? How does Jesus respond to each of them and why? Why do you think Luke included these words between Jesus and the thieves in his account? What is he trying to show us about who Jesus is?
- Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What phrase do you see Paul repeating? How would you put this phrase in your own words? Paul is contrasting two kinds of people—those who are dead and those who are alive. Similarly, with the two thieves, Luke is contrasting two dying men's reaction to Jesus. What connections do you see between the two kinds of people Paul describes and the two thieves being crucified with Jesus?
- The Greek word used for “paradise” (parádeisos) in Luke 23:43 is also used in 2 Corinthians 12:3 and Revelation 2:7. By looking at all three of these words together, how would you describe what Jesus means by “paradise”? The same Greek word used in other places can also mean “garden”, and in Greek translations of the Old Testament it is used in Genesis 2 & 3. Look at Genesis 2:9 and compare it to Revelation 2:7. What do you notice? How does this help you better understand the place Jesus is talking about in Luke 23:43?
- Close by considering your own story of grace. How are you like the thief on the cross? When and where were you saved by grace like Paul described? If this isn't your story yet, what questions do you still have? Spend some time praying either asking God these questions or thanking Him for your salvation.

If you want to dive deeper, here are some other resources:

- The Cross, a video featuring Billy Graham and Lecrae that explores the power and meaning of Jesus' crucifixion and its power for our salvation: <https://youtu.be/IMZLPa-wCIA?si=XsB5GPWK5isA8hRy>
- Tim Mackie, founder of the Bible Project, teaching on the meaning of the word parádeisos: <https://youtu.be/HQIH-WfmZms?si=vOX5LIipbbA-aBeC>.

