

Hey Ladies! You did it! It is your last two weeks of study. Hopefully you can take some time and have the ladies share how they have been changed by this study on Jesus. Thank you for leading a group during this crazy Covid year- I know it takes dedication and perseverance to serve on such a consistent and long term basis. The Lord saw every one of your efforts. You made a huge difference in women's ministry this year. I love and appreciate you. XOXO Alisa

Week 8 Unexplainable Jesus

Day 1

I found this breakdown of the different trials Jesus was put on after he was arrested in the middle of the night. I hope it is helpful.

The night of Jesus' arrest, He was brought before Annas, Caiaphas, and an assembly of religious leaders called the Sanhedrin (John 18:19-24; Matthew 26:57). After this He was taken before Pilate, the Roman Governor (John 18:28), sent off to Herod (Luke 23:7), and returned to Pilate (Luke 23:11-12), who finally sentenced Him to death.

There were six parts to Jesus' trial: three stages in a religious court and three stages before a Roman court. Jesus was tried before Annas, the former high priest; Caiaphas, the current high priest; and the Sanhedrin. He was charged in these "ecclesiastical" trials with blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah.

The trials before Jewish authorities, the religious trials, showed the degree to which the Jewish leaders hated Him because they carelessly disregarded many of their own laws. There were several illegalities involved in these trials from the perspective of Jewish law: (1) No trial was to be held during feast time. (2) Each member of the court was to vote individually to convict or acquit, but Jesus was convicted by acclamation. (3) If the death penalty was given, a night must pass before the sentence was carried out; however, only a few hours passed before Jesus was placed on the Cross. (4) The Jews had no authority to execute anyone. (5) No trial was to be held at night, but this trial was held before dawn. (6) The accused was to be given counsel or representation, but Jesus had none. (7) The accused was not to be asked self-incriminating questions, but Jesus was asked if He was the Christ.

The trials before the Roman authorities started with Pilate (John 18:23) after Jesus was beaten. The charges brought against Him were very different from the charges in His religious trials. He was charged with inciting people to riot, forbidding the people to pay their taxes, and claiming to be King. Pilate found no reason to kill Jesus so he sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:7). Herod had Jesus ridiculed but, wanting to avoid the political liability, sent Jesus back to Pilate (Luke 23:11-12). This was the last trial as Pilate tried to appease the animosity of the Jews by having Jesus scourged. The Roman scourge was a terrible whipping designed to remove the flesh from the back of the one being punished.

In a final effort to have Jesus released, Pilate offered the prisoner Barabbas to be crucified and Jesus released, but to no avail. The crowds called for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. Pilate granted their demand and surrendered Jesus to their will (Luke 23:25). The trials of Jesus represent the ultimate mockery of justice. Jesus, the most innocent man in the history of the world, was found guilty of crimes and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

When considering the trials and persecution of Jesus, I remembered Luke 21:13-15 from last week's study (on the bottom of page 205). In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples that

- they would be brought before kings and governors for His name's sake.
- that this will be their opportunity to bear witness.
- that they need not to worry beforehand on how to answer because God will give them a mouth and wisdom, which none of their adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

For me, this is great encouragement. If my future holds persecution as a Christian- then Jesus promises me that I will have the courage and the words to say when that time comes (even if I lack courage and words today) I also know that my persecution will not go to waste- it will be for a purpose. It will be my opportunity to bear witness to the truth of Jesus Christ.

Day 2

It has never been pointed out to me that the "crowd" in these scenes constituted the Jewish leaders of the time- most of the normal public would have been in bed resting from the Passover festivities from the night before.

I have never really noticed what Jesus said to the women who were weeping next to Him as He walked to His death. He warned them- do not weep for me, but for yourselves and your children. He understood that the wrath of God would come upon all who rejected Jesus. I think Jesus recognized the state of their hearts and tried to minister to them in that terrifying moment. Those women must have thought about those words long into their lifetime.

I love, love, love the story of the thief on the cross that believed and submitted to Christ while he too was dying. It is never too late to pray for someone's salvation. There is nothing you must do to earn it. After his profession of belief, that criminal died- he had no time to "do " any works, and yet Jesus promised him that today he would be with Him in paradise.

It is a full circle moment when the veils tears from top to bottom at the death of Jesus- because remember where Luke started out? God spoke to Zechariah behind that veil about what was about to be set in motion.

How are you responding to the message of Jesus? Are you moved momentarily, and then continue life as normal? Are you curious but not really invested? Or have you accepted His offer and experienced life change?

Day 3

Joseph of Arimathea made a decision about Jesus that led to certain actions. A question you could pitch out to the ladies in your group is: when you put your faith in Jesus- what actions did it lead to in your life?

I like how Erica had us consider the bravery of both Joseph or Arimathea and the ladies who followed him to the tomb to see where the body of Jesus would be laid. I am not sure we can fully comprehend how dangerous these actions were- Jesus was just crucified under the explanation that he would lead an insurrection- and now Joseph and the ladies could potentially be punished for the same as His followers. It is convicting to me personally- I can gloss over theologically right and wrong in our culture today, in an effort to stay under the Christian “hate speech” radar and avoid persecution. I want to be known as a woman who BRAVELY HONORS JESUS in her life.

Day 4

Can you imagine being one of the men on the road to Emmaus and having Jesus himself explain the how all of the Scriptures taught of Him? That would be a sermon for the books! (Especially after giving Jesus a hard time- “how do you NOT know what has been going on these past few days in Jerusalem?”)

Jesus comes back to eat and talk with His disciples. He assures them through His words and actions that He is alive, that He will establish His kingdom and that they will be empowered to do His work.

A question you might want to pitch out to your group is what post-resurrection interaction do you like the most between Jesus and His followers, and why?

Day 5

I like where Erica takes this day- when Jesus ascended into heaven- His disciples had lots of questions. Everything was not laid out to them. They simply knew the next thing they were to do- go back to Jerusalem and wait on the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, in life that is what we need to do- we need to obey the next step and simply wait on the Lord- in an active and intentional sense.

The questions on page 242 and 243 of our study would be great ones to pitch out to your ladies.