

Luke 23:26-49

Good Friday

Introduction. Luke's account of the crucifixion of Jesus, like the other Gospels, understates the horror of this form of execution. Most at the time would have been well aware that being crucified was a terribly painful way of dying. However, Luke focuses on a series of contacts between Jesus and various people, on the way to his death on the cross.

The responses of Jesus, **willing suffering and forgiveness** and **the promise of Paradise**, reveal key **purposes of his mission**.

1. Jesus willingly suffered and offered forgiveness

- a. Some of the women in the crowd are mourning and wailing for Jesus as he walks to the place of crucifixion. **Jesus unexpectedly says, 'don't weep for me'**, and then warns them of future suffering which will be inflicted on many in Jerusalem
- b. Roman authorities (represented by the soldiers) with encouragement of some of the Jewish leaders crucify Jesus.
Jesus unexpectedly says, 'Father forgiven them, for they do not know what they are doing.' (They should have known better but still he offers them forgiveness – note that two, one of the criminals and a soldier, unexpectedly know something of who Jesus really is.)
- c. People in the crowd and the soldiers sneered at and mocked Jesus – speaking some of the truth but their words (and attitude) condemn them. **Jesus refuses to respond to their taunts to save himself.**
- d. One criminal mocks Jesus. **Jesus remains silent.**
- e. The other criminal defends Jesus, admits his own guilt and acknowledges the truth that Jesus is innocent. He then pleads with Jesus to be remembered favourably when Jesus comes into his kingdom. (He recognises in some way that Jesus has power to forgive, power even over death and the future.)

Jesus promises the criminal more than he dared to ask, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise'.

2. Jesus dies. Jesus committed his 'spirit' = life (himself), into the safe hands of his Heavenly Father. Jesus suffered the penalty we should have, 'he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree' (1Pet. 2:24), and 'he was once offered to bear the sins of many' (Heb. 9:28), yet he remained in the perfect will of the Father. He experienced both God's wrath against sin and His sustaining love and mercy. **God, in the form of the Son, took on Himself the penalty all humankind deserves so that we might have forgiveness and eternal life.**

Reflection/Response. Jesus' death happened long ago yet it was our sins that were the reason for his willing death, 'while we were still sinners Christ died for us' (Rm. 5:8). This is the **good news of Good Friday**. We are called to repent, believe in him and commit our lives to serving him (Acts 2:38-41). BB