

Faces in the Crowd
Luke 23:44-49

INTRODUCTION

The events during the last hours of the life of our Savior come in rapid fire succession. It begins on the Thursday night when Jesus has a simple Passover meal with his friends. Jesus begins the evening by washing the feet of His disciples. Next, He startles them with news that someone is going to betray Him. Then they have their Passover meal. During the ceremonial meal Jesus declares the words we have come to cherish, ***“This is my body, broken for you.” And “This cup represents the new covenant that is established through the shedding of my blood.”*** They are precious words to us, but confusing words to those who listened.

Within hours Jesus goes from arrest to execution. He is sentenced to death in a matter of hours. It is obvious to anyone that Jesus is being railroaded. But He endures.

These things all happen so quickly that it is easy for us to miss the impact of each event. So tonight, we want to replay one moment. In Luke 23:44-49 Luke describes the same moment as seen from several different perspectives. These are powerful and picturesque words.

I. The sun _____ shining

The first thing Luke does is show us what happened in the natural realm. **He gives us the broad picture.** As Jesus suffered on the cross there was darkness from noon to 3:00 in the afternoon. This was not a solar eclipse because Passover happens at the time of the full moon which makes an eclipse out of the question. As Jesus faced the wrath of God it was as if God Himself turned away.

II. Jesus _____ His spirit

Next, Luke zooms his camera in on the Savior as He dies on the cross. **Crucifixion is that a tortuous death.** It was designed to be slow and agonizing. The Romans saw this as a deterrent to crime. No simple execution here. If you crossed Rome, you would be punished! It was not uncommon for men to hang for days on the cross working to gain every gasp of breath before they were too weak. This is why the legs were going to be broken of those on the cross...to hasten their death. This is itself was certainly a gruesome prospect. The legs were broken to make breathing more difficult and eventually lead to suffocation.

III. The temple curtain was _____ in two

Luke tells us that when Jesus died the curtain in the temple tore in two. Matthew tells us that the curtain tore in two from top to bottom. This means that no one individual tore the curtain.

IV. The Centurion _____ to Jesus' innocence

In Luke the Centurion is quoted as saying, ***“Surely this was a righteous (or innocent) man”***. In Matthew and Mark we are told that the Centurion said, ***“This man was the Son of God”***. Very likely He said both.

V. The crowd _____ deep sorrow and went home

Having seen the response of the Centurion it's as if the camera pans and we see the same moment in time but from a different camera angle. This time the camera focuses on the town people who have come to watch an execution. These people surely came out because of a warped desire for entertainment. Maybe they came out with a sense of curiosity wondering if the miracle worker was going to do something spectacular to save Himself. Instead, they saw the greatest travesty of justice the world has ever seen.

VI. His friends watched with _____

We can understand how the friends and followers of Jesus felt. It is much like a funeral. You stand at a gravesite, but you feel nothing. You are in such shock that you can only go through the motions. On that day, they stared at these events and tried to comprehend what had happened and why. Consider how quickly things changed. Less than 24 hours earlier many of these followers were sharing the Passover meal with Jesus. These people were in shock.

CONCLUSION

You may find all of this interesting, but you may still be asking, ***“So What?” “What does this mean to me?”***

- **The death of Christ did not leave people _____.**
- **In the death of Christ, we see the _____ of our own _____.**
- **We should find ourselves _____ to live _____ and _____.**