

KNOWING WITH CERTAINTY

Friday, April 15, 0029 A.D., 2:12:24 P.M.

Text: Luke 23:33-46

Introduction: How quickly we have moved through the gospel of Luke.

Luke began his gospel by telling Theophilus that he was going to give an orderly report about the things Jesus had said and done so that he might know with certainty the exact truth about Jesus who is called the Christ.

Then from the fifth verse of chapter one of his gospel, Dr.

I. LUKE SHOWED US THE DIVINE PURPOSE FOR THE SON OF GOD'S DRAMATIC ENTRANCE INTO OUR WORLD.

An entrance

- Heralded by a man called to make straight the paths of the Lord.
- Announced by an angel declaring that He would save His people from their sins.
- Welcomed by a heavenly chorus saying, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Luke allows us to see the purpose and plan of God for His Son's journey among men from Jesus' earliest days.

- When 8 days old, Jesus' parents brought Him to the temple to dedicate Him to the Lord, and God's servant Simeon took Jesus in his arms and said,
Lk. 2:30, 32 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 32 A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."
- The prophetess Anna also saw Jesus, and called the little baby "God's redemption."
- And Jesus Himself, though He had to grow in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man, reminded Mary and Joseph Whose Son He really was and why He was here when He said to them, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"
- Even before Jesus began His public ministry, John the Baptist began to prepare people for His coming saying **Lk. 3:6** And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

- And when Jesus began the work for which the Father had sent Him, by being baptized by His cousin, Luke tells us ...

Lk. 3:22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

- Even the devil knew why Jesus had come into the world. He tried to corrupt God's innocent Lamb so that He could not qualify as the sacrifice for the sin of man. He tried to divert Him from the cross by offering Jesus an easy victory without the agony, but Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan!"
- As Jesus traveled with His twelve apostles, He made clear His purpose. He said to them,

Lk. 18: 31, 33 31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. 33 They will scourge *Him* and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

- At the Last Supper, Jesus again told the disciples plainly what was about to happen.

Luke 22:19–20 ... "This is My body which is given for you; ... "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

- So on to the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus went,
 - not seeking to avoid His betraying disciple but going to meet him there,
 - not hoping to avoid the cruel guards who would take Him to their wicked masters, but submissively yielding Himself to them,
 - not only restoring the ear lopped off by hasty Peter, but by His will holding back the legions of angels threatening to burst heaven's doors to deliver the Lord of Glory from the hands of murderous men.
- Jesus went voluntarily, resolutely, intentionally, purposefully, toward the cross.
- In the trials He offered no defense of Himself. He clearly spoke of who He was, the Great I Am, but He did nothing to dissuade those who would condemn Him to modify their sentence.
- He was, as Isaiah had said some 800 years before

Is. 53:7b He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

- When the cowardly Roman Governor gave in to the blood thirsty demands of the priests and the crowd, Jesus began His final steps toward the cross.

Stand with me as we read Dr. Luke's account that leads us to the culmination of the completion of purpose of God's own Son departing from the glory of heaven to walk the dusty roads of Palestine. Perhaps also you will begin to see why I have given this sermon such a strange title.

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Lk. 23:33-46 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

44 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

As carefully as Luke documented the purpose of Christ's coming,

II. LUKE CAREFULLY RECORDS THE DETAILS OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THAT PURPOSE.

- The crucifixion of the only begotten Son of God began at 9 a.m.

- Before the agony of hanging upon the cross for six hours began, Jesus had already suffered horribly.
 - Even in Gethsemane, His sweat became as drops of blood.”
 - Before the mockery of trials began, the soldiers beat Him in the face.
 - During the night they blindfolded Him and repeatedly struck Him in a cruel game of “Guess Who?”
 - By the time Jesus stood before Pilate, He was already battered, bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night. Pilate tried to placate the crowd and acquit himself from judicial murder by having Jesus scourged.
 - Jesus was stripped of His clothes and His hands tied to a post above His head. A Roman legionnaire took the flagellum and prepared to administer 39 lashes across the shoulders, back, and legs of Jesus. This brutal whip was made of several strips of heavy leather with small lead balls and/or pieces of bone attached near the end of each, so designed to grab the flesh as they landed across the back and pull it from the writhing victim.
 - With each lash, the leather cuts the skin and eventually the tissues underneath, producing excruciating pain and heavy bleeding. The balls of lead make large, deep bruises that are broken open by subsequent blows.
 - At the end of the scourging, the skin of Jesus’ back hung in long ribbons and the entire area was in unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue.

I wonder if God actually showed Isaiah what would happen to Jesus in a kind of nightmare prophecy, because Isaiah’s words are so painfully descriptive of the actual events.

Is. 53:4-5 4 Surely He has borne our griefs
 And carried our sorrows;
 Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
 Smitten by God, and afflicted.
 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,
 He was bruised for our iniquities;
 The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
 And by His stripes we are healed.

- The cross usually used looked like a capital “T.” (When the staff on which the sign “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” was attached, it would look like the traditional shape of the cross “t.”) It was a cruel practice to make the condemned man carry the cross bar of his cross up the road to Golgotha, “Skull Mountain”. There the main support was already upright, firmly planted in the ground.

- Assuming that the Romans crucified Jesus as they did others (and there is no reason to believe otherwise), events would have taken place as follows.
 - The crossbar is laid upon the ground at the foot of the upright. Jesus is shoved backward upon it, the rough wood and dirt painfully scraping His lacerated back.
 - The legionnaire finds the hole between the two main bones of the wrist and drives an iron spike through each arm. With the aid of ropes, the crossbar with Jesus nailed to it, is lifted and swung into place.
 - With His knees slightly bent, His feet are forced together and nailed either through the arches or the heels.
 - Death on the cross was slow and filled with agony. As the weight of the body pulled upon the arms and the victim attempted to support Himself with His legs, the pain of tearing flesh and pinched nerves moved from arms to legs. Cramps, often violent convulsions, loss of breath, and crushing pain in the chest were what Jesus endured on the cross for us.

Jesus endured almost indescribable physical suffering for us from nine in the morning until noon.

But the worst part of the agony of the cross was yet to come.

At noon, things changed.

Suddenly, darkness covered the earth.

For the next three hours, the Father fulfilled what Isaiah described in

**Is. 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

- God the Father began with the sin of Adam and then of Eve, of Cain and Abel, of Seth and all his brothers and sisters and children.
- One by one the Father took each of the sins of mankind, and laid them upon His own dear Son.
- So He proceeded minute by minute, hour upon hour through all the people of history: past, present, future.
- Sometime during those hours between noon and 3 p.m., He came to the name and the life of Michael Alan Claunch.
 - As I studied this chapter of Luke this week,

- And as I prepared this message to share with you this morning,
- I thought about my time at the cross.
- I decided to consider when in those three hours of torture as Jesus bore the sins of the world, when did He bear my sins?
- I admit that I cannot calculate it with certainty, but I really wanted to meditate upon that so I figured as best I knew how.
- I took the number of years from creation to the end of the Millennial Kingdom, the best I understand that from the Scriptures.
- Then with the assumption that our sins were laid on Him in the order of when we were saved, I figured when in those 180 minutes of darkness, the Father would have taken my sin, and put it upon His own Dear Son.

The best I could figure, it was Friday, April 15, 0029 A.D., 2:12:24 P.M.

- God the Father took the multitude of my wicked deeds, every selfish word, the long list of my evil thoughts, every sinful motive that found a home in my soul, and put those sins upon Jesus. Jesus became guilty of every wrong thing I have ever done and yes, ever will do.
- And the Father came also to your name, to your life, to your sin. And yours; and yours; and yours, until He came to the name and life of the last man to ever be born in a sin cursed, natural body upon planet earth

Then we read from our beloved, precise friend, Dr. Luke

Lk. 23:44-46 44 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

No wonder the earth shook!

The Spirit of God took the veil that hung in the temple, the symbol of the separation between Holy, Holy, Holy God and sinful, sinful man, and ripped it in two from top to bottom.

For with the price for sin forever paid, access of the sinner to His Creator by way of the Redeemer would forever be open.

Around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, His work upon the cross, the purpose for which He come into the world accomplished, Dr. Luke says,

Lk. 23:46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

And that was the moment that changed my life, my eternity.

THE PRICE FOR SIN WAS FOREVER PAID.

THE WAY OF SALVATION WAS FOREVER PROVIDED.

ETERNAL LIFE WAS FOREVER OFFERED.

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom. 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

CONCLUSION: I am a very blessed man. God has seen to it that I have been under the teaching of God's Word ever since I was a baby still in the womb of my mother as she carried me with her to church.

After I was born, two weeks later, I was back in church!

But the first church I remember attending was in the western part of Houston, and I was a preschooler. I remember standing for the singing and my dad bending down to tell me that I could not sing Davy Crocket while everybody else sang a hymn.

I was just learning to read, and the words in the hymnal were hard, but I started to learn the songs just by listening and repeating. The first hymn I remember leaning and loving was

**Alas! and did my Savior bleed
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For sinners such as I?**

**Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!**

**But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.**

**At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,**

**It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!**

A couple of years after I started singing this song, figuring out just what these words meant that I loved to sing, a friend who lived across the street from me told me she had asked Jesus to come into her heart.

I didn't quite understand what she meant, but I knew it had something to do with what Jesus had done on the cross.

One day I asked my Sunday school teacher about what Ruthie had said, and she explained it to me. Before long, I asked Jesus to come into my life, to forgive my sins, and to live in me as my Lord and Savior.

Now, although I am not a singer, a fact about which you do not need to be convinced, I love to sing, and the songs I love best are the songs about what Jesus did for me on the cross.

I sing these songs for Him as an act of worship.

I sing them for me to help me meditate on His endless grace.

Thinking about what He did for me on that cross motivates my life for Him.

I am further from perfect than you could ever imagine.

But whatever good things I have done,

Whatever obedience I have practiced,

Whatever surrender I have made,

If I have ever done anything to please the Lord,

It is all because of what Jesus did for me upon the cross.

I wonder if there are some of you who have trusted Christ, but you need to meditate more seriously about what He did for you upon the cross.

Would you think about what Jesus did on the cross for you?

I wonder if you need to let Jesus' suffering and sacrifice motivate you

- To live for Him more faithfully
- To serve Christ more selflessly
- To give to the Lord more generously
- To share your testimony and the gospel more regularly
- To worship Him more sincerely