

# Luke Chapter 23 v 32 - 47

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Glory and praise to the God of all grace, Who has brought us and sought us, and showed us his face.
- Alleluia, thine the glory, alleluia, we sing. Alleluia, thine the glory, of grace, now we bring.
- May thy blessed name fill his heart with thy love, May his soul be rekindled with fire from above.
- Alleluia, thine the glory, alleluia, we sing. Alleluia, thine the glory, of grace, now we bring.
- Amen. Or shall we worship God by praying together?
- [ 1 : 10 ]     Let's come to him in prayer now. All glory and praise to the God of all grace, who has brought us and sought us and shown us his face.
- Father, it is our desire this morning that we bring you all the glory and all the praise. You are the God who has made all things, who always has been before the world began, and shall be once this world has been wrapped up and a new one begun, through the coming of Jesus Christ again.
- And Lord, we thank you that we come to a God who is worthy, so worthy of all praise, all glory. There is nothing in your character, nothing in your being, which mars or spoils you.
- There is not the slightest trace of anything wrong. No mistakes, no problem, no issues with you, no things that we are ashamed of or embarrassed about.
- Everything in your fullness, everything in your almighty, infinite being, breathes life and glory and love and goodness and wisdom and joy.
- [ 2 : 37 ]     And we come now to you, that God, what a God, that we should be able to worship you. We humble ourselves before you. We stand amazed in your presence.
- We seek your face now and ask, as this hymn has encouraged us to ask, revive us again. Fill each heart with your love. May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.
- Lord, send your Holy Spirit to us now. Give us joy in singing your praises. Give us seriousness and willingness as we receive your word.
- Give us a submission to the voice of your Spirit, speaking through the Scriptures. Give us a sense of togetherness as we fellowship with one another. And Lord, give us a sense and a sight of your Son, through your Holy Spirit, that he may be glorified, that he may be worshipped here, and not just now in these moments that we have together, but this whole week, that our lives may be filled with the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may walk with him, that we may be more faithful to him, we may enjoy his presence, delight to be called his people, and live for his glory.
- Lord, then be with us. We thank you for the opportunity of praising and seeking you now. And we do that only in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Well, we love to hear from God in his word, and we're going to have a couple of readings from the Scriptures then, today.

[ 4 : 15 ] And the first of those is in the Gospel of Luke. Luke's Gospel, and chapter 23. Luke's Gospel, chapter 23. I picked up one of these church Bibles on my way in, and if you have one of those as well, and are unfamiliar with the Bible, you'll find this reading on page 1060.

1-0-6-0. This is an account of the death of Jesus Christ, when he was crucified.

Luke, chapter 23. And we're going to be reading from verse 32 to verse 47. Luke, chapter 23, verses 32 to 47.

So Luke, the writer of this Gospel, has been speaking about the events leading up to Jesus' execution on a cross. We pick the reading up at verse 32, where we read these words.

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left.

[ 5 : 38 ] Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. And they divided up his clothes, by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, He saved others. Let him save himself, if he is God's Messiah, the chosen one.

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar, and said, If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself. There was a written notice above him, which read, This is the King of the Jews.

One of the criminals, who hung there, hurled insults at him. Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us. But the other criminal rebuked him.

Don't you fear God, he said, Since you are under the same sentence, we are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve.

[ 6 : 46 ] But this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said, Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

Jesus called out with a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. When he had said this, he breathed his last.

The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God, and said, Surely, this was a righteous man.

Well, we praise God for his perfect word. Jesus is the name we worship. Jesus is the name we trust.

[ 7 : 58 ] He's the giver of all other peace. Let all creation stand and sing, but Jesus is our God.

We will glorify, we will lift him high, we will give him honor and praise.

We will glorify, we will lift him high, we will give him honor and praise.

We're going to read again from God's word now, and from the book of Psalms this time.

Psalms 46. Psalms 46. If you have a church bible, you'll find this on page 570. Psalms 46.

[ 9 : 06 ] As I'm sure, almost all of you will be aware, it's been a hugely significant week in the life of our nation, and however you feel about what's happened on Thursday, it is of course very significant for us as a country, and so I thought it would be appropriate and right to read this psalm in light of that to remind ourselves that in the ups and downs of national and international life, God rules over the nations.

God is sovereign, and however we're feeling about the future, whether we're excited, we'll be surprised, perhaps, some of us, but God is not surprised, and God knows what he's doing.

God rules, and so let's read this psalm and remind ourselves of that fact as we consider these things together. Psalm 46 is for the director of music of the sons of Korah, according to Alamo, a song.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble, therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way, and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, and the mountains quake with their surging, there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

God is within her, she will not fall, God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall, he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

[ 10 : 53 ] The Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress, come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth, he makes wars cease to the ends of the earth, he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire, he says, be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth, the Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress.

And we praise God that that is true. Now I thank you Well as I said earlier on, we're here together as a group from Doncaster, I'm not from Doncaster but speaking for them and we've been thinking a bit this weekend about the Bible and what it has to say about God and particularly the character of God and so you guys you've got to be on the alert as well today because this is carrying on from what we were talking about over the weekend.

Can any of you remember the things that we have been saying God is like especially as we see it in what Jesus has done? Can anyone remember any of the things what is God like?

We've seen four things I think. Yes Ella? God is wise. Yes Brandon? God is powerful. We're getting them in spot right order here. Yes you? Loving.

And Tyler? Pure. Pure or truthful. Great. They're spot on these kids. It's great. Well done. You've really learned. So and how do we know that God is wise, powerful, loving and truthful?

[ 12 : 50 ] What's the number one way? How can you see in the Bible that we know God is these things? Lois? Through Jesus. That's right. We've been saying that you can find out these things in a way from looking around at creation.

That's good. Or maybe looking inside yourself when your conscience tells you or other ways. But ultimately the Bible says no you've really first and foremost got to look at Jesus.

The gospel of Jesus tells us beyond anything else that God is wise and that God is powerful and that God is loving and that God is truthful.

But that's not something which everyone in the world of course agrees with. In fact Christians when they think about particularly the cross of Jesus do something which no one else in all the world would ever do.

They rejoice in the thing that killed their hero. Alright? Now recently there were some very sad events near to where I lived where I live where the member of parliament for the part of the country where I live very close to where I live was killed you probably know about that.

[ 14 : 08 ] Her name was Jo Cox very tragic very sad. Of course we were all incredibly sad that that would have ever happened. Of course when anybody dies it's a great tragedy but this particularly was very horrible and nasty that anyone would want to kill somebody in our leadership of our country.

and Jo Cox had a husband and children and you can't imagine it can you? Her husband and children being thankful for that event happening.

No you'd never you'd never think that. It would be awful wouldn't it for them? Of course it is and we pray that God would be close to them and comfort them and definitely you know they wouldn't spend you know when they go to bed they wouldn't spend their bedtime thinking thankfully about the weapons that had been used to kill this person they loved so much you wouldn't do that that would be nutty it would be crazy wouldn't it?

You wouldn't think about that gun or that knife that's horrible I hardly even want to say that it's so awful but you know for Christians that's exactly what they do that's really strange Jesus is their hero Jesus is the one they love and Christians love to think about the thing that killed their loving Lord they love to think about the cross in fact one of the most famous Christians a man called Paul he said I don't want to boast about anything I don't want to get happy about anything except the cross of Jesus Christ my Lord that's my number one thing the cross the thing which killed Jesus well how could you do that that just sounds so strange well the thing is you see the Bible says as we've been thinking haven't we we've been thinking about how that message just doesn't make sense to the world no one understands it if you go back to school and say

Jesus is the best thing ever and his cross is the best thing ever they're going to go some of them will respect you for it but most of them we agreed didn't we they'll say that's a bit stupid we don't really want to think about that and that's the way across all the world really people don't understand it it doesn't make sense but you see you know what if God opens your eyes to what was really going on there if God helps you to see what Jesus was doing for us then it will start to make amazing sense in fact it will change everything for you now maybe you're here today you've come along and you're quite happy as you are you don't want anything changed in your life you're alright as you are thank you very much but I'm going to stick with the way I've decided to live or maybe you've come here today and you know in your heart of hearts what really needs to happen to me is I need to get changed somehow there's something deeply wrong with me and that the one thing I do need is for everything to be changed inside if that's if that's you today or if it's you who say

[17:16] I don't need anything changed be sure about this the cross of Jesus if you see it for the first time it will change everything and it's so wonderful there's nothing to be afraid of now then what's clear about the crucifixion of Jesus is that even as it was happening people were kind of split down the middle about it some people could not understand it at all and they thought it was stupid and foolish and let's all go home and not think about it anymore but just a few people on this side they saw it and God opened their eyes and they realised that it was life changing for them and so I want you to think about this with you for a few moments this morning so you guys listen up and connect this to what we've been thinking about this weekend but everyone else listen to you how if you see through God helping you what the cross really is about then it will it will change everything for you so I want to say kind of two big things to you this morning and the first one is this some people at the cross just couldn't see either the wisdom or the power of it okay so we saw didn't we yesterday morning that the cross shows us

God's wisdom and God's power because it shows us how he saves in a way that no one would ever guess and it shows us who he saves people who don't deserve it at all he's powerful enough to save even the lowest of the low but you know even at the cross some people couldn't see either the wisdom or the power so if you have your bibles that passage we read earlier on in the service Luke chapter 23 and let's look from verse 35 from verse 35 here at the cross there are some people there and it says this the people stood watching and the rulers even sneered at him they said he saved others let him save himself if he is God's Messiah the chosen one in other words they're thinking as they look at Jesus well he said he was God's special one he's the Messiah yeah well if this was God's way of salvation then why can't he prove that he is better than everyone else if only he would stop this ordeal then that would show us yep this is right this is

God's way in other words they were looking for a kind of wisdom that made sense to them surely you don't want to stay up on a cross forever that's horrible anyone with common sense if they could do it would come down would come off the cross that makes sense but you see that's the world's wisdom and God has a different kind their conclusions are very shallow they can't see beyond physical needs the only kind of salvation which they reckon on is one which would get him out of this terrible suffering that's happening to him right now they thought well if he would just blast his enemies away that would prove it to us but you know what folks there is a far greater need for humanity than just an enemy blasting superhero men and women and young people need a way for a holy holy holy God to forgive their sins against him that's what we need we don't need one who'll just get rid of all the painful stuff in our lives like that we need someone who will deal with our deep problem our big problem the problem of our hearts and our rebellion against him because you see if we get proud or if we gossip about others or if we're selfish or if we just leave our creator out of our lives that's not going to go unpunished our deepest need then is for a perfect substitute who will come in who will step into our shoes and take that punishment that we deserve and the

Jewish rulers here are so wrapped up in themselves and what they think is right and what they would do in his situation that they completely missed that that's what Jesus was doing the cross was of course nonsense to them he was just a messiah with no proof but I wonder what the cross is to you is it God's way of wisdom because you know what you really need someone who will step into your shoes and take your penalty for you so that's some people who can't see the wisdom of it but other people couldn't see the power of it there was a group of people who loved the idea of power and you find them in verse 36 and verse 37 it's the soldiers they were strong men they loved to be able to be stronger than others they were able to fight in war and they were very good at it and the soldiers verse 36 also came up and mocked him they offered him wine vinegar and said if you're the king of the Jews save yourself they knew a great deal about power but apparently

Jesus had none whatsoever because the charge on the sign verse 38 this is the king of the Jews didn't tie up with the reality in front of their eyes a king helplessly suffering and suffocating to death is no kind of king in their eyes that's not how it works for somebody who thinks of power in that way if he really was a king he would surely have the power to protect himself from such an unpleasant end and we know about people with power in this world don't we so let's think of the president of the united states can any of you tell me who is the president of the united states yes jem he's barack obama he's not going to be president for that much longer but at the moment he still is that man and any man who's the president of the united states is a man with incredible power and so i don't know if you know this but barack obama travels in limousines that have walls that are eight inches thick okay and they can withstand a direct hit from a missile okay so if somebody doesn't like the president and they ping a missile over from some other country or from somewhere else in america and it hits his car it won't do any damage isn't that amazing at his inauguration the ceremony where he became the president of the united states he had 42,000 police military and special agents on duty there were fighter jets which flew over in the air constantly watching there were gun boats on the river in other words someone who has power has the power to protect themselves and rightly so if you're an important person but apparently jesus has no power at all to protect himself because he's suffering on a cross so how can he have power that's what the soldiers think they misunderstand completely he says he's a king he can't be nonsense they think well he can't save himself so he can't be a king but you see whilst the jewish rulers you remember them they had left out our deepest need these men the soldiers have left out jesus's deepest intentions what jesus really came to do they had no idea that what he was doing there was something they hadn't imagined they couldn't they couldn't understand that jesus in fact was engaging massive strength the greatest strength has ever been shown in the history of the world but not obvious to someone who just thinks of power in a certain way you see he was exerting enormous strength and power not to get himself out of the cross protect himself from the cross but to keep himself on it because you see little did they know there on that day that as he was suffering there he was holding himself steady in the flames of god's wrath and every moment was a battle to hold himself there every moment he had the choice no more no more i can't take anymore he took every last drop how much power do you need to do that that is the most powerful thing anyone has ever done you can't imagine what strength it needed and he gave it his all and little did these soldiers know that two days later some of them would be trembling beside the tomb which once held him as a mark that he really has power that i am bigger and better than death itself and he cannot hold me that's glorious that is wonderful that shows that jesus does have power even if what it looks like is none at all and the thing

[ 26 : 44 ] is you see just because some people couldn't see the wisdom and couldn't see the power it doesn't mean it wasn't there one person saw it one person understood it if you just skip through the passage you'll see one of these soldiers actually realises something of what's going on if you looked and listened carefully you would have heard jesus in verse 46 calling out with a loud voice father into your hands i commit my spirit as he had said in his own life i have authority to lay down my life and authority to take it up again that's what's happening he doesn't just succumb to death like everyone else does he commands the time of his giving of his life and somebody watched that and they saw it and they said hold on a minute what's going on here the centurion in verse 47 seeing what had happened praised god and said surely this was a righteous man this guy figured out that there was more going on here it's not just all as it seems here is real wisdom here is real power so what about you are you going to think of the cross of jesus as just something that christians think about and it's kind of nice and in the past and i don't really need to bother myself with it very much what do you see hold on this actually changes everything changed everything for that man that centurion next to the cross surely hold on this is a righteous man he doesn't deserve to die and that affects me who knows what his life went on to be like we're not told but he certainly saw that actually where many didn't realise there was great wisdom and great power there actually was so some people just couldn't see the wisdom or the power but that doesn't mean it wasn't there but the second thing i want you to see is this who can remember from this group that we've looked at two things wisdom and power right so what have we got left from this weekend the cross shows us god's wisdom god's power two other things what have we still got to look at yes ella that he's loving and that he's yes louis truthful very good so we're just going to do the same thing here because it's exactly what happened at the cross some people just couldn't see the truth or the love but that doesn't mean it wasn't there okay some people couldn't see the wisdom or the power other people couldn't see the truth or the love so look at verse 39 the best example of the person who can't really see the truth or the love is in verse 39 one of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him aren't you the messiah save yourself and us okay so he'd heard that jesus called himself the messiah but he'd not understood the real truth about what that meant for him jesus is a man with no love at all if he had any kind of pity any kind of love surely if he had the power to get himself off the cross he could get me off as well and this guy as well jesus you just don't have any compassion whatsoever come on save us quick well he had only one thing on his mind escaping the consequences of his crimes see jesus to him was just some kind of last ditch hope of getting out of his self-made mess he's messed everything up he's been crucified for crimes he committed he deserves to die and now he sees jesus oh i can get out of jail free great jesus come on get us down from here that's what's going on and as long as jesus refuses to do that for him then he'll hurl abuse at him well i think perhaps the shallowness of this man is the most obvious in the whole passage he's left god's

deepest justice out of the picture some had left our deepest need others had left Jesus deepest intentions this man has left God's deepest justice out of the picture the other criminal has to remind him look mate we are being punished rightly aren't we verse 40 and 41 don't you fear God since you're under the same sentence we are punished justly we're getting what our deeds deserve how wrong Jesus would be in other words to hand out the kind of pity that this man is looking for it would be wrong for Jesus to get a rightly certified criminal off the cross deserves to die this other man says to him he would be encouraging that criminal to remain unrepentant to never really be sorry to just seek to get out of things every time he does something wrong we're a bit like that sometimes aren't we we don't want to face the consequences of what we do but God you know doesn't work that way he works through real sorrow for sin he works through genuine faith in the substitute for sinners you need to grasp that otherwise you're never going to see what the love of God is really like it's not just something that gets us out of our mess without worrying about the truth it holds as we saw yesterday evening truth and love together so that's what's going on here this man who just could not see the truth or the love in Jesus but that doesn't mean it wasn't there so this other criminal in verse 41 he says we're punished justly for we're getting what these deserve but this man has done nothing wrong you see this guy does see the truth he knows that he doesn't deserve anything good from God he doesn't deserve anything good from anyone else for that matter he's done something wrong and I deserve to die and he sees that Jesus hasn't done that he is innocent and he sees somehow how he saw this I'm not quite sure but he sees that Jesus is bigger than what he can see right here because he recognizes that Jesus has a kingdom doesn't look like he's got a kingdom as he's hanging on the cross but Jesus has a kingdom because he says in verse 42 Jesus remember me when you come into that kingdom so he somehow God has enabled him open his eyes to see beyond the immediate sufferings of the cross and there's Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom he stakes then everything he is everything that he has on Jesus not on himself and not just as out of sort of get out of trouble free card but if Jesus will have me if he remembers me if he's kind and merciful to me a deep sinner then maybe I've got a chance that's what he's saying not just maybe I've got a chance but if he does love me and help me and save me then I will be safe in other words he saw what he really had to do you see he saw this if Jesus was going to come out of this in the end if he if he was going to come into a kingdom if this wasn't the end of the road for Jesus which he recognized I think then he knew which side he wanted to be on he knew that he wanted to be on the side of Jesus's kingdom not on the side of the opponents to Jesus's kingdom even while he was convinced of his own deep sinfulness and need he called out to the one and only person who could really make a difference to Jesus there was no hope of his coming off the cross and he knew that he didn't deserve to come off his cross this criminal but he knew there might be the hope of forgiveness full and free if Jesus had mercy on him so do you know what he did it's very simple he asked him he asked him he said Jesus just please remember me wasn't an a special elaborate prayer wasn't a really complicated thing he didn't last for five or ten minutes he didn't kind of go



into his room and shut the door and and get all earnest he just asked he just said jesus remember me folks that's that's a prayer that any of you can pray that's a prayer that any of you can pray jesus i can't i can't do this i'm at an end of myself i deserve to die remember me when you come into your kingdom in other words he no longer wanted to be a rebel he wanted nothing more than simply being allowed to become a subject of this great king in his eternal kingdom if the king would have him and you know what the king would the king would verse 43 says jesus answered him truly i tell you today you will be with me in paradise the king would have him he's not a wonderfully religious person he's not done everything right in his life he's made massive mistakes he's ended up crucified on a cross for terrible crimes and the king will have him he'll have you he'll have you he'll have me he'll have anyone who says jesus remember me i don't deserve a bit of it but remember me will you have me yes you'll be with me in paradise when i come into my kingdom you'll be there even though some people can't see the truth or the love in jesus dying on the cross this man saw it fully wonderfully amazingly the love of jesus for an undeserving sinner the truth truly you will be with me in paradise god's truth and love were there all along ready to come out straight away for anyone who would put their faith in this jesus and for anybody here it is still the same today so when you do that when you put your faith in him or if you've been a christian for many years the best thing you could do today is just put it in him again and say thank you lord what you have done for me remember me when you come into your kingdom shall we pray together father it's with deep thanks that we come to you for sending your son to be the savior of the world we thank you lord that for many of us here though once we were blind to see the wisdom the power the truth and the love in the cross of jesus now for many of us we've seen it and as we've read this again we've seen it again and we give you our praise for it thank you for your amazing mercy in substituting your own eternal son for undeserving sinners like us and lord we pray for each other and especially if there are anyone there is anyone here who hasn't put their life in the hands of jesus christ that they would do that now they would ask him lord remember me lord if that's us today help us to do that and may you bless us as you promised to

do with your holy spirit to change us and with the forgiveness of sins through jesus christ because we ask lord in his name alone amen praising god to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood to him be glory and power forever and ever amen amen amen amen amen amen amen