

## THE BIG IDEA: God is most faithful when we are most frail.

### The Take-Off

How well do you handle pain? Not necessarily the physical pain, but the experience of pain.

Pain is a universal problem, isn't it? All of us - in some form or fashion - can relate to it, but not all of us come out of pain the same.

Some people are hardened by pain - they wall themselves in so they can't get hurt again.

Some people are focused by pain - they find their purpose and calling from it.

MADD was started by a Mom who lost a child due to drunk driving.

America's Most Wanted was started by a Dad whose child went missing.

Laws are passed in response to pain.

Of all the things we can do as a result of pain, staying the same isn't one of them.

We WILL be changed by pain. The question is how, and in today's passage from Luke, Jesus does something - prays something - that is unexpected, uncommon, and unforgettable

Let's read about it in **Luke 23:44-56 (NIV)** and then we'll take some time to highlight portions of the text and then we'll end with a couple of takeaways that will help us trust God in our most painful moments

## 1. Highlights

- a. v. 44 / 3 hours of darkness / Ex. 10 - 3 days of darkness before the first Passover / John 1:29 - 3 hours before this Passover lamb was sacrificed
- b. v. 45 / curtain was torn / Matt. 27:51 - from top to bottom - torn by God / cf. Eph. 2:14 - our God is a barrier-destroying God!
- c. v. 46 / This was the last of 7 sayings from Jesus on the cross - we'll come back to it
- d. vv. 47-49 / Not everyone responded the same way, but they ALL responded / don't believe the lie that you can encounter Jesus and stay the same / we're either moving closer or farther - NO NEUTRAL!
- e. vv. 50-56 / Note the care and precision here to the body, the preparation for burial and the place of burial
  - Joseph was trusted enough to be on the high council (placed by God to discount later lies about the resurrection??)
  - Plans were already made: the tomb was new and recently cut, the linens were ready for a body
  - The women followed closely to see where the body was placed - they wouldn't have forgotten
  - The women were the last at the cross and the first to the tomb
- f. Interesting parallel - after 6 days, God finished the work of the "old creation" and rested on the Sabbath; after 6 hours, Jesus finished the work of the "new creation" and rested in the tomb on the Sabbath

## 2. Takeaways

- a. So many highlights, but it's go back to that prayer that Jesus prayed and camp out there for the rest of our time together
- b. Next week we'll talk about resurrection and the "good" stuff, right? But the good stuff was the purpose that came from this moment right here - easily the most painful moment of Jesus' earthly life
- c. What I want you to see is that **God is most faithful when we are most frail**
- d. Jesus saw that, and that simple prayer in v. 46 revealed it. Here's why:
  - It was a common bedtime prayer among Jewish children
  - It's found in Psalm 31:5 and Jesus would have grown up praying it
  - In the worst moment of his life, when he felt the farthest from God ("My God, why have you forsaken me?"), Jesus' last earthly prayer was to his FATHER and it was full of TRUST
- e. That's **powerful**, y'all!
- f. How was Jesus able to hurt so much and yet trust so much? Here are 2 takeaways that can help us:
- g. One, **look for faithfulness more than fairness**
  - All of us want things to be fair, but in reality, fairness is what WE decide is fair
  - **Psalm 51:1-4 (NIV)** / only God is just, but he is also faithful
  - On the cross, Jesus saw the faithfulness of God more than the unfairness of the crucifixion
  - Sometimes we see God's faithfulness more clearly looking back, we have to trust it looking forward
  - [Mom and Stephen staying at the game]

- h. Two, **look for the Father more than the fix**
- Instead of looking for God to fix it, Jesus simply looked to the Father
  - It's evident in that last prayer: "Father..."
  - The relationship carried more weight than the circumstance
  - Being with the Father meant more than getting something from the Father
  - In our pain, the Father wants to hold us first and heal us second
  - [Parker's bloody head]

### The Landing

This morning, I know that there is pain in the room, because there are people in the room

I love the song we sang during worship - "I'm gonna praise You through it all"

That song says simply and clearly what Jesus was saying in that last prayer

"Dad. I don't like what's happening, and it doesn't seem fair. At times I wonder if you're even still with me. But this I know - and I've known it since I was a boy praying with my parents at bedtime - I can trust you, even in this.

You're faithful, and you're my Father, and I'm going to praise you through it all."

As we sing that chorus, I want to invite you to allow us to stand with you and pray with you, that you'd see the Father That you'd see him being most faithful even now as you feel the most frail.

Let's pray.