

Approaching Easter

A Devotional Series: Week of April 3

"Wrongfully Accused" (Luke 22:66-23:56)



Day 1 | Wrongfully Accused for Us::

Luke 22:63-71

Appetizer

Think of a time you heard gossip about someone you didn't know. Now, think about your first impressions of that person when you finally met them. It's hard not to think negatively about someone when they've been slandered in your ears. Did you get to know that person for yourself? If so, how did your thoughts about them change/stay the same? Have you ever had that moment when you think to yourself "I was wrong about them, they're great!"? Now, what do you say the next time your friend wants to say something negative about that person? Do you join in the gossip or call it out? What would you do in that situation?

Big Idea: Betrayed by One of His Own

John tells us that Jesus "came to his own, and his own people did not receive him". This is most clearly seen in the Jews desire to see Jesus killed. After Jesus has been up all night, denied by Peter, mocked and beaten by the guards He goes on trial before the Jewish council. **V.67** is at the same time one of the greatest and saddest verses in the Bible. "'If you are the Christ, tell us.'" But he said them, "If I tell you, you will not believe.'" The Jewish leaders were not interested in discovering the truth. They were so close yet so far away from the one they had been waiting for. Their true hearts were revealed as their single goal was not clarity from Jesus but crucifixion for Jesus. The worst was yet to come.

Main Course

1. Let's get it out on the table. In what areas of your life have you sought your own desires in the name of truth? Or what verses of the Bible have you used to satisfy your desires instead of God's?
2. The Council asked Jesus if He was the Son of God. Why were they so mad at His answer in **v.70**?

Dessert

Take this time to sit with your family, spouse or friend around a piece of paper. Fill the paper up with answers to this question: "Who is Jesus?" list as many answers as you can. For inspiration see **Isaiah 9; John 1; Col. 1; Hebrews 1.**

Luke 22:63-71

Day 2 | Wrongfully Sentenced for Us::

Luke 23:1-25

Appetizer

Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do. Maybe it's a mistake at work and everyone is pointing their fingers at you. Describe the response and reactions to these allegations. Now, let's take it a step further: what if your track record is completely clean and you end up losing a job or going to jail for someone else's mistake or wrong-doing? Would you demand justice? Describe your emotions.

Big Idea

The Jews have taken Jesus before the Roman justice system. They bring Him to Pilate and put Him on trial. Pilate finds Him innocent. Pilate sends Him to Herod who finds Him innocent. Herod sends Him back to Pilate who finds Him innocent again. All the while Jesus is being mocked. The Jews grow stronger in their demands despite the verdict and scream "Crucify, crucify him!" Pilate tries to satiate the crowd by having Jesus punished then released but to no avail. They would rather have a known murderer released back into society than let Jesus go. So, against his own judgment, afraid of the crowds, Pilate releases a murderer and commands Jesus to be crucified. Still, the worst is yet to come.

Main Course

1. Think back to day one. What did the Jewish leaders think Jesus was doing wrong (**22:70**)? Now, look at **23:2** - what crime are the Jews telling the Romans that He has committed? Why do you think these crimes are seemingly different?
2. Look at **23:24**. Pilate gives in to the influence. Where are you tempted to 'give in' to the demands and influences of this world? Pilate giving in meant an innocent man would die. What will be the results of giving in to the personal pressures you face?

Dessert

John 18:12-19:15 records more details about Jesus trials before the Jews and Romans. Read this section out loud. Include family or friends. As you read try to capture the emotion of the event. John's account could be a script for a play. Doing this will bring it to life for you as well as for those who listen.

Luke 23:1-25

Day 3 | Wrongfully Executed for Us::

Luke 23:26-56

Appetizer

Think of a truly painful experience in your life? How and why did you face this suffering? How did it change your life both big and small?

Big Idea

This is it. The time had come. Man's redemption resting upon the willing sacrifice of God's own son. "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins." Jesus has been mocked, beaten, scourged, brought to the point of death only to face the most excruciating part of it all - hanging from the cross. By nails He was suspended for all to see for over six hours. God's love for mankind on display. He died and was buried in the tomb. It was finished. Jesus came to earth as the spotless lamb of God to die in our place for sins so we could be granted forgiveness. At the point in Luke there was nothing exciting about Jesus death. It seemed like a defeat. The best was yet to come.

Main Course

1. Look at **23:34** - When you are in pain (physical or emotional) what's your first response? Is it to be concerned with the well being of others? What were the people ignorant of in this verse?
2. Look at **23:39-43** - We see two criminals crucified alongside Jesus. Study the responses of these criminals and articulate the difference between the two. Why is one entering paradise with Jesus and one not? They both are criminals. What's the difference?

Dessert

Take this time with family to talk about this one question: "What is man's greatest need?" It should be obvious but have a discussion over it and allow for different answers. After the discussion read **Hebrews 9:22**. Man's greatest need is forgiveness and it is only possible through what Christ did on the cross. There is no other means of salvation for man except this one act of ultimate, unconditional love.

Luke 23:26-56