

## Luke 23: 44-56 (New International Version)

<sup>44</sup>It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, <sup>45</sup>for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

<sup>46</sup>Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

<sup>47</sup>The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." <sup>48</sup>When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. <sup>49</sup>But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

<sup>50</sup>Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, <sup>51</sup>who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup>Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. <sup>53</sup>Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>54</sup>It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

<sup>55</sup>The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. <sup>56</sup>Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

## **OASIS: His Death and Burial, Luke 23: 44-56**

Opening question: Imagine a time when you didn't understand or felt overwhelmed by what was happening around you. What were your feelings and impulses? How did you want to respond?

Transitional comment: This Easter season, we are doing a 3 part series about the central events, the historical crux, of Christianity. In our last study, we worked through the painful passage about Jesus' crucifixion, when he was surrounded by spectators who taunted him. Now, in this study we will look at the next passage in Luke's Gospel, which describes the events of Jesus' death and burial, and a variety of people with varying responses to what they have just seen.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study (if you haven't already prayed)

➤ Read aloud: Let's listen as someone reads our passage aloud.

First section (vs. 44-46):

- O What information about the context does Luke provide?  
*(n.b. the 6th hour is noon and the 9th hour is 3pm by Roman and Jewish calculation)*
- I What are some possible explanations for the prolonged darkness?  
*(n.b. Three notes: 1. The phrase "stopped shining" is best understood figuratively. It doesn't necessarily mean that the sun's thermonuclear fusion ceased for 3 hours. 2. Since it was the Passover season, which occurs during a full moon, the darkness could not have been the result of an eclipse, which occurs only during new moons. 3. Dust-laden wind storm were not uncommon to the region.)*
- I What do you think is going on? What might the darkness have symbolized?
- I Why might the curtain have torn? (Read and consider Hebrews 10:19-20.)
- O What are the parting words of Jesus? What do we learn about his perspective? (see Ps. 31:5)
- I In what ways is Jesus' comment a prayer (or like a prayer)?
  - A At what time or in what circumstances might you offer a prayer like this? Why?

Second section (v. 47-49):

- O Let's think about the centurion. What has he seen and how has he responded?
  - I. What surprises you about his response? How do you explain it?
- O In vs. 48, what isn't so surprising about the response of these people?
- O What do you observe about those who knew him, including the women (vs. 49)?  
What are "these things" that they are watching?
  - I What do you imagine was going on in their minds and hearts?

Third section (50-54):

O What do we learn about this man Joseph? Who was he? What do we learn about his character and convictions?

I While it is somewhat speculative, why do you think he did this?

O What key facts about Jesus' burial does Luke make sure we receive?

Fourth section (55-56):

O What value is it that the women accompany Joseph to the tomb?

O In vs. 56, what are some of the things that the women do and why?

I What kind of thoughts and feelings do you think the women would have had during the stretch of time represented in vs. 54-56?

I In what ways do they seem to reflect faith in God even though they don't fully understand what has happened, or will happen?

A In what ways can these women serve as a model for us when we don't understand what is happening (or even don't see God's active presence)?

Prayer together: thanks for Jesus' sacrificial death; and prayer that we might exercise faith in God when we are not understanding what happens around us.

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- a. BIG idea: insights into handling the things of life that we don't understand.
- b. Key verse/idea: Jesus—vs. 46; the women—vs. 56.
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.)
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the "teacher role," rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this "on-line" study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.