

Luke 22 (Part 6): 63-71 • The Solution to Man's Desperately Sick Heart

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All right, if you're at Luke chapter 22, here so far in this chapter, we've dealt with the Passover celebration, which, of course, Jesus turned into the Last Supper and the inauguration of the new covenant as He lifted up the cup and broke the bread. We have dealt with the suffering and the prayer that took place at Gethsemane.

We have read here in this chapter about the betrayal of our Lord Jesus by Judas, His arrest, along with the desertion of all of the disciples. And finally, we dealt last week in depth with the denial by Peter of Jesus, and we're picking up the text here in verse 63.

If you read along with me, it says: *"Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. ⁶⁴ They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, 'Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?' ⁶⁵ And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him."* (ESV)

As we stop there for just a moment, for anybody who loves Jesus, these are hard verses to read in the Bible because it seems like each verse—almost each word—carries with it a new punch in the gut. Because what we're seeing here, what we're reading here in these verses, is just pure evil. Jesus came to this earth to live a perfect life. And He never once sinned. He never hurt anyone.

In fact, He went around doing good. He went around healing, restoring lives. We know that Jesus healed the sick. He raised the dead. He released those who had been enslaved from demon possession. He gave sight to the blind. He opened the ears of the deaf. He cleansed the lepers. He taught love for enemies. He fed the masses. He instructed people in the right way, and still, they did this to Him.

And it's not just what Jesus did that makes what they did to Him so heinous, so horrible. It's who Jesus is that makes it so deplorable because Jesus, we have to remember, is the quintessential picture of beauty. When you stop and think about something that's beautiful, whether it's a beautiful spring morning when the sun is shining, whether it's snow-capped mountains or a beautiful field, maybe the grass waving in the wind—whatever that you might look at and see

is beautiful. The northern lights. The beautiful stars at night as you gaze into the heavens.

There are a lot of things in this world, in this universe, that we look at, and we say, that's beautiful. Sometimes we struggle to even find the words to describe how beautiful something is. Jesus is the very definition of beautiful. He is everything that you and I know to be beautiful and more.

And I'm not talking about how Jesus looked physically. We don't have any paintings. We don't have any drawings of how Jesus looked, but interestingly, we do have an insight about His appearance that is given to us from the prophetic writings of Isaiah, written about 700 years prior to His birth. I want to show you one here from Isaiah chapter 53:2, check this out. It says,

Isaiah 53:2 (ESV)

...he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

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This is an interesting passage from Isaiah telling us that there wasn't anything special about Jesus' physical appearance. He was an average-looking guy.

But looks can be very deceiving, can't they? Because even though Jesus looked probably like an average Jewish man of that time, He was obviously much more than that. So much more that the apostle Paul went on to write this about Jesus to the Colossians. Check this out from chapter 1: It says:

Colossians 1:15-20 (ESV)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

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Colossians 1:15-20 (ESV)

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And (furthermore) he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him (listen to this, in him) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

Isn't that amazing? In other words, all that God is, we find in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the Creator God. And yet they hated Him. They hated Him. They hated Jesus, and people still hate Him today. And it's hard to hear for those of us who love Him so much because of what He has done for us. But John records Jesus saying or speaking about this hatred. Look at this from John chapter 15. He said,

John 15:25 (ESV)

But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’

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And what He's actually doing is quoting a Psalm here. He's quoting Psalm chapter 69. Let me show it to you. This is something that's very interesting. Verse 4: It says,

Psalm 69:4 (ESV)

More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me...

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I got to thinking about all this as I was putting together this and just thinking about these verses. I was pondering this whole idea of hatred—the hatred that was aimed at Jesus. And hatred is a very, very strong word. We don't even like to use it very often. And of course, the emotion that goes along with it is something that we ought to avoid as often as possible.

But hatred, make no mistake about it—hatred in its full meaning—is what we are seeing here in these verses at the end of this chapter, Luke chapter 22, in the way these men are treating Jesus, abusing Him, mocking Him, blaspheming Him. And they had no cause to do any of those things. They had no cause—absolutely no cause.

And the thing that makes it so hard to read in these verses, the thing that makes it so difficult to think about, is that what these verses are doing is they're revealing something that is very fundamental and yet very troubling about our hearts. They're revealing to us the extent of our own human depravity.

And that's what's hard to hear. It's what's hard to read. To hate Someone—I mean, to hate Him—Who has done you no wrong requires an almost animalistic brutality that would otherwise defy reason. And yet we do know the reason for it because the Word has given it to us. We know, and this is what's difficult and what every Christian has to come to terms with, and that is that the hatred that those men were showing that day to Jesus is the hatred that lies within every fallen human heart.

And what I mean by that is that it lies within my heart too. And I can't look at what they did to Jesus, and I can't say, as much as I would like to, how could they? We say that sometimes, don't we? When we read about some heinous act, some terrible, deplorable way someone has been treated. And sometimes you even hear Christians say, how could they, how could they do that?

Well, I know how they could do that. I know because the Bible tells me that same sickness is in me too. I was born with it. And so were you. In fact, the Lord warned us about this sickness through the prophet Jeremiah. Let me put this on the screen for you so we can see it together. Look what Jeremiah 17:9 says. You guys probably know this passage. It says,

Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

The heart is deceitful above all things, and (look at these words) desperately sick; (it even goes on to ask the question) who can understand it?

The words “*desperately sick*” are really hard to hear. I mean, they're hard to hear about a person. When we learn about someone we love, when we learn that they are desperately sick, we're often devastated. We get a phone call, or somebody comes and tells us, oh, so and so, yeah, well, he's desperately sick, or she went to the doctor, and she found out that she's desperately sick. And we're devastated. We hate hearing those words.

Well, guess what? We just heard those words related to our own hearts. God has made it abundantly clear that our hearts are desperately sick. And that's hard to hear. But I got to thinking about what was happening to Jesus in these verses as they were beating Him, as they were abusing Him, as they were blaspheming Him.

And I got to thinking, Jesus knew everything that we've just been talking about. He knew that these men who were treating Him that way had hearts that were desperately sick. He knew that. And He understood that the things that they were doing to Him are the things that people with desperately sick hearts do. Those are the kinds of things they do. But He also knew that was exactly why He came to this earth.

He came to do something about our desperately sick hearts. And so He endured this horrific treatment that you and I find even difficult to read, let alone watch. He endured that mistreatment knowing that He was the solution to the problem. In fact, I believe it was that idea—I believe it was that truth—that actually carried Jesus through and enabled Him to go on because we know that as God in human flesh, He could have put a stop to it at any moment.

In fact, Jesus even said concerning Himself, do you not think I could summon or call upon My Father, who would send legions of angels? But then how would the Word of God be fulfilled? (Matthew 26:53-54) Jesus endured the suffering. He allowed it to continue knowing that the people doing it had sick hearts, but knowing that He was the solution to their sick hearts.

Let me show you what it says in Hebrews chapter 12. This is such a beautiful passage. It says,

Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)

...Jesus...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame...

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That is one of the most powerful and one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible. Because you can understand now, as we've set the stage here for this whole situation, what this passage is saying. Jesus endured the expression of sick hearts for the joy that was set before Him. And that joy was knowing that the solution to that terminal sickness was there in Him. Help was on the way.

That's one of the things I think about now when I hear sirens. I used to hate hearing sirens. I've got to be honest with you and just tell you that I used to hate

whenever I heard an emergency siren, whether it was an ambulance or whatever, a fire truck. I always thought, oh man, terrible things are going on. But then I realized, no, that means help is on the way.

And that's what I actually even say out loud. Even if I'm driving in the car by myself and I see an emergency vehicle on the way, lights going, sirens blaring, I think to myself, well, good. Help's on the way. Help's on the way. Jesus endured the shame that He went through for you and I because He knew help was on the way.

Luke goes on in verse 66 to say this: *"When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council..."*

Now let me stop here also for just a moment to tell you that Luke is giving us a little bit of an abbreviated version of all the things that happened during the night or during the nighttime hours because we actually know that Jesus endured several gatherings or trials, if you will, prior to the sun actually coming up.

Right after Jesus was arrested, He was taken to the home of Annas, who was the ex-high priest but was, in fact, the power behind the position of high priest. And it was there that Jesus was questioned initially. After that, He was brought to the home of Caiaphas, who was the sitting high priest. And it was at that time that some of the members of the Sanhedrin had gathered also to question Jesus and so forth. And this was, again, while it was still dark.

It was during that second meeting at the home of Caiaphas that false witnesses were brought in. And, of course, none of them could agree, but they gave their false testimony anyway. After that, Jesus was questioned by Caiaphas, Caiaphas demanded to know if He was, in fact, the Son of God. After His answer, Jesus was beaten. That's what we read about in verses 63 through 65.

But now, as we move on here in verse 66, daybreak has come. Jesus is now being brought before yet another meeting of the Sanhedrin, presumably with more of the members of the Sanhedrin in attendance. It is now daytime, and there is yet another trial.

I don't know if you're aware of how many violations of Jewish law have actually taken place so far up to this point we're just a sun break right in that day, but there were so many abuses of basic Jewish law that took place in this.

For example, according to Jewish law, all criminal trials were to begin after sunrise and were to end before sunset. According to Jewish law, criminal cases were never to be tried during the Passover celebration. According to Jewish law,

only an acquittal could be issued on the day of the trial. In other words, the day the trial takes place, the only thing you can do on that day is acquit the person. If it is a guilty verdict, they had to wait until the next day to actually deliver that verdict or before it was handed down.

According to Jewish law, all the evidence that is brought in a trial had to be corroborated by two or three witnesses. That, of course, didn't happen in the case of Jesus' trial. Those witnesses were also to be examined separately. According to Jewish law, a witness at a trial who gave false testimony was to be put to death. None of that happened here.

And according to Jewish law, a proper trial was always to begin with evidence of the accused person's innocence before any evidence showing possible guilt was offered. So many of those things never happened, but they were a very strong part of Jewish law. And that is why the following exchange takes place here at the end of verse 66, verse 67 and verse 68.

Look at this, end of verse 66: "...and they said, ⁶⁷" (If you are the Messiah) *If you are the Christ, tell us.*" But he said to them, *"If I tell you, you will not believe,* ⁶⁸*and if I ask you, you will not answer."*

Interesting response, isn't it? Jesus knew that this trial was not about getting to the truth. There was nothing legal going on here. There was nothing honest going on here. There was nothing sincere that was happening here. But Jesus couldn't help but be truthful.

And so He said in verse 69, look with me in your Bible, *"But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God."* ⁷⁰ So they all said, *"Are you the Son of God, then (that you are talking about)?"* And he said to them, *"You say that I am."*

That's another interesting response that Jesus gives here. This response is really just another way for our Lord to communicate to these men that He knew this wasn't anything but a true or fair assembly.

What that sentence or what that response basically communicates is: It doesn't really matter because your minds are made up. You're going to say what you're going to say. You're going to believe what you're going to believe. It doesn't really matter how I answer the questions because you're going to believe what you want, and it's already a done deal.

And that's what Jesus is saying. He's exposing their duplicity and their hypocrisy to even ask the questions because they don't feel that they need the answers.

And, of course, they jumped on His statement in verse 71. It says, *"Then they said, 'What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.'"*

What's interesting about that, though, is that during Jesus' public ministry, He had repeatedly identified Himself as God's unique Son, which is, in itself, a declaration of His deity. I want to say that again for those of you that might've missed it or might've possibly been taught otherwise: Jesus, many times during His public ministry, declared Himself to be the unique Son of God, which is to say, He is equal to God.

And, of course, the Jews considered that blasphemy—to say such a thing. And it would be for any other man to say it. If any other man had made that declaration, I am the unique Son of God, that would be a blasphemous statement. But, of course, in His case, Jesus was telling the truth.

It's interesting, isn't it? You know, I've heard over the years, many times, people say that Jesus never once declared Himself to be God. I've actually heard that. I've actually had people say that to me: Jesus never actually said He was God. He never declared Himself to be God, which makes me wonder if they've ever read the Bible.

Because, frankly, the Jews who traveled with Jesus, His closest followers, and the Jews who heard Him speaking in many of the public places that He spoke, they all believed that He did say that. They believed that He said He was God. And I want to show you this. Look—I'm going to put on the screen here for you—John chapter 10. Jesus makes a statement here:

John 10:30 (ESV)

I and the Father are one. The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

He says, *"I and the Father are one.* (And look what happened. It says,) *The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father (referring to His miracles); for which of them are you going to stone me? And the Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."*

Well, there it is right there. The Jews believed that what Jesus said—when He said, *"I and the Father are one"*—they believed He was making Himself equal to God or making Himself God by that statement.

Now, you might share that with somebody who doesn't believe that Jesus is God, and you might actually share this very passage, and they might say to you something like this: Well, you see, the Jews did believe that's what Jesus said, but they misunderstood. They didn't really—He wasn't saying He was God. They misunderstood Him.

Well, there's a problem even with that sort of position because when the Apostle John wrote a piece of commentary in his Gospel account concerning these kinds of statements that Jesus made, John, the apostle himself, said this. Let me show you this from John 5:18:

John 5:18 (ESV)

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

John himself writes, *"This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father (look at this) making himself equal with God."*

John tells you right there—he followed Jesus, he walked with Jesus, and he's explaining to you what the Jews heard and what was, in fact, true. Jesus declared Himself to be God by calling God His Father and Himself being the unique Son.

So, we take all this and bring it back to Luke chapter 22. And what do we have? We have the realization that we put the Son of God to death. That's the realization. We sentenced to death the very God who created us. We did not recognize Him. We did not appreciate Him. We did not see His beauty. We chose to see something quite different.

And you'll notice I say we. Because there's a point in every person's life who becomes a believer when we have to realize it wasn't the Jews alone who turned Him over to be crucified. And it wasn't the Romans alone who nailed Him up on that cross. It was you and me.

To think that maybe we would do something different—how do we know? And the fact of the matter is, my sin and your sin is why He came to die in the first place. He came to be the solution—the healing—of our desperately sick hearts.

I want to close this morning with one of the most beautiful passages from Isaiah chapter 53, which I'll show you on the screen. It says:

Isaiah 53:4-5 (ESV)

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we (we) esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds (everyone) we are healed.

We are healed. What a glorious, What a glorious realization. We are healed. You know, that desperately sick heart that Jeremiah revealed—or, I should say, the Lord revealed through Jeremiah—Jesus came to heal that heart. He came to cleanse that heart, to wash that heart, to make it new. And that's what He does.

The Bible actually tells us that the old is gone, the new has come. Isn't that amazing? *"The old has passed away;... the new has come..."* We've been given a new heart. We've been given a new nature. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I wish I could say to you today that the old sinful nature is completely gone. I wish I could say that. But unfortunately, we have to crucify Him every day.

Unfortunately, every day, we have to bring it to the Lord, lay it at His feet, and say, Lord, I don't want to yield to this today. I want rather to yield to You.

I want to give my life to You today. I want You to live through me. I want Your power operating in me, through me. I want to walk in the power of the Spirit today, not the power of the flesh.

And that's the birthright that each believer is given in Jesus: the birthright to walk according to the Spirit, to not yield any longer to the power of the flesh.