SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

REFLECTION JOURNAL · FIVE DAYS

Luke

Chapter 23

The Innocent One Crucified

MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 23:43

"And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.""

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO _____

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This week in Luke 23

Every judge in this chapter calls Jesus innocent, and He goes to the cross anyway — in the place of a murderer, beside a thief, praying for the men who nailed Him there. This week, come to that cross as you are. The Innocent One took your place, and Paradise is open to any man who asks to be remembered.

How to use this journal

1. Each day, read the passage slowly — out loud if you can.
2. Answer the **Observe** question from the text before you write what it means.
3. Write honestly on the **Reflect** questions. No one grades this.
4. Do the **Respond** step today, not someday. Say the memory verse.
5. Bring this journal to the group. The last page is for the table.

The full Deep Dive, the O·I·A study and the slides for this chapter are on the Luke study page.

WHERE I AM AS I START THIS CHAPTER

What is going on in my life right now that I want to bring to God this week?

DAY 1 OF 5

No Guilt in This Man

READ · LUKE 23:1–12

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What three charges do the leaders bring against Jesus, and what does Pilate say after he questions Him (23:2–4)?

REFLECT

Herod had wanted to see Jesus "for a long time" — but only to watch a sign (23:8). In what ways have I wanted Jesus to perform for me rather than to rule me?

REFLECT

Herod and Pilate "became friends with one another that very day" over their opposition to Jesus (23:12). What friendships or groups in my life are held together by something other than Christ?

RESPOND — TODAY

Ask Jesus today for what you need, not for a show — and thank Him for one thing He has already done.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 23:43)

DAY 2 OF 5

Release for Us Barabbas

READ · LUKE 23:13–25

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

How many times does Pilate say Jesus is innocent, and what does the crowd shout back each time (23:14–15, 18, 21–23)?

REFLECT

Pilate knew the truth and still let "their voices" prevail (23:23). Where am I tempted to go along with the loudest voices instead of standing on what I know is right?

REFLECT

Barabbas, a man thrown into prison "for insurrection and murder," walked out free while Jesus was handed over (23:25). What does it mean for me personally that Jesus took the place of a guilty man?

RESPOND — TODAY

Write one sentence that begins, "I am Barabbas, because…" and then thank Jesus for taking your place.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 23:43)

DAY 3 OF 5

Behind Jesus

READ · LUKE 23:26–31

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Who carries the cross, where does he walk, and what does Jesus tell the women who are weeping (23:26–28)?

REFLECT

Simon did not choose the cross; it was "placed on him … to carry behind Jesus" (23:26). What burden have I been handed this season that I could carry behind Jesus instead of resenting it?

REFLECT

Jesus told the women, "stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves" (23:28). What in my own life should grieve me more than it does?

RESPOND — TODAY

Do one hard, unwanted task today on purpose, and as you do it, pray: "Lord, I'm carrying this behind You."

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 23:43)

DAY 4 OF 5

Remember Me

READ · LUKE 23:32–43

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What does Jesus pray for the men crucifying Him, and what do the two criminals each say (23:34, 39–42)?

REFLECT

Jesus prayed "Father, forgive them" for men who were not sorry (23:34). Who is the person I find hardest to forgive, and what would it cost me to pray that prayer for him?

REFLECT

The second criminal feared God, admitted "we are receiving what we deserve," and asked, "Jesus, remember me" (23:40–42). What keeps me from coming to Jesus that simply and honestly?

RESPOND — TODAY

Pray the thief's prayer out loud today — "Jesus, remember me" — and then pray "Father, forgive them" for one person by name.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 23:43)

DAY 5 OF 5

Into Your Hands

READ · LUKE 23:44–56

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What happens to the sun and to the veil of the temple, and what are Jesus' last words before He dies (23:44–46)?

REFLECT

Jesus died saying, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT" (23:46). What would it look like for me to put my fears, my family or my future into the Father's hands today?

REFLECT

Joseph had "not consented" to the Council's plan and gave Jesus his own tomb (23:51–53). What can I give Jesus that only I am in a position to give?

RESPOND — TODAY

Before you sleep tonight, pray Jesus' words from 23:46 and name the one thing you most need to hand over.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 23:43)

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS

Questions for the table

FOR THE GROUP · 1

Six people in this chapter say Jesus is innocent — Pilate, Herod, a criminal and a centurion (23:4, 14–15, 22, 41, 47). Why do you think Luke works so hard to show that, and why does it matter for men who know what it is to be guilty?

FOR THE GROUP · 2

The crowd, the rulers, the soldiers and one criminal all told Jesus to "save Yourself" (23:35–39). How does knowing He refused to save Himself change the way we see our own suffering or sacrifice for others?

FOR THE GROUP · 3

The torn veil means the way to God is open (23:45). What still keeps men in our group standing at a distance like Jesus' acquaintances did (23:49), and how can we help each other come close?

MY PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I am the guilty one You took the place of, so today I ask You to remember me and to…

CUT OUT · CARRY IT · LUKE 23:43

"And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.""