

Luke 23:1-24
Jesus is our Hero

Study Summary and Learning Objectives

In this study, we will talk about Jesus as the unexpected hero, examining what this means in our daily life.

Objective

- See how Jesus is our hero, even though He is a different kind of hero than what we, or the Jewish people, may have expected.

Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- Familiarize yourself with the verses and questions, and spend some time reflecting on Jesus as your hero.

Questions for Discussion

Pray for your group to open your time together.

? Who is your favorite superhero?

Read Out Loud: Luke 23:1-24 (NIV)

Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king." 3 So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied.

4 Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." 5 But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

6 On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. 7 When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. 9 He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10

The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. 11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. 12 That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. 15 Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. 16 Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.” [17] 18 But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” 19 (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) 20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

22 For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.” 23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their demand.

? In our society, what do “heroes” look like? What qualities do they possess and how do we expect them to triumph?

Possible Answer: Heroes today are people who win by defeating the villain. They are brave, they stand up for what is right and they hopefully win in the end. They can be violent, or use power in other ways but they never win by losing.

? Up until now, Jesus has been seen as a hero in Jerusalem, because he was seen as the Messiah who would rescue them all. If you had been in Jerusalem at this time, waiting for the hero from God to save your people from Roman and other pagan oppression, what would you have expected?

“From the mouths of Jesus’ opponents, what we know to be true--namely, that Jesus’ royal status and his role as savior are interconnected. What we know, but they do not, however, is that royal identity and salvation are further [related]...[Jesus’ opponents] see his suffering and death as a denial of his divine vocation...Evidently, [Jesus] understands his death as consistent with the divine plan, not as a repudiation of his status and ministry...[T]he crucifixion seals the identity of Jesus as the Messiah and king who accomplishes the divine purpose precisely as the suffering one.”

-Joel Green

have expected?

Possible Answer: Someone like Samson, Joshua, Elijah or Moses; someone who would lead a revolution; someone who would do great miracles that would bring the empire to their knees, like the plagues on Egypt

? Verse 9 says “He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.” When you read this account, do you find yourself wanting Jesus to stand up for himself? Why or why not? Why didn’t He?

Possible Answers: We often want Jesus to stand up for himself, as our “heroes” in today’s society might. But Jesus allowed himself to be crucified because He was submitting to God and to His plan.

? Our heroes often have major flaws or have tumultuous inner lives. But both Herod and Pilate found Jesus was not worthy of death, and He was flawless. Why does the crowd want to crucify Him over Barabbas, who was imprisoned for insurrection and murder?

Possible Answer: Jesus’ life stands in stark contrast to theirs; His presence alone is convicting and the people can’t stand that. The Priests persuade the people to choose Barabbas. Their hearts are easily persuaded because they were turned against Jesus.

? Based on what we know about how a hero would be seen both in the 1st century and today, why is Jesus’ crucifixion so shocking?

Possible Answers: Because it is so subversive and so different. It tells us a lot about God and about ourselves. It is better than winning through violence and revolution. God is showing us why he is so amazing here.

The significance of the crucifixion is not only what God does for us; consistently throughout the New Testament the crucifixion is portrayed as the pattern that we are to follow. It is a model of social behavior toward the other as well as a statement about what God has done for us. -Miroslav Volf

? When Jesus died on the cross, he did it to be the hero of the whole world. When you think about His sacrifice, does it seem heroic to you? Why or why not?

Possible Answer: Some might see Jesus as “weak” in that He doesn’t stand up for Himself, He just takes the beatings and is killed without doing anything wrong. But ultimately, His life and death is a picture of true love and heroisms and the greatest sign of strength, love and endurance of all time.

For Discussion and Accountability

? What is Jesus saving you from, and are you allowing Him to presently act as your hero?