

Jesus – Faithful Under Pressure

Luke 22:47-71

Against the backdrop of this ugly moment, Luke wants us to be captivated by the beauty of Jesus. But we also are meant to see ourselves in the scene.

Chad Bird puts it this way: *“There was a man who was more than a man. And we killed him. He was the greatest man who ever lived. And we killed him. He was the kindest, most gentle, most truthful and upright and compassionate man who ever lived. And we killed him. Hands that healed, we wounded. The face that glowed, we spit upon. The heart that beat with love, we pierced. There was a man who was more than a man; he was God. And we—you and I and all of lost and hopeless humanity—we killed him.”*

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” This is the good news of the gospel. The Jesus we see here is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

One of the questions that we can readily have go through our minds is **“What can we expect from Jesus in some of the worst moments of our lives as believers?”**

We can go to him at our worst and expect Him to be absolutely committed to our good because that is the way Jesus is.

Gavin Ortlund in his book *Gentle and Lowly* states that we need to rethink how we view God and how we view the Son of God. He is not altogether like us. Ortlund writes:

“We cannot present a reason for Christ to finally close off his heart to his own sheep. No such reason exists. Every human friend has a limit. If we offend enough, if a relationship gets damaged enough, if we betray enough times, we are cast out. The walls go up. With Christ, our sins and weaknesses are the very resumé items that qualify us to approach him.”

“Jesus does not love like us. We love until we are betrayed. Jesus continued to the cross despite betrayal. We love until we are forsaken. Jesus loved through forsakenness. We love up to a limit. Jesus loves to the end.”

Jesus is for us especially when we have been unfaithful to Him.

1. The Restorative Touch of Jesus – Expect Jesus to be willing to restore our deepest brokenness. (Luke 22:47-53)

This is the “evil day” that Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6:13 – “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” Peter takes up the wrong armor on this day.

“Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched his ear and healed him.”

We know from John 18:10, that the one who did this was Simon Peter. In that gospel, Jesus says to Peter, *“Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”*

That is what the call of the gospel is to us – No more of this! Only by Christ healing our hearing like this man can we be healed of our persistent sinning.

In 2 Peter, Peter has a long description of how we are to fight against sin and grow in righteousness. He ends that letter by saying in 2 Peter 3:14 “Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these things, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.”

The power of darkness is at work to destroy Jesus. But Jesus remains rock solid to his calling. As Jesus said clearly in John 10:10-11,

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

When they come to “lay hands” on Jesus, they intend to take his life. When Jesus lays hands on one of them, it is to restore his life.

Jesus would not turn and could not be turned from his calling and from his mission to lay down his life for the sheep.

Oh to feel the touch of Jesus on your wounds, on your life, on your sins.

2. The Compassionate Look of Jesus (Luke 22:54-62) - Expect Jesus to see us at our worst moments toward him and remain compassionately and unwaveringly committed to us.

“But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are talking about.’ And immediately, while he was still speaking the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.” (Luke 22:60-62)

Luke writes ‘And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.’”

Jesus was there for Simon Peter especially when Simon Peter was not there for Jesus.

“It is for this reason that God suffers it to appear that the best men are but men at best. No matter how richly gifted they may be, how eminent in God’s service, how greatly honored and used of Him, let His sustaining power be withdrawn from them for a moment and it will be quickly seen that they are ‘earthen vessels.’ The most experienced saint, if left to himself, is immediately seen to be as weak as water and as timid as a mouse. ‘Man at his best estate is altogether vanity’ (Psalm 39:5).” A.W. Pink

Simon immediately remembered Jesus’ words to him in part. The part that said he would deny him. However, he also needed to remember the words of Jesus “...but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:32)

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” Romans 5:6-11

When Peter did nothing to deliver Jesus from his enemies, Jesus did everything to deliver Peter from his sins.

Expect Jesus to see us at our worst moments toward him and remain compassionately and unwaveringly committed to us.

Isaiah 49:15 *“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.”*

Augustine describing the faithfulness of his mother: “And now thou didst “stretch forth thy hand from above” and didst draw up my soul out of that profound darkness because my mother, thy faithful one, wept to thee on my behalf more than mothers are accustomed to weep for the bodily deaths of their children. For by the light of the faith and spirit which she received from thee, she saw that I was dead. And thou didst hear her, O Lord, thou didst hear her and despised not her tears when, pouring down, they watered the earth under her eyes in every place where she prayed. Thou didst truly hear her.”

2 Timothy 2:13 – “if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.”

3. The Just Lips of Jesus (Luke 22:63-71) - Expect Jesus to defend your innocence though no one defended His.

“And they led him away to their council, and they said, ‘If you are the Christ, tell us.’ But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer.” This council was not allowed to gather and render a decision at night so at the break of dawn, “When day came...”, they gathered with a predetermined sentence in mind.

“In Roman times this was the highest indigenous governing body in Judaea, composed of high priests... elders, and scholars (scribes) and meeting under the presidency of the ruling high priest. This body was the ultimate authority not only in religious matters, but in legal and governmental affairs as well, insofar as it did not encroach on the authority of the Roman procurator. The latter, eg., had to confirm any death sentences based by the council.” (BDAG)

In other words, there is no way that Jesus could get a fair hearing no matter how he answered them. They were bent on accusing them. But Jesus did say this, *“But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of glory.”*

This is the promise of Daniel 7:13-14

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came one like the son of Man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to him was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

And Psalm 110:1

“The Lord said to my Lord; ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’”

Jesus endured injustice by men in order to bear the just wrath of God so that we might never have to fear living in an unjust world again.

Despite the fact that Jesus would not get a fair hearing, he speaks of the incredible authority that would be his because of the cross. Jesus would not defend himself against their accusations because they would lead him to His exaltation. Jesus would not swerve from His calling and mission to establish justice to heaven and to earth. In the moment of the greatest injustice (“If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer”), Jesus commits himself to establishing justice in heaven and on earth. Jesus would not turn from his calling and his mission to establish peace (justice) on earth.

When Jesus could not get a fair hearing from us, he ensured that we would live in a world where we would live under His just and protection rule forever. In the face of our struggling with sin, we would have Him as our perpetual advocate before the Father.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to

condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

Romans 8:31-34

What we should expect from Jesus is One who will plead our case, and argue our innocence, and insist on our full rights of protection and citizenship.

1 John 2:1-2 “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins only but also for the sins of the whole world.”

We should expect that the first person to defend us every day for the rest of our lives and to argue for our innocence and protection is Jesus’ Himself.

“The grace of God meets particular sins at particular points in time. It doesn’t merely cover my life as a whole, leaving the details to work out on their own. Christ meets us again and again in our particular moments of lust, resentment, fear, negligence, coldness – and says, “Father, forgive them, for the sake of my blood.... I’m not my own advocate before the Father. I don’t have to make a case for him to receive me; Christ makes my case for me. Even after my conversion, my faith is not the ultimate ground of my assurance and salvation. Christ and his electing, redeeming love is my assurance, my boast, my confidence.” Gavin Ortlund