



The King Who Stayed on The Cross

Luke 23: 32-43

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Day 1: The King Who Stayed

Devotional

When we think of power, we often picture someone who can escape any situation, overcome any obstacle, or force their way out of trouble. But at Calvary, we see a different kind of power altogether. Jesus had every ability to come down from the cross, yet he chose to stay. This wasn't weakness—it was the ultimate display of strength and purpose. The crowds mocked him, challenging him to prove his power by saving himself. They couldn't understand that his greatest act of power was choosing not to use it for his own benefit. Real strength isn't always about what you can do; sometimes it's about what you choose not to do. Jesus stayed because he had a mission that was bigger than his own comfort or reputation. In our own lives, we often face situations where we want an immediate escape. We pray for God to remove us from difficulty rather than sustain us through it. But what if staying in the struggle, with God's strength, is actually where we discover his power most profoundly? What if endurance, not escape, is the pathway to purpose?

Bible Verse

'Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.' - Luke 23:32-34



Reflection Question

In what current situation might God be calling you to stay and endure rather than escape, trusting that his power is being displayed through your perseverance?

Quote

Jesus proves he is the king not by coming down, but by staying on the cross.

Prayer

Lord, help me understand that your power is often revealed not in escape but in endurance. Give me strength to stay faithful in difficult seasons, trusting in your greater purpose.

Day 2: Purpose Over Pressure

Devotional

The pressure was immense. Religious leaders, soldiers, and even one of the criminals beside him demanded that Jesus prove himself. "If you're really the king, come down!" they shouted. But Jesus didn't respond to human pressure—he moved by divine purpose. How often do we find ourselves trying to force God's hand? We want him to prove himself on our timeline, in our way, according to our understanding of how power should work. We create versions of Jesus that only function when life is going smoothly, when our prayers are answered quickly, and when circumstances align with our expectations. But Jesus operates differently. He doesn't bow to our demands or perform on command. His love isn't conditional on our comfort, and his kingship isn't dependent on our approval. The same Jesus who refused to come down from the cross for the crowd's satisfaction is the one who stayed there for our salvation. His purpose was greater than the pressure, his mission more important than the mockery. When we understand this, we stop trying to manipulate God and start trusting his timing. We realize that his "no" to our immediate relief might be his "yes" to our eternal good.



Bible Verse

'But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.' - Isaiah 53:5

Reflection Question

Have you created a version of Jesus that only works when life works for you, and how might you surrender your expectations to trust his greater purpose?

Quote

People want Jesus to prove himself on demand. But Jesus does not respond to human pressure. He moves by divine purpose.

Prayer

Father, forgive me for trying to pressure you into my plans. Help me trust your divine purpose even when I don't understand your timing or methods.

Day 3: The Paradox of Following

Devotional

Here's a question that should make us pause: How can we follow a suffering Savior and expect a pain-free life? How can we worship a crucified king and never carry a cross? There's a fundamental disconnect in wanting Jesus as our Savior while rejecting the path he walked. We don't have a problem with Jesus being king—we have a problem with the way he reigns. We want a king who conquers through force, who eliminates our problems, who makes life easy. But Jesus shows us a different kind of kingdom, one where strength is found in surrender, where victory comes through sacrifice, and where glory is revealed in suffering. This doesn't mean we seek out suffering or that God wants us



to be miserable. But it does mean that following Jesus involves embracing a way of life that values character over comfort, purpose over pleasure, and eternal significance over temporary ease. The cross wasn't just Jesus's path to glory—it's the pattern for all who would follow him. When we understand this, we stop being surprised by difficulty and start seeing it as an opportunity to experience God's sustaining power. We realize that the same strength that kept Jesus on the cross is available to keep us faithful in our own challenging moments.

Bible Verse

'Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.' - Luke 23:32-33

Reflection Question

What cross might God be calling you to carry as you follow Jesus, and how can you embrace it as part of your spiritual growth rather than resist it?

Quote

How can we follow a suffering Savior and expect a pain free life? How can we worship a crucified king and never carry a cross?

Prayer

Jesus, help me understand that following you means walking the path of sacrifice. Give me courage to carry my cross with faith and purpose.



Devotional

Even in his darkest hour, Jesus was still in the business of salvation. Hanging between two criminals, enduring unimaginable pain, he heard one man's desperate plea: "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Without hesitation, Jesus promised paradise. He was saving while he was suffering. This reveals something profound about our Savior—his work doesn't stop when circumstances get difficult. Your salvation came out of his sacrifice, which means his greatest act of love happened during his greatest moment of pain. He didn't wait until he felt better, until the situation improved, or until he was comfortable. He saved in the midst of suffering. Proximity doesn't equal transformation. One criminal was close enough to touch Jesus but remained unchanged. The other, equally close, experienced complete transformation. The difference wasn't location but recognition—seeing kingship in a crucified Christ, authority in suffering, glory in what looked like defeat. If Jesus could save a thief on the cross with his last breath, surely he can save you. No matter how broken, how far gone, how hopeless your situation seems, the same Jesus who transformed a criminal's eternity in a single moment is still saving today. He meets you exactly where you are, not where you think you should be.

Bible Verse

'One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'" - Luke 23:39-43

Reflection Question

What area of your life feels too broken or hopeless for God to redeem, and how might you bring that to Jesus just as you are?

Quote



If he could save a thief on the cross with his last breath, surely he was able to save you.

Prayer

Lord, thank you that you save while you suffer and that no situation is too desperate for your grace. Help me come to you exactly as I am, trusting in your transforming power.

Day 5: Come As You Are

Devotional

The invitation is simple yet revolutionary: Come exactly how you are now. Messed up as you are right now. Broken as you are right now. Hurt, depressed, sick, unstable, unfaithful—come to Jesus just the way you are right now. This isn't a call to clean yourself up first; it's a recognition that transformation happens through encounter, not preparation. The criminal on the cross didn't have time to get his life together. He couldn't make amends, couldn't undo his crimes, couldn't prove his worthiness. All he could do was recognize who Jesus was and ask to be remembered. That was enough. It's always enough. The same power that kept Jesus on the cross is the same power that keeps us every single day. You didn't lose your mind because he stayed. You didn't give up because he stayed. You didn't fall apart because he stayed. His endurance becomes our strength, his sacrifice our hope, his staying power our keeping power. This is the king who saves not when it's easy, but when it costs him everything. This is the Savior who proves that the greatest display of strength isn't what you can do, but who you choose to be and what you choose not to do. He chose you. He chose to stay. He chose to save. Now he invites you to choose him—exactly as you are.

Bible Verse

'Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."' - Luke 23:43



Reflection Question

What keeps you from coming to Jesus exactly as you are right now, and what would it look like to release those barriers and simply receive his grace?

Quote

Come exactly how you are now, messed up as you are right now. Broken as you are right now. Hurt as you are. Depressed as you are. Sick as you are. Unstable as you are. Unfaithful as you are. Come to me just the way that you are right now.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for accepting me just as I am. Help me stop trying to fix myself before coming to you and instead trust that your love transforms me from the inside out.