

# Growth Group Guide: Luke 23

**Bible Version:** Always use the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

## SCRIPTURE READING QUESTIONS

Before diving into the group discussion, consider these four questions as you read the text:

- **What does this passage say about God, who He is, and what He does (Father, Son, and Spirit)?**
- **What does this passage teach me about me?**
- **What comfort/challenge can I take away from this passage?**
- **How will I respond or live differently because of what I've read?**

## PART 1: THE FOUNDATION

### Loving God's People (The Community Lens)

- In the shadow of the cross, we see a diverse "community" reacting to Jesus—from the mocking leaders to the mourning women and the repentant criminal. Our "One New Family" is built on the foundation of the one who was rejected so that we could be accepted.
- **Key Question:** "How are you pursuing authentic community with other believers right now?"
- **Key Question:** "What gets in the way of community with other believers?"

### Looking to God's Word (The Truth Lens)

- Our "Wealth in Christ" (Indicative facts) is displayed in Jesus's final words: "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit" (v. 46). The truth of the Gospel is that Christ's finished work provides us with a permanent standing before God.
- **Key Question:** "How is God's Word challenging you?"
- **Key Question:** "What can you do to prioritize God's Word?"

## **PART 2: THE WALK**

### **Listening to God's Voice (The Prayer Lens)**

- Even in agony, Jesus prays for His enemies: "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing" (v. 34). Walking in the Spirit means responding to His leading by extending the same radical forgiveness we have received.
- **Key Question:** "How is God directing you?"
- **Key Question:** "What do you need to quiet in your life to hear God better?"

### **Living Sent (The Mission Lens)**

- Mission is seen in the "sending capacity" of the repentant criminal who, in his final moments, points to the innocence of Jesus (v. 41). We identify everyday opportunities to share the Gospel by recognizing that it is never too late for anyone to turn to Christ.
- **Key Question:** "What everyday opportunity have you used to point someone to Jesus?"
- **Key Question:** "What opportunities did you miss to tell someone about Jesus?"

### **GROUP PRAYER & SUMMARY**

- **Closing Thought:** Luke 23 centers on the substitutionary death of Jesus, where the innocent King dies in the place of the guilty so that we might enter Paradise with Him.
- **Final Action:** Think of someone you struggle to forgive and, following Jesus's example, pray for them by name this week, asking God to show them the same mercy He showed you.

## PAGE 3: FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET

### The Structural Lens: The Theological Framework

- **Indicative vs. Imperative:** The **Indicative** is the core of this chapter—Jesus *is* the innocent Savior dying for the guilty (the "3-3 Split" of his innocence vs. our guilt). The **Imperative** is our response: to trust like the criminal or care like Joseph of Arimathea.
- Explain the significance of the veil being torn (v. 45)—access to God is now open to all.

### Facilitation Tips

- If the group gets caught up in the political trial (Pilate vs. Herod), redirect them to the personal responses to Jesus. Focus on the contrast between the two criminals.
- Use this to discuss the "Cost of Discipleship." If the group feels heavy, remind them that the "Wealth in Christ" is that He paid the cost we couldn't.

### Leader Insights: The Four Lead Practices

- **Community:** Insight: The cross creates a new community where the "outsider" (the criminal) is welcomed as a brother. Challenge the group to see how the Gospel levels all social hierarchies.
- **Truth:** Insight: Pilate finds "no basis for a charge," yet condemns Him. Truth is often sacrificed for comfort, but the believer must stand on the Truth of Christ's identity.
- **Prayer:** Insight: Jesus's prayers on the cross are grounded in Scripture (Psalms). Encourage the group to use the Word of God as the language of their prayer life, especially in suffering.
- **Mission:** Insight: "Sending capacity" is modeled by Joseph of Arimathea, who used his position and resources to honor Jesus when it was most dangerous to do so. Mission often requires courage.