

*Jesus*

in the

middle

Luke

23

## Jesus In The Middle

- When God brought the Jewish nation out of slavery to Egypt, He placed around them His shield or wall of righteousness
  - They made a covenant with God at Mt. Sinai and received His standards for living called, The Law
  - Biblical righteousness is a state of being right with God, characterized by living justly, honestly, and faithfully according to God's standards
    - It's not merely about outward actions but also about a right relationship with God, others, and creation

## Jesus In The Middle

- When God brought the Jewish nation out of slavery to Egypt, He placed around them His shield or wall of righteousness
  - This wall of righteousness was placed upon the heads of each family group to instruct, model, and stand in the gap when there became a breach in their wall of righteousness
  - They were to stand before God interceding for their family, town, nation with an attempt to move them back and repair the breach

## Jesus In The Middle

- **Psalm 23** is a brief psalm of the many times the Nation of Israel allowed their wall of righteousness to become porous and needed someone to stand in the gap
  - **Psalm 23:19-23 NIV**, 19 At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped an idol cast from metal. 20 They exchanged their glorious God for an image of a bull, which eats grass. 21 They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, 22 miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. 23 So he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.

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- **Ezekiel 22:30 TLB**, 30 “I looked in vain for anyone who would build again the wall of righteousness that guards the land, who could stand in the gap and defend you from my just attacks, but I found not one.”
  - So God raised up His own man called Jesus the Son of God
  - **Galatians 4:4-5 NIV**, 4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.
  - To stand in the gap between a holy, righteous God the Father and sinful to the bone mankind

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- **Matthew 20:28 NIV**, 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
  - We pick up the serving of Jesus when He gave Himself as a ransom to all who will believe
    - He stepped into our breach of righteousness before God and made a way
  - We are here this morning to remember and honor the one who stood in the gap for our righteousness found in **Luke 23**

## There was no room for Jesus when He was born and there was no room for Jesus in the hearts of those given the responsibility to stand in the gap

- **John 1:3 NIV**, 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
- We find the ones who were to stand in the gap were the gap
  - **Luke 23:5 NIV**, 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.”
  - **Matthew 12:22-24 NIV**, 22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. 23 All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”
    - 24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”

## There was no room for Jesus when He was born and there was no room for Jesus in the hearts of those given the responsibility to stand in the gap

- **Luke 23:13-26 NIV**, 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.”
  - 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 “*terrorist*”.)
  - 20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”



## There was no room for Jesus when He was born and there was no room for Jesus in the hearts of those given the responsibility to stand in the gap

- **Luke 23:13-26 NIV**, 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. 25 He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.
- There was no room for Jesus in His creation
- Is there room in your heart for Jesus?
- Is there room in your life for His teaching?
- Will you let Him stand in your gap before an eternal God?

## God the Father allowed His precious Son to be humiliated

- **Isaiah 53:3 NIV**, He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
  - **MSG**, He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum.
  - **NLT**, He was despised, and we did not care.
  - **AMP**, we did not appreciate His worth
- This was written about 700 years before Jesus was born
- Current mindset – **John 1:46 NIV**, 46 “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked

## God the Father allowed His precious Son to be humiliated

- **Luke 23:32-38 NIV**, 32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 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. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.
  - 35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” 36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” 38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.

## God the Father allowed His precious Son to be humiliated

- **Isaiah 53:12 NIV**, Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.
- What did Jesus do that demanded this treatment?
  - He loved the poor, suffering, wounded, needy, outcast, broken and gave them acceptance
  - **Mark 2:17 NIV**, 17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the *(self-defined)* righteous, but sinners.”

## God the Father allowed His precious Son to be humiliated

- Jesus' response, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- Jesus chose to give His life, to stand in the gap for you and me
  - **Matthew 26:52-54 NIV**, 52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

## We find Jesus in the middle repairing the breach between God and sinful man

- **Matthew 27:44 NIV**, 44 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.
- **Luke 23:39-43 NIV**, 39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”
  - 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”
  - 43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

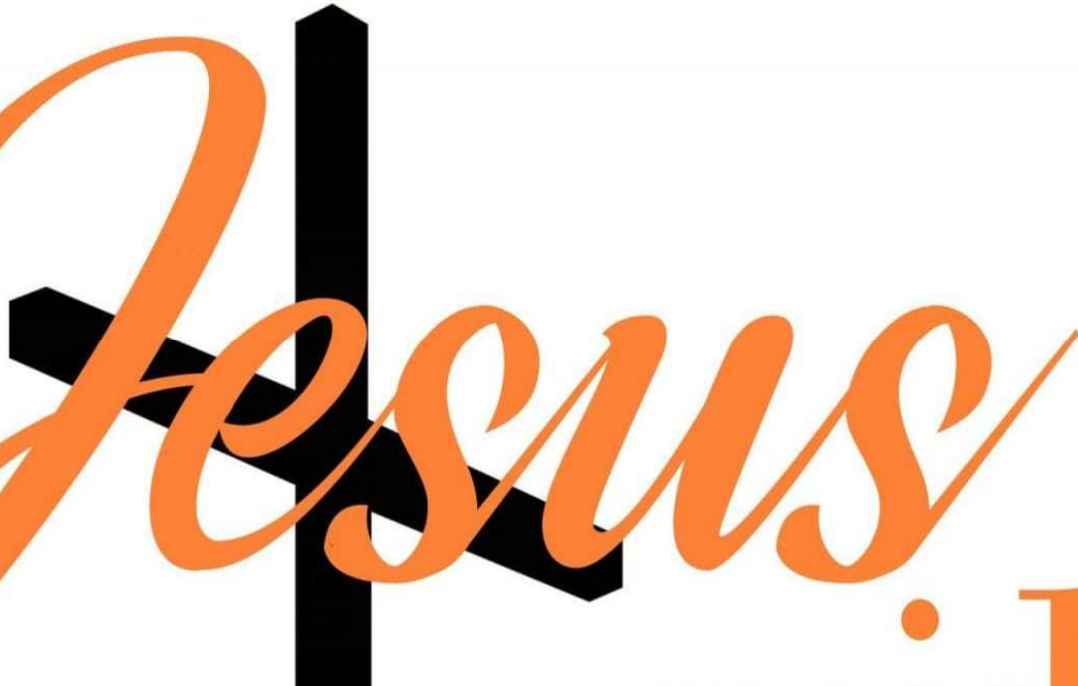
## **We find Jesus in the middle repairing the breach between God and sinful man**

- Here we see the current condition of mankind, you and me
  - One thief just wants a Savior that can change his current situation
  - The other thief reached out in faith asking Jesus to simply, “Remember me”
- As Jesus is taking some of His last breaths, He makes time for a repentant sinner
- All three were going to die
  - One to make a way of redemption
  - One to follow the path of Jesus for his redemption
  - One rejecting Jesus who is the only way for redemption
  - Which of the two thieves are you this morning?

## Jesus In The Middle

- Truths we can learn from the thieves on the cross
  - We all must make a choice regarding Jesus
  - No one is beyond hope
  - When we die, those who believe and accept Jesus will go directly into the presence of Christ
  - Not everyone receives Christ's free gift of eternal life
  - Jesus always has time for you, if you make time for Him
  - Jesus really does love us
- So I ask you again, "Which of the two thieves are you this morning?"





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