

# Last Days of Jesus

Saturday | Day of Uncertainty | Matthew 27:62 – 66 & Luke 23:55 – 56

## Sermon Discussion Guide

April 5, 2020

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### STUDY NOTES

**Preparation Day (23:54).** Friday was called this because people had to prepare for the Sabbath, which began at sunset Friday. For instance, food could not be cooked on the Sabbath. Jesus dies on Friday at about 3:00 p.m. which left little time to ask for his body, wash it, and place it in a tomb.

**Pilate (27:65).** In Matthew 27:19 we have mention of Pilate's wife: "19While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.' We are not certain how much influence Pilate's wife and her dream had on the decision Pilate made. His wife is mentioned only here in scripture.



Jesus has been arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed. His disciples have scattered and the women who followed Him are just about the only ones left to watch him take his last breath. Fear had overtaken everyone. From the Jewish Leaders, to the Romans, to Jesus disciples, each had their own motivation for fear and fought that feeling in ways they thought would protect themselves and their interests. They had not yet realized that it was really God they were fighting. What everyone thought was a huge victory for Satan turns out to be his biggest defeat – and a resounding triumph for the Son of God. Instead of fighting against God, they should have surrendered to Him. As you read the following passages and answer the questions below, consider what each group was futilely trying to protect and then consider the things in your life you alone try to protect and have not yet surrendered to God.

### As a group read Matthew 27:62 – 66; Luke 23:55 – 56

"62Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, 63and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' 64Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." 65Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how." 66And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone."

Matthew 27:62 – 66

"55Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how His body was laid. 56Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes."

Luke 23:55-56

1. Why do you think it was important for Matthew and Luke to record Jesus' burial and not just his death and resurrection?
2. Notice the final measures the chief priests and Pharisees take to ensure their victory to destroy Jesus is complete. What do you think they were feeling? Fear, Joy, Relief, Satisfaction, Anger or something else. Why?

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## STUDY NOTES

**A Seal (27:66).** This was the insignia of Pilate. It would be a capital offense to remove the stone without Pilate's approval. The seal and the guard represent the most powerful human forces available to keep Jesus's body in the tomb.

**Prepared Spices and Perfumes (23:56).** The main reason a dead body was anointed with spices was to control the smell of decomposition. Jews did not practice embalming, and the funeral spices were a way to help minimize unpleasant odors. At the tomb of Lazarus, when Jesus asked for the stone to be rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, Martha objected: "By this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days" (John 11:39). The spices the women brought to Jesus' tomb were intended to eliminate such an odor and honor the body of Christ.

3. Knowing the attitudes and actions of the chief priests and Pharisees, what is ironic about them calling Jesus a "deceiver" guilty of "deception" in their request of Pilate?
4. How did Pilate respond to their request? What do you think Pilate was feeling? Fear, Hope, Frustration, Irritation, Curiosity or something else. Why?
5. Just as the chief priests, Pharisees, and Pilate put in place man-made precautions to keep the situation under control, what man-made precautions are giving you a false sense of security that everything in your life is under control?
6. In what ways do we trust in our own plans instead of in God?
7. In what areas of life are we prone to try to cover up the truth as did the chief priests and Pharisees?
8. Why are we sometimes afraid to admit the truth?
9. Some people believe the women went to the wrong tomb on the Sunday following Jesus' burial. How does Luke 23:55 make that extremely unlikely?
10. What example do the women in Luke 23 teach us about obedience?
11. Matthew 27 and Luke 23 are filled with irony. Satan's triumph is actually his defeat. Christ's "defeat" is actually his triumph. How should this challenge our views about the way God works in our lives?
12. What truth from these passages do you need to face today?
13. What foolish, fleshly attempts to control God and your own life do you need to repent?