

**BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE**  
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**APRIL 10, 2022**

**RESPONSES TO THE CROSS**

**Luke 23:26-46**

Without question Pilate had determined Jesus to be innocent (V-20). It was his desire to release Jesus, but the crowd demanded Barabbas, a vicious criminal be pardoned, and Pilate caved into their demand. We now see Jesus as he is led away to be put to death. They lead Him through the streets of Jerusalem. He is not just a passive victim overwhelmed by superior forces. In John's account (19:11) Jesus told Pilate "*You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.*" When Peter had thought to defend him at his arrest Jesus had reminded him saying (Matt 26:53), "*... do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?*" What Jesus did, he did willingly. Luke tells the story of the crucifixion from the viewpoint of the participants in the drama. As we see the death of Jesus from their perspective, we become aware of the varied responses to the cross.

There were five responses that we see in this passage of scripture here in Luke 23. And the first was...

**I. SOME RESPONDED IN IGNORANCE (w.26)**

As Jesus stumbles under the load, a man coming in the opposite direction, Simon the Cyrenian was drafted for the job of carrying his cross and he does it out of ignorance of what is going on. He had traveled over 800 miles to celebrate the Passover and now he had been rendered ceremonially unclean because he is unclean covered with Jesus' blood from the cross.

**II. SOME RESPONDED IN SORROW (w. 27-31)**

Jesus turns to the weeping mourners and says with compassion in Vs. 27-31. The women react in a perfectly normal way as they weep over the tragedy of Jesus impending death. But as Jesus' remarks make clear the real tragedy is to misjudge who He is. The real issue moves beyond what Jesus will suffer to what His death will mean both to those who believe and to those who reject Him. Jesus was looking for repentance not sympathy.

**III. SOME RESPONDED IN SHAMELESS INDIFFERENCE (v. 34b)**  
*"...And they divided His garments and cast lots."*

The soldiers who had the responsibility of carrying out the crucifixion were simply marking time until the execution is complete. These men had been hardened by the very coarseness of their lives. They had seen others die. They were not concerned about the meaning of Christ's death. Poor, poor soldiers, what did they take home from the cross, a few pieces of clothing and nothing more.

**IV. SOME RESPONDED IN OPEN MOCKERY (w. 35-40)**

- ◆ The Rulers Mocked Him (v. 35)
- ◆ The Soldiers Mocked Him (vv. 36-37)
- ◆ Pilate Mocked Him (v. 38)
- ◆ Even the Thieves Mocked Him (Vv. 32-33, 39-41)

Matthew and Mark both record that in the beginning both criminals mocked Jesus. But somewhere along the way one had change of heart because in V- 40 as we read.

**V. AT LEAST ONE RESPONDED IN FAITH (w. 41-43)**

It is a sobering thing to know that you are dying. It was sobering enough that at least one man came to the cross and went away a changed man and he did so because.

- ◆ He admitted his guilt V- 41
- ◆ He confessed Christ As Savior V- 42

The Lord's response to this man's faith is very reassuring as we see in V- 43. The man was saved wholly by grace; it was the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). He did not deserve it and he could not earn it. His salvation was personal and secure, guaranteed by the word of Jesus Christ. Christ's promise to the thief extends to all who believe in Him today. When we call on Him to save us, when we acknowledge our sins, and seek His deliverance, He responds with a word for today. You too can experience life with Christ in His kingdom today by believing in Him