

## Scripture Reading: Luke 23:1-25

Luke's account of Jesus' last hours is filled with irony. In the mocking words of Jesus' accusers, in the taunting of Jesus on the cross, the truth about Jesus is affirmed. As irrational as it may seem, this man **is** the Messiah of God, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. Luke seems determined that his readers understand the meaning of the events that are taking place. He seems to be answering the unspoken question: Is this man who is crucified with the criminals really God's very own Son? It seems like a cruel April Fools joke that this is the way the story will play out.

In another piece of irony, Luke tells us that, at the request of the crowd, Barabbas was released by Pilate, not Jesus. The name "Barabbas" means "son of the father." He was imprisoned for an attempted insurrection. In other words he had tried to do what many of Jesus' followers thought (hoped) Jesus would do -- be a military leader-king like David. Luke tells us that Barabbas was the son of the father -- the supposed king -- the people wanted. But in truth, in his death on the cross, Jesus was truly the Son of the Father -- the King -- the people needed.

The story of Jesus' Passion invites us to consider what we want from God versus what we need from God. The Gospel's invitation is open-ended: it is always possible to stop trying to get God to do what we want long enough to recognize and accept what God is already doing.

This is the invitation, and the challenge, of every day Christian living: paying attention to God who is present and active in our lives. Sometimes, we are so busy trying to be good, be faithful, and be Christian that we miss what God is doing in our lives and in the world. We can be so busy telling God what we want, that we miss God telling us what we need.

Holy Week is an invitation to stop long enough to listen, to pay attention, and to discover what God has done, what God is doing, and what God promises to do.

Luke's Gospel affirms that these events are part of God's grand plan for the salvation of creation. God is firmly in control. All we need to do is believe, trust, and follow.