

THE SOLDIERS

Luke 23:32-34

Naming the soldiers as the “bad guys” in the story of Jesus and the cross would be easy. They represent the Roman Empire. They beat Jesus. They crucify Jesus. But the Gospel accounts tell us there is more to the story.

☐ **Monday: Read Luke 23:32-34.**

What does Jesus’ prayer of forgiveness teach us about responding to those who wrong us? Who in your life needs your forgiveness?

☐ **Tuesday: Read Luke 3:14.**

How does following Jesus challenge the way we use power, authority, or influence in our own lives?

☐ **Wednesday: Read Matthew 27:27-31.**

Where do you see the temptation to ridicule or diminish others instead of offering dignity and compassion?

☐ **Thursday: Read John 19:23-24.**

How do we become desensitized to the suffering around us?
How can we cultivate compassion in place of insensitivity?

☐ **Friday: Read Matthew 8:5-13.**

What does the centurion’s faith teach us about trusting Jesus’ power?
Where is Jesus asking you to trust Him more?

☐ **Saturday: Read Mark 15:33-39.**

What do you think moved the centurion from being part of the execution to recognizing Jesus as the Son of God? How is Jesus still revealing Himself in unexpected places?

A Roman centurion is one of the first to have complete faith in Jesus. A centurion at the cross praises God and declares him righteous. According to Mark’s Gospel, the centurion at the cross says, “Surely this man was the Son of God.” And according to Luke, Jesus says of the soldiers who crucify him, “Father, forgive them.”

Following Jesus means letting ourselves be transformed by the power of Christ’s mercy and sacrifice.

Prayer: Jesus, the weight of the cross was crushing. The soldiers mocked and beat you, yet you bore it without complaint. Lord, when I am insulted or hurt, let me respond with love rather than anger. Help me to forgive as you forgive, and to see the suffering of others rather than focusing on my own pain. Amen.