

**March 8, 2009**  
**Luke 23:26-43**

## **Lent 2009 - The Crux of It All**

### **In the Middle of It All**



*My life swings between voices calling “loser” and “fake.” The key is not listening to either. I’m not as bad as my critics accuse me of being, but I’m not as good as I’ve led some to believe. And right there, in the truth somewhere in the middle of it all, is where we hear the voice of God. He still says to me, and to everyone called to follow Jesus, “I forgive you, I want you and I will use you.*

- Janeen

What is something you have learned to do through practice?

Examples: play the violin, weld metal, create a great scrapbook page, build furniture, play soccer, dance

In what ways did the end product, performance, or competition motivate you to keep struggling and improving through practice? Do you recall times when you didn’t feel good enough? Do you recall times when you faked like you were?

**READ** Luke 23:26-43

Notice how Jesus is in the middle between the two thieves. How does he relate to each of them? In what ways is his response to them the same? In what ways is it different?

Jesus is also in the middle of the crowd. List the different people in the crowd. How does Jesus respond to them?

#### **THE CROSS – in the Middle of FORGIVENESS**

List some of the things Janeen said that forgiveness is not. Recall the Biblical definitions she gave for forgiveness.

*Where are you on the journey of forgiveness?*

Explore the two extremes:

In what ways do you find yourself like the first criminal – the one who is bitter, hopeless, full of rage, oozes bile?

In what ways do you find yourself like the second criminal – the one who simply has faith and “opens himself to something bigger, to a faith in this revolutionary rabbi who has upset the Romans and the Jews”?

Read the quote to the left.

To what extent are you able to believe the hope in this statement?

What does it mean to have Jesus there with you?

As you listened to the sermon this week, what circumstances in your life came to mind? (What’s in the sack of potatoes you are carrying around?) How would you describe yourself being in the middle of the journey related to these circumstances? What helps you grapple with this?

#### **PRAY TOGETHER!**

Jesus, help us to live as forgiven and to forgive. Thank you for what you have done for us.