

Lord, Remember Me!

When they were
come to the place,
which is called
Calvary, there they
crucified Him, and
the malefactors, one
on the right hand,
and the other on the
left" (Luke 23:33).



Three men died that day. They were crucified side by side outside the walls of Jerusalem at a place called Golgotha ("skull hill") where the Romans did their killing.

It was located not far from the Damascus Gate so that people going into the city would have to see the executions.

Jesus of Nazareth hangs on the middle cross. Two men were crucified with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

PORTRAIT OF TWO THIEVES

Who were they? The translators use different words to describe them: "Thieves, robbers, malefactors, bandits." Luke's word means "members of the criminal class, professional criminals, members of the underworld."

These men were hoods, thugs, cutthroat killers, men who killed for fun and profit, assassins. Beyond that, we know little else about them.

It may appear that these two men are exactly alike. They were both criminals who were sentenced to die together at the same time and place.

Both had been severely beaten, both were covered with blood and dirt. Both men were dying and both would soon be dead.

But in reality, no two men could be more different. These two men who were crucified on the outer crosses differed on one main point: how they viewed the Man in the middle.

AMAZING FAITH

Let's take a closer look at the man who wanted forgiveness. Was any man ever in a more desperate situation? Brutally crucified, he is dying in agony for crimes he had committed. He is a guilty man, justly punished. He deserves to die and he knows it. This man is as close to death as you can be and still be alive. Now, at the last moment, he makes one final appeal to the Supreme Court of the Universe: "Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

I submit to you that here we have the most amazing example of saving faith in all the Bible. Jesus is hanging next to him, a sight awful to behold. The man's feet and arms are nailed to the cross, ropes hold his body upright so it won't fall off. Every movement is agony, every breath torture. Beneath him the howling mob screams for blood. They jeer, they hiss, they curse, they spit, they roar like wild hyenas. Somehow this thief saw Jesus bleeding and dying and yet he believed that He would someday rule a kingdom.

He saw Jesus at His weakest, and still he believed in Him. He is a crucified sinner trusting in a crucified Savior.

No man ever looked less like a king than Jesus did that day, yet this man saw Him as He really was.

This is made more amazing when you consider that this man had none of the advantages the disciples had. As far as we can tell, he never heard Jesus teaching by the seashore, he never saw Jesus heal the sick or raise the dead, he knew nothing of Jesus' great parables and never saw any of His miracles. This man missed all the outward signs of Jesus' kingship. Yet he believed.

He evidently knew nothing of the virgin birth, the Old Testament prophecies, the conversation with Nicodemus or the raising of Lazarus just one week earlier. The coming miracle of the resurrection was unknown to him. All the things we take for granted, he knew nothing about. Yet there on the cross, he came to understand the heart of the gospel. In the crucified Jesus—beaten, mocked, forsaken, His life blood ebbing away—this thief saw a King.

One crucified man saw another crucified Man and believed in Him. That made the difference between heaven and hell.

A PROMISE WITH THREE PARTS

How do we know this thief was saved? We know he was saved by the answer Jesus gave in **verse 43**: "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Jesus answered his request by giving him a promise with three parts.

1. Immediate Salvation. Note the word "today." Jesus put it first for emphasis, meaning, "This very day, the day of your crucifixion." Wherever "paradise" is, Jesus told this thief that he was going there that very day.

2. Personal Salvation. The phrase means to be "with Me in a very personal way." It is not "You over there and Me over here" but "You and Me together, side by side." It means to be in the personal presence of another person. Wherever Jesus was going, this thief would be right by His side. Heaven is where Jesus is, and to be with Him is to be in Heaven.

3. Heavenly Salvation. "Paradise" is the crucial word. Scholars tell us that it originally referred to the walled gardens of the Persian kings. When a king wanted to honor his subjects, he would invite them to walk with him in his garden in the cool of the day. This same word was used in the Greek Old Testament to refer to the Garden of Eden; in **Revelation 2:7** it refers to heaven. It is a place of beauty and inexpressible blessedness.

If we take these three promises together, we can see what a remarkable thing Jesus is saying. He is promising that this thief—who has lived his entire life in crime—will, upon his death, be transferred to heaven where he will be in the personal presence of Jesus Christ. Truly, this thief received much more than he asked for.

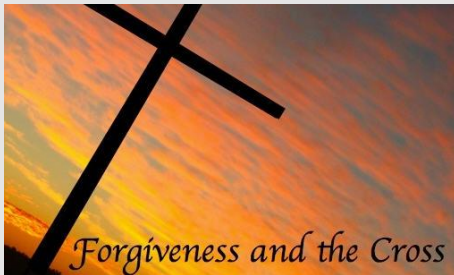
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I know that some people feel that they are too far gone in sin to ever be forgiven. Let me put the matter plainly. It doesn't matter where you've been sleeping. It doesn't matter what you've been drinking. It doesn't matter who you've been hanging around with. It doesn't even matter if you've broken the Ten Commandments—all of them, one by one—this week. It just doesn't matter. You can be saved right now. If this man can be saved, anyone can be saved. If there's hope for him, there's hope for you. If he can make it to heaven, so can you. If Jesus would take him, He'll certainly take you. He was pardoned before he lived a single righteous day.

In one transforming moment, a man who was not fit to live on earth was made fit to live in heaven. I take my stand with him. I claim the same mercy. We all get to heaven the same way, by the grace and mercy of God.

All that God wants from us—and all that He will accept—is simple faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. When we place our faith in the Lord Jesus, in that very moment we are saved.

The question is simple. Are you ready to die? You have nothing to fear if you know the Lord. You are not ready to die if you don't. Do you know Him? What will you do if you don't know Him? Ray Pritchard.



Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Jesus Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 13: 38

FORGIVENESS – COSTLY

There is one eternal principle which will be valid as long as the world lasts. The principle is -- Forgiveness is a costly thing. Human forgiveness is costly. A son or a daughter may go wrong; a father or a mother may forgive; but that forgiveness has brought tears ... There was a price of a broken heart to pay. Divine forgiveness is costly. God is love, but God is holiness. God, least of all, can break the great moral laws on which the universe is built. Sin must have its punishment or the very structure of life disintegrates. And God alone can pay the terrible price that is necessary before men can be forgiven. Forgiveness is never a case of saying: "It's all right; it doesn't matter." Forgiveness is the costliest thing in the world.

William Barkley

Faith's Resting Place

My faith has found a resting place,
Not in device or creed;
I trust the ever living One,
His wounds for me shall plead.

Refrain

*I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.*

Enough for me that Jesus saves,
This ends my fear and doubt;
A sinful soul I come to Him,
He'll never cast me out.

Refrain

My heart is leaning on the Word,
The living Word of God,
Salvation by my Savior's name,
Salvation through His blood.

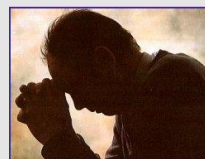
Refrain

My great physician heals the sick,
The lost He came to save;
For me His precious blood He shed,
For me His life He gave.

Refrain

Eliza E. Hewitt

POINT TO PONDER



Release!

Signed in tears, sealed in blood,
written on heavenly parchment,
recorded in eternal archives.
The black ink is written all over
with the red ink of the cross.
'The blood of Jesus Christ
cleanseth us from all sin.'

T. De Witt Talmage

Bringing the Word of Life,

PO Box 12,

Carrickfergus,

Northern Ireland.

BT38 7YD.

www.btwol.com

newlife@btwol.com