

LUKE 23:42-43 – The Thief on the Cross

8/6/16 Sat Morn Prayer

Luke 23:42-43 Then he said to Jesus, **"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."**
[43] And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Context/Biblical Background – The conversion of the thief on the cross, an illustrious instance of Christ's triumphing over principalities and powers even when He seemed to be triumphed over by them. It was providential that Jesus was crucified *between* the two thieves, for this **gave both of them equal access** to the Savior. Both **could read Pilate's** superscription, "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," and **both could watch Him** as He graciously gave His life for the sins of the world. The one thief imitated the mockery of the religious leaders and asked Jesus to rescue him from the cross, but the other thief had different ideas. He may have reasoned, "If this Man is indeed the Christ, and if He has a kingdom, and if He has saved others, then He can meet my greatest need which is salvation from sin. I am not ready to die!" Notice his astounding faith and courage!

A criminal on a cross finds salvation. -

"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

- This second criminal respected God (*Do you not even fear God?*).
- He knew his own sin (*under the same condemnation . . . we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds*).
- He knew Jesus, this Man, (*has done nothing wrong*). He called out to Jesus (*he said to Jesus*).
- He called out to Jesus as Lord (*he said to Jesus, Lord . . .*).
- He believed Jesus was who Jesus said He was (*remember me when You come into Your kingdom*).
- He believed the promise of everlasting life from Jesus.
- This man appears to have been the first who believed in the *intercession* of Christ.
- **See what he said to our Lord Jesus: Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom, Luke 23:42.** This is the prayer of a *dying sinner* to a *dying Savior*. It was the honor of Christ to be *thus prayed to*, though He was upon the cross reproached and reviled. It was the happiness of the thief *thus to pray*; perhaps he never prayed before, and yet now was heard, and saved at the last gasp. **While there is life there is hope, and while there is hope there is room for prayer.**
- **Observe his *faith* in this prayer.** In his confession of sin ([Luk 23:41](#)) he discovered *repentance towards God*. In this petition he discovered *faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*. He owns him to be *Lord*, and to have a *kingdom*, and that he was going to that kingdom, that he should have authority in that kingdom, and that those should be happy whom he favored; and to *believe* and *confess* all this was a *great thing* at this time of day.
- **Observe his *humility* in this prayer.** All his request is, **Lord, remember me**. All he begs is, *Lord, remember me*, referring himself to Christ in what way to remember him.
- **There is an air of begging and fervency in this prayer.** He does, as it were, breathe out his soul in it: "**Lord, remember me**, and I have enough; I desire no more; into Your hands I commit my case."

[43] And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

- Jesus answered the trust of the second criminal, assuring him that his life after death would be **with** Jesus, and be in **Paradise**, not torment.
- **Here is something truly remarkable: a deathbed conversion**, and may fairly be said to be the only Biblical example of a last-minute salvation. There *is* one deathbed conversion in the Bible, so that no one would despair; but *only one*, so that no one would presume.
- Significantly, **this thief who trusted in Jesus at the last moment goes to the same heaven anyone else does**. This may not seem fair, but in the larger picture **it gives glory to the grace of God, not to human merit in salvation**. In heaven, we will all be filled to the full with joy and reward; but the degree of our faithfulness now determines how big our container for joy and reward will be in heaven, though all will be filled to the fullest they can hold.
- **In Paradise:** "Paradise (*paradeisos*), a Persian word meaning 'garden, park,' was used in the Septuagint for the Garden of Eden (*Genesis* 2:8). It then became a type of the future bliss for God's people in *Isaiah* 51:3. In the present passage it represents the state of bliss which Jesus promised to the criminal directly after death."
- Jesus answered the second criminal **far beyond his expectation**.
- The thief on the cross likely had **some distant time** in mind; Jesus told him *today*.
- The thief on the cross asked **only to be remembered**; Jesus said "*you will be with Me*."
- The thief on the cross looked **only for a kingdom**; Jesus promised him **Paradise**.

- By this word we are given **to understand that Jesus Christ died to open the kingdom of heaven to all penitent obedient believers.**
- Christ here lets us know that He was going to paradise himself, to *hades - the invisible world*. His human soul was removing to the place of separate souls; not to the place of the damned, but to paradise, the place of the blessed. By this He assures us that His satisfaction was accepted, and the Father was well pleased in Him, else He had not gone to paradise; that was the beginning of the joy set before Him, with the prospect of which He comforted Himself. **Heb 12:2** ...*who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
- He lets all penitent believers know that when they die they shall go to be with him there. He was now, as a priest, purchasing this happiness for them, and is ready, as a king, to confer it upon them when they are prepared and made ready for it. We see here how the happiness of heaven is set forth to us.
- **It is being with Christ there.** That is the happiness of heaven, to see Christ, and sit with Him, and share in His glory, **Joh 17:24**.
- **It is immediate upon death:** *Today You shall be with Me*, tonight, before tomorrow. Lazarus departs, and is immediately comforted; Paul departs, and is immediately with Christ, **Phi 1:23**.

Summary:

- **“The Thief on the Cross”** – The perfect example of being saved by grace and not by anything we do!
- Although not recommended to wait this long, deathbed conversions would appear valid and effective!
- It took courage for this thief to defy the influence of his friend and the mockery of the crowd.
- It took faith for him to trust a dying King! When you consider all that he had to overcome, the faith of this thief is astounding.
- 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.
- The man hoped for some kind of help in the future, but Jesus gave him forgiveness that very day, and he died and went with Jesus to paradise.

PRAY TODAY FOR: (Name persons, name things, take direct aim at the objective of your supplications)

- Our Church, Nationally and locally
- For CreationFest – illumination; a message; an open door; effectiveness; clarity; boldness; deliverance
- Our Nation:
- Our leaders; for kings and those in authority
- Our Current Pres/VP Candidates: Donald Trump; Hillary Clinton; Mike Pence; Tim Kaine
- Police officers/military & all those upholding law & order
- When in small groups - Personal Prayers:

The Old Rugged Cross – George Bernard – Ernie Ford

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame; and I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain: So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true, its shame and reproach gladly bear; then he'll call me some day to my home far away, where his glory forever I'll share. (Refrain)

"Amazing Grace" – Newton – sung by Judy Collins

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.

2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.

3. Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

4. When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we'd first begun. (Repeat verse 1)

Please Note: You may see or download any of the past notes and audio of the Prayer/Devotional Notes by going to: www.missioncalvary.com When the screen comes up, scroll down on the left side to “Saturday Prayer Studies” Click on it and you'll see studies of Bible Prayer/Devotions. If you have any trouble, email me at ptwente@gmail.com