

GOOD FRIDAY

Luke 23:32-43

INTRODUCTION: Today is what is called Good Friday. Jesus Christ was condemned, cursed, and crucified between two thieves. He hung there in agony, soaked in blood and suffering under the wrath of His heavenly Father. On one cross hung a rebel without repentance. On another cross was a rebel who chose to repent. One the cross in the center was a Redeemer dying for the sins of mankind. One man died in his sin. One man died to sin. One man died for sin. One man was a sinner. One man was a saint. One man was the Savior. The death of our Lord Jesus between these two men, one blaspheming and the other believing, pictures the death of every human being. Today we will look at three truths that the repentant thief learned that day.

I. HIS SINFUL CONDITION!

This repentant thief at first was initially anything but sorrowful for his sin: Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32. Both of these thieves at first did not accept the person of Jesus Christ. These two men had heard about the miracles of Jesus but they did not know about the message of forgiveness. Our Lord Jesus will one day deal with the problems of sin and wrong in the world. But He came the first time to deal with the problem of sin and wrong in the human heart. We are all fortunate that our Lord Jesus did not come down from the cross. Isaiah 53:12. The purpose of Jesus was not to die with these men but to die for these men. Matthew 10:28; Romans 3:18; Psalm 10:13. One day the Lord Who longs to save your soul from eternal destruction in the Lake of Fire will be your Judge and there will be no hope for you unless you repent now!

II. HIS SIMPLE CONFESSION!

The repentant thief was no bible scholar or theologian. Yet on that Good Friday, that repentant thief shows us the greatest theological truth ever known: How can a sinner be saved? Luke 23:39-42. When we acknowledge our sinfulness and admit that our only hope of heaven is the mercy of God! We rejoice that because of our Lord's death on the cross vile sinners can have all their vile sins washed away! That vile thief came to his senses and recognized Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. Matthew 1:21; Romans 10:13. That thief had just heard Jesus pray for those who had put Him on the cross: Luke 23:34. Anyone who will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved: Luke 18:13; Acts 8:37. Every genuine cry for salvation includes these truths: 1.) I deserve God's wrath as a sinner. 2.) I believe Jesus is the perfect Son of God. 3.) I need Jesus to save me and I am asking Him to do so. That is exactly what the repentant thief did and at that moment he was graciously converted to become a son of God!

III. HIS SAVING CONVERSION!

On that cross the repentant thief realized that he was guilty before God and that Jesus Christ was innocent before God. He realized that Jesus wasn't on His cross because of His own sins but for the sins of the world. As the thief asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom, Jesus performed the greatest miracle of the cross, the forgiveness of all his sins! Three things happened when the repentant thief asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom: 1.) His conversion was sure: "Truly I say unto you today you will be with me in paradise!" 2.) Jesus said "Today!" That repentant thief's soul was in paradise before the undertaker even knew he was dead: 2 Corinthians 5:8. 3.) We need to see how spiritual this promise was: "you will be with Me in paradise." Are you ready to meet the Lord in heaven today?