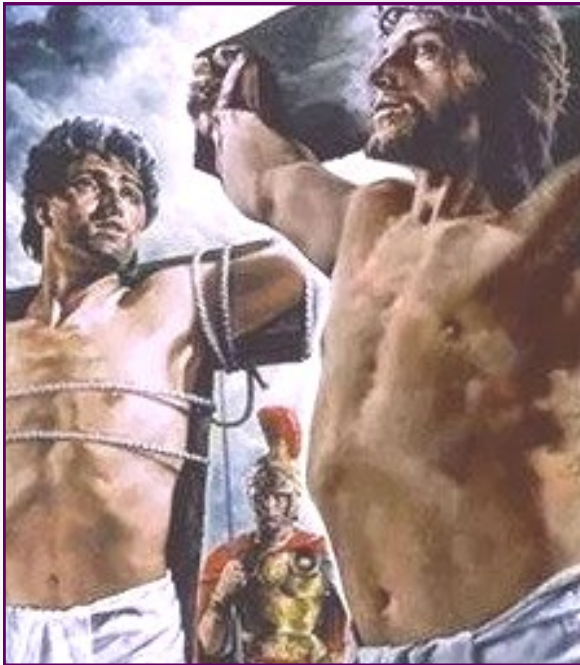


The Thief on the Cross

“Lent, A Monologue”



“And Jesus said unto him, ‘Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.’”

Luke 23:43 KJV

“I had been a sinner all of my adult life. I had robbed people, rich and poor. I had taken advantage of people who tried to help me. I never killed anyone, but I probably would have if they would have been in my way. I needed their money, I thought. My language was only used to help myself. I was the only important person in the world. I had no friends. I had used them all. I deserved to die.

“As I listened to the man they called Jesus, I thought at first that I could use this man, just as I had used so many others. He was so mild that I felt a new feeling inside that I had never felt before. He truly seemed to love people. I did not know what love meant. I had never loved anyone except myself.

“There were two of us, one on each side of Him. They had wanted to make Him the one that everyone saw. He was the prime target because getting rid of Him was going to affect many people. The people in charge of the government were afraid of Him. They misunderstood Him.

“During the time that we were all hanging there together, the other robber started tormenting Him by asking Him to save Himself and us if he were really the true Christ. I had begun to believe that He was the real Christ and I asked the other thief if he did not fear God because we were all being condemned to death. I realized from the people that were there and from hearing what had happened in the high court that this man was indeed innocent. No one came to try to save the other robber or me. No one cared what happened to us. We were receiving what we deserved.

“But this man was different. People were crying and praying. They were not violent. The people were heartbroken. No one was heartbroken over me. I had broken the hearts of many other people by my words and my actions. Instead of feeling sorry for us, they wanted us killed. Many people knew us and they had been wronged by us. We were getting what we deserved.

“His were words of kindness. He was concerned that someone take care of his mother, and He forgave the people who had put Him on the cross saying that they did not realize what they were doing. I didn’t even know where my mother was nor had I cared.

“As time went on, I realized He really was the Messiah, as He said He was. His kingdom was not of this small world, but a much bigger world than any of us could ever imagine in our wildest dreams.

“I asked Him to remember me when He went to His Heavenly Kingdom. He didn’t even ask my name. Now I know that He knew it because he knows all of us. I know that He knows the flowers, the number of hairs on our head. He knows what is in our hearts. We don’t have to tell him. He already knows. His answer was the sweetest words I have ever heard. He said, *‘Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.’*”

“Through His loving grace He had saved a wretch like me. I am sorry the other thief didn’t realize the wonderful gift that was there for both of us. Salvation was free for me and it can be for you, but you must accept it.”

“The thief had nails through both hands, so that he could not work; and a nail through each foot, so that he could not run errands for the Lord; he could not lift a hand or a foot toward his salvation, and yet Christ offered him the gift of God; and he took it. Christ threw him a passport, and took him into Paradise.”

D.L. Moody

Perhaps these thoughts were going through the mind of that thief after Christ told him he would be with him in Paradise.

"I Know Not How that Bethlehem's Babe could in the Godhead be; I only know the manger Child Has brought God's life to me.

*I know not how that Calvary's cross
A world from sin could free;
I only know its matchless love
Has brought God's love to me.*

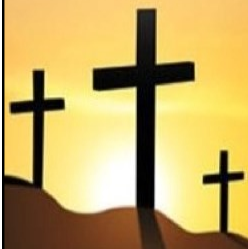
*I know not how that Joseph's tomb
Could solve death's mystery;
I only know a living Christ,
Our immortality."*

By Harry W. Farrington

FORGIVE THEM

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Luke 23:34



The Thief on the Cross: These references are also scarce. The most information is found in Luke 23:30-43; Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27; John 19:28 and John 19:32. However, in John they are not referred to as thieves, but it does tell about their legs being broken by the soldiers.

*Someone who really loves you
sees what a mess you can be,
how moody you can get,
how hard you are to handle,
but still wants you in their life.*

Ephesians 2:10



Prayer: Dear God, We know that You alone are sinless. We have all sinned and fallen short of Your glory. But through Your love and grace we can be forgiven as long as we seek to put You first and ask You to help us. We can overcome anything this earth has to offer, even death. Help us, dear Lord, to be Your servant today, tomorrow, and always. Amen

1. We may not be in jail, but have we hurt anyone by our words or actions?

2. How should we approach people that we know we have wronged?

3. How does the Bible say we should approach someone after we have hurt them?

4. Probably one of the most common hurts between people is gossip. How can we help this stop?

5. What do we share in common with the thief on the cross? If nothing else, do we share his earnest seeking for forgiveness and acceptance by Christ?

"When you are down to nothing, God is up to something. Pray. Keep the faith and love with no end."

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"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Martin Luther King, Jr.