

## Series: **Seven Sayings of Christ on the Cross**

**Texts:** *Matthew 27: 38-44 & Luke 23:39-43*

This is a short yet powerful story that teaches us the gospel of GRACE (**G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense). There were three crosses and three men. Two needed salvation. One trusted Him and received salvation, and the other did not.

### Part 2: **SALVATION**

**Key text:** *Luke 23:43*

<sup>43</sup> *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

**Read Matthew 27:38-44.**

The crucifixion was witnessed by a diverse group of people, each with their own perspective on Jesus. According to the gospel accounts, several individuals were present during the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross.

In the midst of what was happening, in the midst of what people were saying (the disrespect of people, the mockery of the religious leaders, the abusive

insults of many), one of the thieves who was hanged on the cross started to think differently.

He knew what he did and he knew the reason why he was hanging on the cross.

He saw Jesus hanging on the cross, receiving all those mockeries and insults while gasping for breath and going through excruciating pain, and yet he saw Jesus at peace, in control of His agony and pain, in control of His emotions.

He noticed that Jesus never even once retaliated. This happened to fulfil what the scriptures say.

**Isaiah 53:7** – *He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.*

This thief realised that Jesus was not supposed to be on the cross because Jesus was not like them.

**Jesus did not have a criminal record.**

Crucifixion was the ultimate penalty only for bandits and criminals like them.

He realised that Jesus was a good man, a godly man.

After that moment of silence, reflection and soul searching, he started to change his perspective, his view of Jesus...

They were heartless, hopeless and Christless criminals but one of them had a **change of heart**.

***The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.***

**Luke 23:39-43**

*<sup>39</sup> Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." <sup>40</sup> But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even **fear God**, seeing you are under the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but **this Man has done nothing wrong.**" <sup>42</sup> Then he said to Jesus, "**Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.**" <sup>43</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

**Listen to his confession...**

**a. <sup>40</sup> ... Do you not even **fear God**,**

**Prov. 8:13** - *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.*

**b.** <sup>41</sup> ... *this Man has done nothing wrong.*

He acknowledged that Jesus was sinless man, a godly man.

**c.** <sup>42</sup> *Then he said to Jesus, “Lord,*

He started to call Him **Lord**. Lord means “**OWNER**”.

**d.** <sup>42</sup> *Then he said to Jesus, “... remember me...*

It's **personal** – *remember me*. It is between him and Jesus and no one in between.

**e.** <sup>42</sup> *Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come **into Your kingdom.***

He acknowledged Jesus as King because only a king has a kingdom.

This changed and the repentant criminal only wanted one thing, **to simply REMEMBER HIM** when Jesus gets to His kingdom. But Jesus had a better idea for him.

Luke 23:43 - <sup>43</sup> *And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”*

**a. Assuredly...**

Jesus was talking to someone who was once a heartless criminal but now Jesus was giving him hope, giving him **100% assurance of salvation.**

b. ***Today, you will be with me...***

It's personal. It's between him and Jesus and no one in between.

c. ***... in Paradise.***

It's a very unique word. It's a Persian word that means a walled garden. Persian kings had beautiful gardens that were walled and well-watered and if the king wanted to honour someone, he made that someone what was called a "***companion of the garden***".

## **LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE STORY?**

The truth of the matter is that we are like those thieves. We have sinned against a holy God and deserve His wrath or holy anger.

**1. We were all sinners. *Rom. 5:12 & Rom. 3:23***

**S.I.N** is an acronym – **S**eparation **I**s **N**ormal

When we believe that SIN or Separation Is Normal, you and I will start to live in deception.

**2. The penalty of sin is death. *Romans 6:23***

Sin's payment is **death**. Someone must die!

**3. Christ died to pay the penalty of our sins. *Rom. 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24 & 1 John 2:1-2***

#### **4. Salvation is only through Christ alone. *John 14:6* & *Acts 4:12***

Only Jesus saves! It is not through good works nor religion that we can attain salvation.

The essence of ***death*** is **SEPARATION**, and the essence of ***life*** is **UNION** with Christ.

**The story of the repentant thief gives us the answer on how we can have a UNION with Christ.**

- a. **We need to fear God.** A reverential fear and a sense of awe and respect to Jesus. *Prov. 8:13*
- b. **We must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in our personal life.** *John 1:12*
- c. **We need to confess that Christ is the Lord and Saviour of our life.** *Romans 10:9*

**Romans 10:9** - *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*