

Luke
See Jesus
“Almost Paradise”
Luke 23:32-43

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / June 2, 2024

Luke 23:32-43 “Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Him. ³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on His right and one on His left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ And they cast lots to divide His garments. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at Him, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ of God, His Chosen One!’ ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up and offering Him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ ³⁸ There was also an inscription over Him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’ ³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Him, saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!’ ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ ⁴² And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ ⁴³ And He said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.’”

Reader: This is the Word of The Lord.

Response: ***Thanks Be To God!***

I. You need to see that anyone can be forgiven if they repent and believe.

Luke 22:34 “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”

1 Corinthians 2:6-8 “Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸ **None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**”

- A. The Centurion and those with him believed and were saved (Matthew 27:54).
- B. 3,000 Jews were converted on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41).
- C. 5,000 believed in Christ when Peter & John were arrested (Acts 4:4).
- D. Many priests believed and were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7).

II. Jesus responded to His enemies with a silent trust in His heavenly Father - and so should you.

Luke 23:35-37 “And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at Him, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ of God, His Chosen One!’ ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up and offering Him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’”

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

When you say nothing in return, it says a lot.

1 Peter 2:23-24 “When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, **but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.** ²⁴ He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.”

III. You need to know which thief you are.

Luke 23:42-43 “And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ ⁴³ And He said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.’”

3 Proofs of a Heart Transformed by the Gospel

1. You’re more concerned about eternal life than your present life.

Luke 23:40 “But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?’”

Luke 12:4-5 “I tell you, My friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. ⁵But I will warn you whom to fear: fear Him who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him!”

2. You take responsibility for your sin and guilt.

Luke 23:41 “And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds...”

Luke 15:17-19 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’”

3. Your only Hope is Jesus, and nothing else.

Luke 23:42 “And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’”

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:

1. Pastor Peter said “Deconstruction without reconstruction is destruction.” What is the difference between something that is “deconstructive” and something that is “destructive?”
2. When and why have you believed yourself or someone else to be outside the reach of God’s forgiveness?
3. Pastor Peter said “When you say nothing in return, it says a lot.” When have you seen that to be true?
4. Review the “3 Proofs Of A Gospel-Transformed Heart.” Which have you been encouraged to see in someone else? Which have you seen in yourself?
5. Which thief are you most like? Why?