

THE PREACHING FROM THE CROSSES

TEXT: LUKE 23:39-43

INTRO: What we have before us this morning is the gospel account in Luke of the two thieves being crucified along side the Lord Jesus Christ.

- What we want to look at is the messages preached by the dying thieves.
- One by a skeptic, an impenitent thief, a man who was sorrow that he got caught, wordly repentance which worketh death.
- A man lost for eternity
- Another by a repentent thief, a man who was sorrow for his sins, who showed godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation.
- A man who would be saved for time and eternity.

I. THE MESSAGE OF THE SKEPTIC/THE IMPENITENT THIEF

A. Vs 39: "If thou be Christ..."

- Notice the "IF", Questioning
- Doesn't that sound familiar?
- Doesn't this remind you of Satan's tactics.
- Satan, speak three times in the scripture-
 - Once to Eve
 - Once to Job
 - And Once to Jesus
- 1. To Eve, he questions: "Yea hath God said?" (Ge. 3:1)
- 2. To God (concerning Job), he says: "Doth Job fear God for nought?"
- 3. To Jesus, he says: "If thou be the Son of God..."

B. Notice, this is the favorite devise of the skeptic to challenge or question the premise.

- This is the same approach that all of modern education and sciences uses in attacking the Word of God as the final authority.
 - So, then they can set themselves as the final authority that everyone has to run to all the time.
- C. The dying thief, the skeptic is of his father the devil.
- When he railed on Christ and said **"If thou be Christ"**
 - He sounded just like his father, Satan
 - Because Satan ^{said} to Jesus in Luke 4:3 - **"If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."**
- D. The impentient thief is coming from the same mind set as the religious leaders of the council, who wanted Jesus put to death.
- This ^{ese} so-called godly men ^{had} just previously uttered in Luke 23:35 - **"And the rulers also with them derided him saying, He saved others; let him save himself if (there is that if again) he be Christ, the chosen of God."**
- E. If you think about this for a minute, it is pretty ridiculous based on the evidence we have just seen to believe - "God is everybody's Father".
- Such a thing is absolutely impossible.
 - God would never have children that would yell out
 - **"If thou be the Son of God...save thyself,"**
 - or **"If thou be Christ, save thyself and us"**
- E. This is the message preached by "the skpetic"
- A message of impentience or without repentance
 - A message of doubt
 - A message without hope.
 - A message of unbelief
 - A message which leads the listerner to eternal damination.

II. THE MESSAGE OF THE REPENTENT THIEF

- A. Here is a man as we will see as evidenced by his words that must be thinking - **"Why is everyone picking on Jesus?"**

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- It just doesn't make sense
- He hasn't done anything?

B. **ILLUSTRATION** - Let us try to picture that thief. *for a moment*

1. He strains his cramped neck muscles to the right and looking across the dying Saviour, he says to his companion in crime.

- **"Dost not thou fear God"** - He is doing Jesus preaching for Him.
- **"seeing thou art in the same condemnation?"** - They are both crucified.
- **"And we indeed justly"** - he had admitted Jesus death is unjustly.
- **"for we receive the due reward of our deeds"** He is talking about Bible justice where **"...every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;"** He. 2:2
- **"but this man hath done nothing amiss"** - Again, the thief is saying - No fault in Jesus.

2. The dying thief is preaching a sermon while all the religious leaders are changing the scriptures and ridiculing God's Saviour.

- While the Roman soldiers are gambling at the foot of the cross.
- While Peter is weeping and Judas is swinging on the rope around his neck.

3. The thief has just preached a tremendous three point message to his companion-in-sin.

- a) Shut your mouth and quit griping and criticizing a decent man.
 - b) We got what we deserve, we took our chances and got caught.
 - c) If you fear God show it, and shut your mouth, You make me sick!
- Pretty strong message.
 - We need more preachers in America with backbone to preach such a message.

4. When a man begins to talk like that to his companion-in-sin, he already has one foot on the threshold of heaven
- All that is left is for him is to come to Jesus.
5. You see the attitude of the other thief is that attitude of so many today.
- "Why did I have to get such a raw deal and why does this have to happen to me when I haven't done anything worse than anyone else?"
 - This attitude will land a person in hell!
6. On the other hand the attitude of the repentent thief was "I got what I had coming and God was merciful at that, for I got ALL I had coming, I'd get an eternity in hell."
- Reminds us of what the Publican prayed in Luke 18:13
 - "God be ^{merciful} ~~merciful~~ to me a sinner."
 - We are told that by Jesus "...this man went down to his house justified..."

III. THE INVITATION

1. After preaching his three point message in Vs 40-41.
- The preacher concludes with the invitation Vs 42
 - "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"
 - The thief comes forward to receive Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour.
 - He has taken his Kingship seriously.
 - The dying thief takes Jesus at His word to be what He professed to be THE KING OF TRUTH with an earthly kingdom over Israel (Luke 1:30-33).
 - He recognizes a future kingdom and lays ahold of this article of faith, while he is ten feet from a King who will be dead before the sun goes down.
 - The thief was saved by faith (Eph. 2:8-10, Heb. 11:1-30)
2. Important to notice, the thief calls Jesus, "Lord".
- "Lord remember me"
 - You know there should have more than two thieves that were crucified.

- There should have been bunch of theives.
- The bunch that came up with all those so-called modern translations, the New Age Bibles of Satan.
- They steal the word "Lord" out of a dying thief's mouth and by doing this, do away with the diety of Christ.
- Therefore, sending a repentent sinner to hell.

3. But Praise God!

- The Bible says in Psalm 119:89:
- **"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."**
- MAT. 24:35 - **"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."**
- Jesus said in John 10:35 - **"...the scripture cannot be broken"**
- Praise God, the Word of God, the AV 1611, KJ Bibles says **Lord**.
- Because instead going to hell this thief went to paradise.

4. Jesus responds just like he said he would:

- John 6:37, Jesus said - **"...and him that cometh to me I will in wise cast out."**
- We see Jesus's responds to the thief's petition in Luke 23:43.

5. We want to notice something very important in Jesus' response.

- **"To day shalt thou be with me in paradise"**
- Immediate salvation
- Notice also:
- The thief repents without going to a priest.
- He confesses without going to a priest.
- The priests present are **mocking** Jesus!
- Judas confesses to **these priests**. (Mt 27:1-6).
- The thief cannot kneel to pray, nor can he get baptized.
- He does not talk in tongues, neither does he handle snakes.
- He prays no "Our Father" or "Hail Mary".
- He goes to no church or minister for "last rites".
- He keeps no Golden Rule. He ignores all the commandments.

- He joins nothing and purposely avoids the "mass".
- He does **NOT** "live it" and never did.
- He believes on the Lord (vs 42) Jesus and is saved by grace through faith, having believed.

6. "To day shalt thou be with me" - Instantaneous salvation.

- That morning the poor man was in jail, that night in paradise.
- In the morning he chewed a stale crumb of mouldy bread, but that night feasted on the Bread of Life!
- In the morning, a guard tramped in and kicked a pot of scummy water over on the floor in front of him and cussed at him and told to "Drink it off the floor"
- Yet that night he drank long cool draughts from the Water of Life.
- In the morning, unfit for respectable society and the company of decent men and women - that night - made a prince unto God and acceptable before the throne of the Sinless Creator of the Universe!
- "Saved by His power divine, saved through His life sublime.
- Life now is sweet, and my joy is complete!
- For I'm SAVED! SAVED! SAVED!" Glory!!!

• Actually 3 messages preached from the crosses that day.

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The Lord

one of unbelief - "IF" a skeptic rejection - of the Savior
 one of repentance "I'm a dirty rotten sinner"
 I want to be saved - save ME LORD
 one of salvation - To day shalt thou be with me
 in paradise

IF you have never asked the Lord to remember you
 want you today. - Lord save me.

• Christian let us remember, we were all once dying thieves once
 sinners hell bound, until we asked the Lord to remember us!
 Let us even be mindful of the price our Savior paid.