

### **Luke 23: 32-43 (New International Version)**

<sup>32</sup>Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. <sup>33</sup>When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

<sup>35</sup>The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

<sup>36</sup>The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup>and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

<sup>38</sup>There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>39</sup>One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

<sup>40</sup>But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup>We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

<sup>42</sup>Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

<sup>43</sup>Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise\*."

\* paradise comes from a Persian word, referring to 'garden'. This word evokes the images found in Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 2.2, among others.

**“Today you will be with me in Paradise”**

Possible Starter question: Have you ever been involved in a ‘rescue’, either as the rescuer or the one who was rescued? Share your stories.

Transitional comment: Today we’re studying the second of the series of Jesus “Last Words”. This was a word that was spoken to a dying man, and it was a word of salvation.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit’s leading (if you haven’t already prayed)

Read and Overview observations:

- Read Luke 23:32-43
- Take a moment and survey the scene. Who are the characters that show up in this section of the story? What word or words would you use to describe each of their attitudes at this moment?
- Are there any words or ideas that are repeated throughout this section?
  - I Why do you think people resorted to insult and mockery when they crucified Jesus? Which of the insults do you think would have been most hurtful?
  - I What was the theological significance of Jesus being crucified as a criminal, hanging between two thieves?
  - I How did the second criminal’s statement in verses 40-41 help, through irony, clarify the theological truth of what was happening?
- A number of people spoke words about being ‘saved’. How many references to this and who said what? What were they talking about being saved from? How does this differ from the salvation that was offered to the third man?
  - I Read verse 42 three different times,
    - The first time, encourage people to read it together.
    - The second time, have people read through it on their own.
    - The third time, only the leader reads.but before you read, ask people to consider the dying man’s request carefully. Ask them to identify a phrase or word that strikes them as significant and have them be ready to share it after the three readings.

Share your responses with one another.

- I What did this request in verse 42 say about the dying man’s faith?

- I Read Jesus' answer in verse 43 three different times,
- The first time, encourage people to read it together.
  - The second time, have people read through it on their own.
  - The third time, only the leader reads.
- but before you read, ask people to consider the Jesus' response carefully. Ask them to identify a phrase or word that strikes them as significant and have them be ready to share it after the three readings.

Share your responses with one another.

- I What do Jesus' words in verse 42 say about his response to the dying man's faith? What was the substance of Jesus' assurance?

### Summary

A When did you turn to Jesus in faith? Have a few people share their conversion stories – when Jesus' offer of salvation became something that provided hope for life and eternity.

Prayer together: thank God for the gift of Jesus – the one who provides us with forgiveness and salvation.

---

Text is on other page or [www.Biblegateway.com](http://www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. BIG idea: Salvation is offered to anyone at anytime. All we need is the willingness to repent and believe.
- b. Key verse/idea: verse 43: "Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.)
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the "teacher role," rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this "on-line" study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.