



Cries from the Cross Sermon Series

Sermon #2

'The Second Cry: Salvation!'

This past Sunday in Cries from the Cross:

- This past Sunday we began our 7-part series called 'Cries from the Cross' as we are looking at the 7 sayings that Jesus said while on the Cross of calvary.
 - ***One reason that the Lord laid this series on my heart was to prepare our hearts this Easter season.***
 - To reflect deeply on what Jesus' death on the cross really did mean for us, I feel it's appropriate that we study what Jesus said moments before He yielded up His spirit.
- This past Sunday we looked at: ***'The First Cry: Forgiveness!'*** from ***Luke 23:34.***

- 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.'
- Sunday Morning I asked the question:
 - ***What does the first cry of Jesus on the cross show us about God's forgiveness?***
 - ***Point 1: The Possibility of Forgiveness. (V. 34a)***
 - ***Point 2: The Passiveness of Far too many. (V. 34b)***
 - ***Point 3: The Prophecy Fulfilled. (V. 34c)***
- Based on Sunday's message, have you reflected on God's Forgiveness?
 - Are you forgiving others?
 - Have you asked God to forgive you of your sin?

'The Second Cry: Salvation!'

Luke 23:39-43

Sermon in a Sentence:

In Jesus' second verbal cry on the cross, we see that salvation truly is available to all. In his conversation with one of the thieves, we see that the thief Admits his Sin, Asks for Salvation, and Accepts God's Sovereignty.

Intro:

- The passage of scripture we are looking at tonight, we obviously see the second phrase that Jesus said on the Cross.

- *But in examining the verses prior to that, we will also see the words spoken by the two criminals that were on the right and left of Jesus.*

- *Who are these criminals?*

- Technically, we do not know who they are.
- We do not know their names or much if anything about them.

- *An important possibility to consider, is that it is possible these two thieves were guilty of the same crime that Barabas committed.*

- *Remember, Jesus took the place of Barabas.*

- *Either way, the greek term ‘criminal’ here only occurs 4 times in the NT.*

- In Luke 23:32, 33, 39 and 2 Timothy 2:9.
 - It comes from the greek word *‘Kakourgos’* and literally means an *evil-doer, malefactor, and criminal.*

- *W.W. points out an incredible observation when he said ‘It was providential that Jesus was crucified between the two thieves, for this gave both of them equal access to the Savior.’*
 - The two thieves that we will read about in our scripture text tonight show us that all have equal access to God, through Jesus.

- *Yet it’s how you respond and what you do with the information concerning Jesus’ identity that truly matters.*

- The words we will see Jesus say on the Cross tonight are very powerful, but I think it’s even more incredible when you put that with the words that the thieves said, and we get a bright and bold look into what salvation really is.

Read Luke 23:39-43

Background on Luke 23:39-40:

- Before we ask our question tonight and dive into the exposition of this text, we need to spend a moment looking at the details and contrast that verses 39-40 give us.
 - ‘One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him,[a] 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?” Luke 23:39-40
- *Everyone has an opinion about Jesus.*
 - Either He’s Lord or He’s a liar.
 - *The same contrast that many people in our world have today concerning Jesus and WHO He is, is found right in front of us in this passage.*
- *The religious leaders were the first to mock and scorn Jesus, the soldiers did it, and now*

one of the criminals on the cross, in verse 39, is going to do the same thing.

- The ESV translation says the one thief ‘railed’ at Him.
 - *This is translated from the greek word ‘Blasphemo’ which is where we get our word for Blaspheme.*
 - *In the greek this word means to defame, revile, and to slander. To speak of God or divine things in terms of irreverence.*
- *This first thief see’s what is going on, and joins in on everyone jumping on Jesus.*
- But the second thief, says not so fast when he jumps on him, for jumping on Jesus: *‘But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?’*
 - *It’s almost like the second thief on the cross realizes they are getting ready to die and breathe their last, and he cannot believe the other thief is wasting his time railing at Jesus instead of repenting.*

- When the second thief uses the phrase ‘do you not fear God’ gives strong indication of the heart of OT faith.
 - *‘The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.’ Proverbs 1:7*
 - Deuteronomy 6:2, Deuteronomy 10:12, Job 28:28, Proverbs 9:10, and Ecclesiastes 12:13 all show that fearing God was a big part of OT faith.
- *The second thief realizes that the thief railing him should fear God, because in his death he will face judgment.*
 - *As the 2nd thief will share in the verses that follow, they are being punished justly for their crimes. But Jesus has done nothing.*
 - I believe the second thief had an ‘aha’ moment. Where he thought ‘if my earthly punishment is this bad, how bad will my eternal punishment be if I don’t trust in Jesus?’
- While you are breathing, there’s still hope of salvation for you through Jesus.
 - *In these verses we have a beautiful depiction and accurate illustration of*

what the Gospel IS and how it truly is available to all.

Question to Ask:

How does the conversation Jesus has with the thief on the cross and His second cry on the Cross show us that salvation is available to all who believe in Jesus?

Point 1: Admits his Sin. (V. 41)

- ‘And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’
 - *Anytime that I counsel with someone who wants to accept Christ or who has questions about the Gospel, the number one question that I ask is, what is sin? And do you sin?*
 - **In order for someone to be able to come to Christ, I fully believe they have to understand just how far away from Him they really are.**
 - In order for them to recognize and see their need for a Savior, they must have a personal understanding of their sin.
 - If you don’t recognize your sin, then what do you need Jesus for?
 - *In verse 41 I believe there are two important things we need to point out in seeing that the thief admitted his sin.*

● **Guilty. (V. 41a)**

- ‘And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds;’
- *I want us to see that it definitely took great courage for the thief to defy his friend and possibly co-worker in crime, and to stand up for Jesus.*
 - **This thief stood up for a man that everyone else was condemning.**
- **What caused him to do such a thing?**
 - Guilt. He knew that he was being repaid for the crimes he committed.
 - He committed the crime, and he was paying the punishment.
 - **The punishment for sin without the blood of Jesus over one’s heart is hell. Life without Christ for eternity.**
- Even in his last moments on earth, the thief was trying to get the other thief to see and understand.
 - He wants him to see that they deserved what was happening to them.
- **What is revealed in the second part of verse 41 shows that Jesus did not deserve, but He took it.**
 - The second thief saw his own guilt, his own sin, and realized that time was too late for him to somehow save himself.

- **What you have here is a scriptural example of a deathbed confession that is unfolding.**
 - One commentator said ‘He saw his sin and admitted his wrong. And he did the only thing he could do—the only thing he needed to do; plead with Christ for forgiveness and mercy.’
 - *Have you dealt with your own personal guilt?*
 - Has the price of your guilt been paid for in full?
- **Not Guilty. (V. 41b)**
 - ‘but this man has done nothing wrong.’
 - **Jesus was perfect. Jesus was sinless. In order for you and I to receive salvation we must believe that He was perfect.**
 - Because if He wasn’t, how then can He save us?
 - **Thomas R. Shcreiner said ‘Of all the people present, the one with true spiritual perception is one of the criminals hanging on a cross. He recognizes that he deserves his punishment, and he turns to one of the central themes of the passion narrative: Jesus is innocent and guiltless. His punishment is completely undeserved.’**
 - Even Pilot couldn’t find anything wrong that Jesus did, but Pilot turned him to the

angry crowd and washed his hands clean.

- ‘So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood;[b] see to it yourselves.” 25 And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” 26 Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged[c] Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.’ Matthew 27:24-26
 - **Jesus was not guilty, yet He bore our pain and suffering that we deserve.**
 - Worthy is the lamb!!
 - The first thing we’ve seen tonight, is that the thief admits his sin.

Point 2: Asks for Salvation. (V. 42)

- ‘And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”
 - **Perhaps this thief on the Cross asked Jesus to remember him because he heard what Jesus had cried out just moments earlier ‘Father forgive them for they know not what they do.’**
 - **He heard that forgiveness was available, so he asked Jesus the most important question that any of us can ask of our Lord!!!!**

- ***‘Remember us, for without you we are truly hopeless!!’***
 - The second thief says ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’
 - ***He’s asking for the Lord to save Him, and to remember him! Wow!***
 - ***I believe verse 42 reveals three important things concerning the thief asking for salvation that we need to point out.***
- ***He (the thief), realizes WHO Jesus is.***
 - ‘Jesus,’
 - ***It’s important to see that this thief recognizes who Jesus is and does so by simply saying his name without anything derogatory terms attached to it.***
 - No one else in this situation was treating Jesus with reverence or respect, except this thief.
 - ***His eyes were opened to see just WHO Jesus is and He accepted that truth.***
 - The realization that this thief has of WHO Jesus is reminds me of what Jesus said in Matthew 16:28.
 - ***‘Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.’***
 - Do you realize who Jesus is?

- ***He realizes WHERE Jesus is going.***
 - ‘remember me when you come into your kingdom.’
 - The thief specifically asks Jesus to remember him when He goes into His Kingdom.
 - ***Obviously this is a reference to Heaven.***
 - ***He is addressing Jesus as God and realizes where He’s going.***
 - The thief has the moment of ‘this man really is who he said he was.’
 - ***He genuinely asks our Lord to bring him where He is going.***
 - Have you asked Jesus to take you where He is one day by faith?
 - If you haven’t, then you need to do so today.
 - Jesus is going to His Kingdom (Heaven), where are you going?
- ***He realizes WHAT Jesus will be doing.***
 - The fact that the thief asks Jesus to remember him in his Kingdom, shows us that he realizes Jesus is God, but also that Jesus is going to reign.
 - ***Jesus is also the judge, and I do think and believe that He had somewhat of an understanding of this.***
 - In regards to the thief on the Cross, many speculate as to how he came to this realization

of who Jesus was, where He was going and What'd be doing.

- ***My response to that is what God does today in the lives of believers.***
 - It's led by the Holy Spirit. Supernatural, and you can't explain it.
- ***When God saves someone, He saves them. It's totally out of our control and in to His hands.***
 - Tonight we've seen the thief Admit his sins, ask for salvation, but now we need to see that he accepts God's sovereignty.

Point 3: *Accepts God's Sovereignty. (V. 43)*

- 'And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."
 - ***Now, towards the end of our message tonight, we see that Jesus responds.***
 - With all the conversation that has been going on between the two thieves, Jesus finally speaks and He does so with just one line.
 - ***It's important to point out that Jesus uses the word 'today'.***
 - Jesus uses the word 'today' in Luke 4:21 when Jesus proclaims the promises that are found in Isaiah to be fulfilled 'today' in His ministry.
 - In Luke 13:32-33 we see that Jesus heals, forgives, and exorcizes demons 'today'.

- Jesus also told Zacchaeus that 'today' he must stay at his house because 'today' salvation was coming to him in Luke 19:5, Luke 19:9.

- ***The criminal would also be with Jesus 'today' because physical death was imminent for the both of them.***

- ***Jesus also tells the thief that he will go to 'paradise'.***

- Now, there is much discussion on that word and what it meant contextually and so on and so forth.
- ***I believe that paradise is another name for heaven, which would be the dwelling place of God and those who have accepted Him.***
 - 'And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—'2nd Corinthians 12:3
 - 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.' Revelation 2:7
- ***Either way, I truly believe Jesus was telling the thief that he would be with Him in Heaven.***
 - Because of the faith that the thief showed, I do believe that we too, who are saved, will see the thief in Heaven one day.

Conclusion:

- ***Tonight we've studied one of the clearest scriptural examples of what it means to follow Jesus.***
 - It's not rules, regulations or what you do that makes you a follower of Jesus.
 - I believe very plainly in what the thief said on the cross and what Jesus said in response to him is a great example to all of us, on what salvation is truly about:
 - **Point 1: *Admits his Sin. (V. 41)***
 - **Point 2: *Asks for Salvation. (V. 42)***
 - **Point 3: *Accepts God's Sovereignty. (V. 43)***
- ***Maybe you're here tonight, and you don't know where you will spend eternity because you haven't asked Jesus to save you.***
 - I encourage you during this time of invitation if that's you, to come down, grab my hand, and come and talk to Jesus about your salvation.
- ***If you are saved, what a beautiful passage you can walk anyone through that God puts in your path about what it means to be saved and how to be saved!***
 - In a world with so many confusing beliefs, we have a solid scriptural example of how to be saved.
 - It's not by baptism.

- By doing the right things.
 - ***But, by faith and believing in Him. Have you done that?***