

The Dying Thief

Would you leave your brand-new shiny bike in the public park overnight, while it's dark outside and while you were asleep? What might happen to it? Some boy or girl might find it and see no lock on it and take it home and pretend that it belonged to them. That would make that person a thief. They would break two commandments. Commandment #8, **Thou shalt not steal**, and commandment number #9, **Thou shalt not bear false witness**, or tell lies.

Why do we use keys? I have a whole lot of keys on my key ring. I have one for the church door, the office door, the mail box, a house key, a car key, another mail box key and some others. We need keys to lock things up because there are thieves everywhere we go. Like the Corona virus that has gone all around the world infecting people so that thousands and millions get sick and some die, sin is everywhere, and the Bible says that, **The wages of sin is death**.

That brings us to talk about the two thieves who died on two crosses at Calvary on the same day that the Lord Jesus was crucified.

Yes, on the day that the Lord Jesus died there were three crosses on that hill. One in the centre was for the Lord Jesus. On one side was a cross with a man who had stolen stuff. He was nailed to a cross to die. On the other side of the Lord's cross was another man, who also stole things and was put to death on another cross.

So, on that day when Jesus died, he was treated like a transgressor as there were thieves on either side of him.

Transgressor is the Bible word for someone who has broken the law of God. When God gave us His law, He drew a line which we are not to cross. It is a clear marker to warn you not to keep out. It is a no-go area, or you are a transgressor.

When God says, "Thou shalt not steal", and you go on anyway to take something that does not belong to you, to use it yourself, you cross the line of God's law. Then you are guilty and as a transgressor of God's law, you deserve to die, like these two thieves.

These thieves probably knew each other. They would have been in jail before this. They would have talked and lamented over their horrible death when dragged out to die on a Roman cross.

Well, while they hung on the cross they were still talking. They shouted terrible things at the Lord Jesus to mock him. They joined in the mockery of many others who joked and jested, **If you be the Christ, come down from the cross. Then we will know and believe you are the Son of God. Save thyself and us.** They said it in a sneering evil way that was horrible, as it belittled the Lord Jesus, and poked fun at him. It really showed that these men were sinful from head to toe and from inside out.

Then something strange happened. There was a major halt the mockery. One of the thieves shouted to the other to stop. He said to his fellow thief, Wait, stop mocking this man called Jesus, **"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?"**

It was like a bright light came on in this man's heart. He began to realise Jesus truly was the Son of God. He suddenly saw the Lord Jesus as perfectly good and they were totally sinful. He knew deep inside himself that they deserved to die for their transgressions. They were law breaking thieves, but the Lord Jesus did not deserve to die. He was the sinless Son of God.

The thief who stopped mocking the Lord, prayed to the Lord Jesus, **"Lord, Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."**

He understood that Jesus was Lord and that he had a heavenly kingdom where people live for ever and ever. And this past thief wanted into that heavenly kingdom. But how could he? Who could forgive his sins and give him eternal life?

Well, the Lord did. He said, **Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise."**

That very day, while hanging on the cross, the believing thief died, but his soul went straight into heaven, or paradise. He was able to believe who Jesus was and to believe why Jesus was suffering on that cross. **You see, while Jesus died on the cross, He was suffering for sinners to open the way to heaven for them. He was able to give this thief the gift of full salvation, by forgiving His sin with a full guarantee of heaven.**

The Lord Jesus can do that for you too. Even though you are a transgressor of God's law, you can be saved through faith in the power of Jesus' death on the cross. **Will you ask him to remember you, to save you and one day take you to heaven?**

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