

A Prayer for Forgiveness and a Thief Forgiven

Sermon 92 in the Mathew Series

Matthew 27:36-44; Luke 23:32-38

Last week we dealt with the crucifixion itself.

This week, we want to deal with the first 2 of 7 sayings of Christ upon the cross.

I. The First Saying from the Cross -- Luke 23:34

1. The Prayer – Father
2. The Petition – forgive them
3. Their Ignorance – for they know not what they do.

In the gospels, whenever Jesus forgave sin in – he always personally forgives the sinner.

Matthew 9:1-8

Jesus asks the Father to forgive them for this particular act – done in ignorance – 1 Cor. 2:8

none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Pink correctly notes – that this prayer fulfills Isaiah 53:12

Because He poured out His soul unto death,

And He was numbered with the transgressors, (*two thieves*)

And He bore the sin of many, (*the careful language of particular atonement*)

And made intercession for the transgressors. (*his prayer – Father forgive them*)

II. The Second Saying from the Cross -- Luke 23:39-43

A. The Unrepentant Thief -- v. 39

Both criminals were acting their natural part – but then something supernatural happened!

B. Repentance at the Eleventh Hour 40-42

1. His Confession before men
“Don’t you fear God? We are receiving the due reward for our actions”.

He then proclaims that Jesus was innocent of any crime.

2. Think about what this thief knew and what he had seen:

- 1) He heard Jesus pray the prayer of forgiveness for those who crucified him.
- 2) He had witnessed Christ’s demeanor on the way to Calvary.
- 3) He had heard Christ’s words to the daughters of Jerusalem.

4) The very mocking cries that he himself had made, and that those around the cross were uttering could have been used to awaken his conscience.

3. The sinners humble request to Jesus
“remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

C. Our Lord’s Response v. 43

It comes quickly and without reservation or qualification.
“Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Paradise is Heaven – where saints who die in the Lord immediately go – 2 Cor. 12:2-4

2 Cor. 5:8 -- To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

III. Final Applications (some thoughts taken from Spurgeon)

1. Death Bed repentance
2. This incident shows that salvation is not dependent upon good works.
3. The words of the thief as an example of salvation

Calvin says: “How clear was the vision of the eyes which could thus see:
In death – life; In ruin – majesty; In shame – glory; In defeat – victory; In slavery – royalty.
I question if ever since the world began there has been so bright an example of faith!”