

JESUS, THE MASTER SOUL-WINNER

(Part Thirteen – Christ’s Dealing with the Penitent Thief)

TEXT: Luke 23:34-43

INTRODUCTION: We have come to the final message in our present series. We have undertaken this study in obedience to Christ’s command in Matthew 4:19 *“Follow me, and I will make you [to become] **fishers of men.**”* Jesus came to *“to seek and to save that which was lost.”* He dealt masterfully with all kinds of people in all kinds of situations. Some turned to Him in faith, and some went away unrepentant. Some were self-righteous and some were convicted. Some needed only a word of grace, and others needed the spiritual application of the law.

Jesus ended His earthly ministry just as He had begun it. Hanging upon a cross with His physical life ebbing from Him, He turned to one condemned at His side and saved his soul. It is a classic story, full of both sobering and encouraging lessons.

OUTLINE: What are the “non-negotiables” of salvation found in this story?

I. The Centrality of FAITH

A. Faith in the Person of Christ

1. As perfect Man (*“this man hath done nothing amiss”*)
2. As Savior (*“Jesus, remember me...”*)
3. As King (*“your kingdom”*)

B. Faith apart from works (hands and feet nailed)

C. Faith born of fear (*“Dost not thou fear God”*)

II. The Crisis of CONVERSION

A. The cause of the thief’s change (v. 34)

B. The evidence of his change (vv. 40, 41)

III. The Certainty of CONFESSION

A. A confession of **sin**

B. A confession of **faith**

1. In Christ as “Lord”
2. In Christ as King

IV. The Certification by JESUS CHRIST

“Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”

A. Assurance of full reconciliation (*“with me”*)

B. Guarantee of immediate bliss (*“Today...in paradise”*)

CONCLUSION: This story not only brings into clear focus the “non-negotiables” that we must insist upon in dealing with lost souls; it also has pointed application to our lives as believers.

- 1) Let us hold loosely to things below. *“We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out”* (1 Tim. 6:7). The only thing that matters is what this thief had when he departed this life for the next – his **soul**.
- 2) Let us not dread death. Christ’s utterance to this dying repentant thief proves that death for the child of God does not cause even a temporary loss of consciousness! Immediately we are *“with the Lord”* in a place of eternal bliss, more alive than we ever were here below!

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”