

THREE SERMONS ON CALVARY

By Roy Goodlet

Is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead just a happy story, or is it the most important event in history? Is it your salvation story? Someone said, "When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice." Today you have a choice concerning three sermons on Calvary. Two of the messages come from thieves. One was an unrepentant thief, and the other became repentant. The latter thief chose to listen to the sermon coming from the middle cross, the one preached by Jesus of Nazareth. Just like the thieves, today you will make a choice to either listen or accept the sermon from the middle cross, or reject it.

Luke 23:39, "One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!'"

He was like a majority of the people in this world. He thought only of himself. He had no need for a God in his life, and since he did not recognize sin in his life, he didn't need repentance or forgiveness either.

Luke 23:40-42, "But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'"

The conditions were the same for both thieves. The opportunities for pardon were just as limited, but the second thief decided to take a different approach. Both were hanging on the same hill, but each took a different approach to the third cross.

Luke 23:43, "Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

This sermon is presented by the Son of God, a man who while on earth had lived a perfect life and now found Himself hanging on a cross that was a tree He created, then cut down and formed by man, His most prized creation.

Tell me, why should he listen to thief #2? He was a criminal. He committed sin. Why shouldn't Jesus just tell him, "Too bad! You should have repented much earlier than this?" Why? Because the response He got from the thief was what He had been wanting to hear. This is why He was on the cross. This is why He left heaven to come to earth. He wanted someone to come to Him and say, "I'm sorry. I want Your forgiveness. I want You to save me."

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