

“I AM SINFUL BUT JESUS IS SAVIOR”

Luke 23:26-43

Series: “The Cross Makes the Difference”

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INTRODUCTION:

We live in a world where your message must be communicated in thirty seconds. If you had to explain the entire Gospel in a thirty-second spot, this is how. If you could tell your children only one Bible story, tell them this one, because it summarizes the Gospel. The answers to life’s most important questions – how to relate to God, how to be forgiven of sins, what happens when you die – are all answered in this 30 second conversation between three men on crosses.

I. SCRIPTURE [Luk 23:26-43 NIV]

26 As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him....

32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 When they came to the place called the Skull...

(Aramaic = Golgotha; Latin = Calvary)

...they crucified him there, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left.

NOTE: THE INHUMANITY OF CRUCIFIXION...

A. Purpose: justice and fear.

B. “Excruciating” means _____

C. The crucified eventually died when _____.

D. The greatest man ever to live...

[Isa 53:7 NIV] 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

[Jhn 10:17-18 NIV] 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."

36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.

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

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

II. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

- A. Don't you fear God?
- B. We are punished justly.
- C. This man has done nothing wrong.
- D. Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.

III. THE PROMISE OF PARADISE

- A. Jesus said, "Today you will be with me in paradise."
- B. This is the heart of the Gospel.

[Eph 2:8-9 NIV] 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

The thief did nothing to earn his way into heaven.

"Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling."

IV. APPLICATION:

There are two kinds of people in the world: _____ and _____.

- A. Reminders for the saved.

1) The Gospel is _____.

2) The invitation is _____.

3) Our daily response is to be _____.

- B. Challenge to the lost (and those who are unsure):

1) Cry out to Jesus.

2) Believe his promise.
(Jn 3:16; Eph 2:8-9).

- 3) Respond as he commanded.
(Mt 28:18; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Pet 3:21)