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Two Men with Two Different Destinies at the Cross

Calvary had 3 crosses, and
this is significant:

- One died To Sin,
- One died In Sin,
- ONE died For Sin.



There are life-changing events in history and the Bible records some of them for us. The Bible has an interesting and poignant account of how 2 persons' destinies were sealed at the historic event of the death of Christ on the Cross. Consider these two kinds of responses in a life-threatening occasion and the two different consequences.

In Luke 23, we have 2 condemned thieves who were hung on the Cross. For both, their verdict was 'guilty' and the consequence was a death sentence by crucifixion. How would you have reacted as one of the thieves?

One raved and ranted against God rudely and irreverently and blamed God and even blasphemed God. Do we react like this, or do we humble ourselves and examine our hearts and acknowledge that we are depraved and fallen sinners and beseech for God's mercy in our time of desperation? The world is full of guilty sinners in their self-righteousness they refuse to submit to God or seek His divine mercy, they rely on their own merit and face certain death. Hebrews 9:27 says, *'And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.'*

The evangelist Luke records this about the two thieves to teach us that there is hope in despair when we dare to respond to God in repentance and faith. The two thieves indirectly represented two ways of dealing with suffering and having different ends in the end. One of them said, *'And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.'*

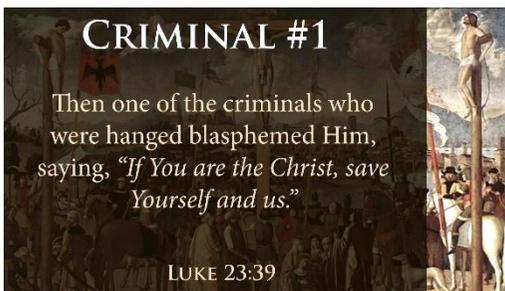
Notice first the conditions that they were in. Both are caught and sentenced to death and were suffering at the cruel cross of crucifixion. Both are found guilty

of a serious criminal offense (“*we receive the due reward of our deeds*” v. 41) and both of them saw the very Christ, our Lord Jesus, and the sign over his head (*the King of the Jews* v38); they heard the words verbally from His mouth (...*Father, forgive them* v34) and both of these thieves have no way out of their dilemma except the last chance through Christ alone. If they missed this, they would be condemned for eternity.

If we think of it, all of us are in the same boat as these two thieves: we are born in sin and are guilty of offense against God punishable by death (Rom 6:23) and we must pay the penalty of sin by eternal death. However, consider Jesus on the cross this Good Friday and His victory over death and hell and His mercy and grace and the offer of forgiveness for penitent souls. All of us need a divine Deliverer to save us from certain death one day.

The Unredeemed Thief

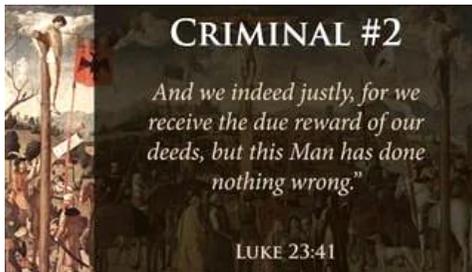
There are 2 important responses that divided these two thieves, and they represent two groups of people. The first thief who was unbelieving, proud and abusive said “.... *If thou be Christ, save thyself and us*” (Luke 23:39). Here was a spiritually bankrupt and blind man but yet he was so arrogant and self-righteous.



It was a matter of total indifference to him that he was suffering "*the due reward of his deeds.*" To him in this deplorable condition, he still dared to defy God and taunted Christ and refused to believe in our Lord Jesus as the Messiah, the Very God. Man can try by all worldly means (i.e. good works, philosophy or morality) to get himself off the cross but to no avail for Romans 3:23 says, '*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*'

That is why the whole fallen world is in a sense suffering with physical and moral disasters and bleeding profusely due to our iniquities and sinfulness. Suffering of sin is the consequence of sin and is one way that God allows to awaken us to spiritual realities. He dared to taunt the King of kings and Lord of lords, not realising the serious consequences of it. We cannot escape this life's woes, be it sickness, this financial troubles or family problems and our trials without the pardoning mercy and grace of God.

This unrepentant thief had no spirit of remorse or shame or brokenness, or guilt, or penitence, or any kind of meekness at all. He was so blind to what was in front of him that he did not see Christ as an Almighty monarch to be worshipped and to deliver him out of his troubles. It never entered his mind that he should apologise to God for his filthy sins and ask Christ for His mercy and grace. He was totally ignorant and blind to who he was talking to. Pray that it will not happen to anyone of us too!



The Penitent Thief

But on the other hand, the other thief was very different. **First, he was not affected by the other fellow's railing and not afraid to be different from him.** The first thing the repentant thief did was to avoid all worldly and deceptive devices of the evil one for there are many in the world.

"But the other answering rebuked him, saying, *Dost not thou fear God?*" (Luke 23:40). **This is the second thing about this penitent thief: he feared God.** There are two kinds of people in the world. Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 says, '*Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.*' That is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10). God was so real to him that he revered and respected God. God was his Saviour and Lord by His word and actions. We are to submit our lives to His grace and mercy. Sinful creatures are to approach God in holy fear, instead of murmuring against God.

The penitent thief confessed his sins and he admitted that he had done wrong: "*.... we receive the due reward of our deeds* (v41). He had no desire to give excuses or cover up his sins; and he laid open before the God he feared, and he knew that there was no way to hide his sin and guilt from an omniscient God. Without any self-righteous defenses, the penitent thief gave it up and surrendered fully before an all-knowing God! 1 John 1:9 says, '*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*'

Not only did he admit to wrong and guilt, but he also accepted his punishment as well deserved. We are all under the sentence of condemnation justly as sinners but Romans 8:1 says, '*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*' This is the real test of humility before God. Many may say the words of confession of sin: "*God be merciful to us miserable sinners,*" but when some trouble comes, they get angry at him. And this fury reveals that they do not really feel unworthy before God. He knew that he had no rights before God. There are not many people like Job, who, when he lost everything, said: "*.... Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD*" (Job 1:21). But this penitent thief did become like Job in the last moment of his life. He took his suffering without complaint, and he really feared God and sought His pardoning grace and covenant mercy.

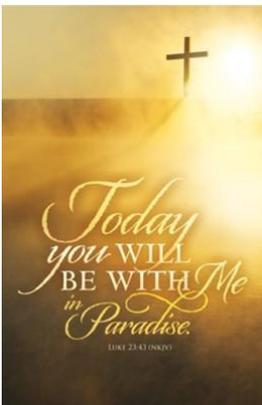
The thief affirmed Jesus' righteousness: "... *this man hath done nothing amiss*" (Luke 23:41). It did not make any difference to the first thief if Jesus was right or wrong. But it matters for eternity what we think of Jesus. We must say with the thief: "... *this man hath done nothing amiss.*" This man only is perfectly good for He is truly God. This man only speaks the truth, and that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6). This man is worthy of our faith and full allegiance and total worship and service because He is truly God.

And then the thief acknowledged that indeed, Jesus is truly a King. "... *remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*" (Luke 23:42). Even though he was suffering, Jesus to him had the mark of a victorious Master and a true King. For those who had eyes to see, He had Power even when He was on that cruel cross. A power of love that made Him a Victor over all His tormentors. He is all powerful and one day He will vindicate His great name, and every knee will bow and confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God (Phil 2:10-11).



And he said unto Jesus,
Lord, remember me when
thou comest into thy
kingdom. And Jesus
said unto him, Verily
I say unto thee, To day
shalt thou be with me
in paradise.
Luke 23:42-43

And the penitent thief did one more thing. He feared God, sincerely admitted wrong, accepted justice, acknowledged the goodness and power of Jesus. Now he pleaded for help. "... *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*" (Luke 23:42). Both thieves can be saved from death but only one received it finally. But how different is their destiny and path of salvation: What about you today? Are you not saved and in Christ? You cannot save yourself and all of us need to say to the Lord: "... *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*" and let us repent of our sins today. **Examine your hearts seriously and ask the Lord to redeem you from your sins and He will save you forever and that is the difference between eternity in heaven and hell.**



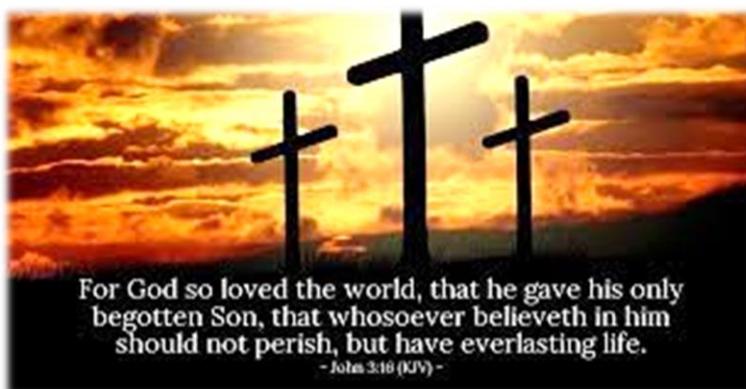
Hope with Repentance of Sins

Now what motive did Jesus give us to follow in the steps of the penitent thief? There was a fearful silence toward the railing thief: not a word of hope was recorded of Jesus to him. There was no promise and no hope for him at all. He was totally lost in eternal damnation.

But to the penitent one, Jesus says: "**Today you will be with me in Paradise.**" This was almost too good. There would not even be a delay. Today the Spirit of Jesus and the revived spirit of the thief would be in perfect union with Christ in Paradise. The promise would be without delay and what a joy.

What is this paradise? It is an interesting word is found in two other places in the New Testament. First, in 2 Corinthians 12:2 where Paul describes it as third heaven which refers to the place where God is.

Paradise is another term to mean the heavenly abode of God prepared for those who love Him including the elect angels. The second place the word "Paradise" is found is in Revelation 2:7. Here Jesus says to the church and the elect angels at Ephesus, "*the Paradise of God.*" If we look at the end of the book of Revelation, we find that the tree of life is in the heavenly city of God. In Revelation 22:1, John said, '*And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*' Our Lord Jesus chose to say to the repentant thief on the cross, ".... *Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*" (Luke 23:43).



Conclusion

Calvary is a place of hope and peace with God provided when you stand with Christ. **We must seek Christ as Saviour and repent of our sins and revere our Lord Jesus today before it is too late. That will result in an eternal comfort and everlasting consolation when you leave this life behind and enter into the next world where our destiny would be forever.** We only need Jesus as our Saviour and Lord and that is enough for all eternity. Will you humbly come before the Lord tonight and embrace His saving mercy and confess and repent of your sins and be saved forevermore?

Jack Sin



What have the Life and death of Christ got to do with me?
Does it even have any impact in my life here and when I die?

COME AND FIND OUT AT THESE 2 WORSHIP SERVICES

GOOD FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE
29 MARCH 2024, 8:00 PM
Understanding the Vicarious Atonement

EASTER MORNING SERVICE
31 MARCH 2024, 10:00 AM
The Implications of the Empty Tomb

By Rev Jack Sin

ALL ARE WELCOME

VENUE :
SOVEREIGN HOPE BP CHURCH
160, PAYA LEBAR RD, ORION
@ PAYA LEBAR #04-06, S(409022)



**Those interested can inform Dn Yue Kay at 97450311 by
25 March 2024**

DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES IN THE LORD

Lord's Day Programme for April to June 2024



April 7

Discipline of Meditation of the Word
(2 Tim 2:15, Joshua 1:8)



April 14*

Discipline for Godliness
(1 Tim 4:1-8)



April 21

Discipline of Joyful Giving to the Lord
(Mal 3:7-10, 2 Cor 9:6-15)



April 28

Discipline of the Tongue
(James 3:1-12)



May 5

Discipline of Fervent Prayer
(James 5:14-17)

Discipline of Faithful Stewardship
(Matt 25:14-30)



May 12*

May 19

Discipline of Contentment
(1 Tim 6:1-10)



May 26
Discipline of Christian Witness in the Workplace
(Col 3:22-25)



June 2
Discipline of the Sound Mind
(Phil 4:6-8, 2 Cor 10:4,5)

June 9*

Discipline of Christian Fellowship
(Acts 2:41-47)



June 16

Discipline of the Christian Family
(Deut 6:1-25)



June 23

Discipline of Reverential Worship
(1 Chr 16:23-29, 1 Cor 14:33,40)



June 30

Discipline of Responsible Evangelism/Missions
(Acts 8:25-40)



Memory Verse

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Good Friday Worship Service! If you are here for the first time, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor brings us God's Word tonight on "**Understanding the Vicarious Atonement (Rom 5:6-19)**". The Lord's Supper will be served.
3. This Sunday is Resurrection Sunday! Pastor will preach "**The Implications of the Empty Tomb (1Cor 15:1-23)**".
4. Next Sunday, Pastor will preach "**Discipline of Meditation of the Word (2 Tim 2:15, Jos 1:8)**", commencing a new quarterly series on "**Christian Disciplines in the Lord**".
5. The following Sunday School classes are held on Sunday after the worship service:
 - Westminster Confession of Faith (Pastor)
 - Studies in 2 Chronicles (Dr Kwong Leen)
6. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on Kingdoms, Covenants and Canon of the Old Testament and the Parables of Jesus. Join us for a time of profitable learning. [Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode: 218178].
7. **Creation Ministries International Special Talk by Dr Don Batten** will be held on **Sat 13 Apr 2024 at 3.30pm**.
8. **Annual Church Camp** will be held on **June 11-14, 2024**, at **Lotus Desaru Beach Resort** on the theme "**Biblical Pathway for Church Growth & Health**". Rev David Khobal, Principal of Myanmar Theological Seminary, will be our Camp Speaker. Contact Dn Yue Kay (hp:97450311) or Dn Paul (hp:97314733) for more details and registration by 30 April 2024.
9. Pray for our brethren in their:
 - Thank God for Kin Hoong's catheterization procedure on 25 Mar and continue to pray for any follow-up, if necessary.
 - Anthony's recovery from the radiotherapy treatment.
10. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church. [Zoom ID:863 7527 5431 Passcode: 625551].
11. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

Kindly indicate "**Church Building Fund**" if you would like to designate towards this cause.