

## FORGIVENESS AT THE CROSS: THREE CROSSES AND 3 SAYINGS

### Luke 23:32-49

Tonight we are going to look at three of the seven sayings of Jesus from the cross... the three that are found in the Gospel of Luke. We are also going to explore the reason for three crosses instead of just one...

#### **1.FORGIVENESS OFFERED AT THE CROSS – “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM...” – Luke 23:32-38**

- Jesus is “crucified” - verse 33...at the place of the Skull – in Latin “Calvariia” where we get the word Calvary. (Talk about the horror and shame of the one word - crucifixion). Jesus then asks His Father to forgive even these soldiers. This is the first saying in Luke at the cross. There is no bitterness or hatred here, but love. The cross is the greatest demonstration of God’s love. In response, most mock Jesus -verses 35-36 - fulfilling Psalm 22:6-8 written 1000 years earlier by David. Through all the false accusations and mockings Jesus did not open His mouth – Is. 53:7.
- Jesus told His followers to love their enemies, and He now shows them what this looks like in even in this extreme case. This love should melt the heart of the hardest sinner. All of us need forgiveness from the Father.

**Tokichi Ishii.** Tokichi Ishii was hanged for murder in Tokyo in 1918.

He had been sent to prison more than twenty times and was known for being as cruel as a tiger. On one occasion, after attacking a prison official, he was gagged and bound and his body suspended in such a way that his toes barely reached the ground. But he stubbornly refused to say he was sorry for what he had done.

Just before being sentenced to death, Tokichi was sent a New Testament by two Christian missionaries, Miss West and Miss McDonald. After a visit from Miss West, he began to read the story of Jesus’s trial and execution. His attention was riveted by the sentence, “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’” ([Luke 23:34](#)). This sentence transformed his life.

I stopped: I was stabbed to the heart, as if by a five-inch nail. What did the verse reveal to me? Shall I call it the love of the heart of Christ? Shall I call it His compassion? I do not know what to call it. I only know that with an unspeakably grateful heart I believed.

Tokichi was sentenced to death and accepted it as “the fair, impartial judgment of God.” Now the word that brought him to faith also sustained his faith in an amazing way. Near the end, Miss West directed him to the words of [2 Corinthians 6:8-10](#) concerning the suffering of the righteous. The words moved him very deeply, and he wrote,

“As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing.” People will say that I must have a very sorrowful heart because I am daily awaiting the execution of the death sentence. This is not the case. I feel neither sorrow nor distress nor any pain. Locked up in a prison cell six feet by nine in size I am infinitely happier than I was in the days of my sinning when I did not know God. Day and night . . . I am talking with Jesus Christ.

His last words on the gallows were: “Today, my soul purified, enters the City of Light.”

## **2.FORGIVENESS EXPERIENCED AT THE CROSS – “TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME...” – Luke 23:39-43**

- There are three crosses. One “criminal” (Matthew and Mark call them “robbers”) on one side and one on the other- Isaiah 53:12. Both joined in mocking Jesus at first – Mark 15: 32. But one changes. One thief miraculously goes from mocker to believer. One repents. One acknowledges their sin and guilt. One acknowledges Jesus’ pure innocence. One calls out for Jesus to remember Him! This is faith. This is repentance. This is trust! Imagine the scene of this dying thief trusting himself to One who is marred and bloody almost beyond recognition....yet believing He will have a Kingdom to come!!! There are no works or religious ceremonies required – Romans 3:28; 4:5. Can one be saved on his “death bed” – yes! “There is one that none might despair, but only one so that we do not presume.” Have you turned to Jesus in faith? He is the King and only in Him do we enter His Kingdom.
- In this second saying from the cross in Luke Jesus reassures the dying repentant thief he will be with Jesus today in Paradise! Paradise is the place of the righteous, even in death. This is really all we need to know even in the face of death and eternity – that we will be with Jesus! Today...and forever. Those who trust Jesus will never be separated from Him in this life or the next! Only the ONE hanging on the central cross saves. Jesus exercises His saving rule by this statement from the cross. All of us need the presence of Jesus now and for eternity.
- *“The dying thief rejoiced to see that Fountain in his day, and there may I, though I as vile as he, wash all my sins away....”*

## **3. FORGIVENESS PURCHASED AT THE CROSS – “FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS...” – Luke 23:44-49.**

- The curtain of the Temple was torn in two – this is Luke’s way of saying “it is finished!” The work of Jesus on the cross leads to the veil of the Temple separating God’s Holy Presence from sinners being ripped open. We don’t have to go through a priest, but we go directly now to God’s presence through Jesus our One and Only High Priest – Hebrews 6:19; 9:24- 26;10:19-23.
- Jesus surrenders Himself in victory to His Father, knowing He had completed His task of purchasing for Himself a people. He quotes from Psalm 31:5. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth – 1 Peter 1:18-20. This was why He came – John 17:1. Jesus dies as a righteous man – the only Righteous One – for the unrighteous – verse 47; 1 Peter 3:18. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried. All of us need the salvation only Jesus purchased.
- *“Jesus paid it all All to Him I owe Sin had left a crimson stain...He washed it white as snow.*

### Concluding Applications:

- Where do you stand with Jesus? These three crosses represent all humanity. On the one hand is the bitter rejector. On the other hand is the one trusting Jesus. Which one are you? Are you with the rejecting or indifferent mocker? Or with the repentant thief? There are only two possible responses to Jesus – and the two robbers show them. Only the ONE Perfect Holy Lamb on the central cross saves!!!
- Trusting Jesus gives us access to God’s presence continually. Are you living your life daily in His presence and for His glory? - spending time with Him in His Word and prayer?
- Do you live daily for the praise of the One who gave His life and paid it all for you?