

Luke 23:33

And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

I think we are all familiar with the crucifixion of Jesus, and how there were two criminals crucified with Him, one on each side of Jesus. But did you ever realize that both of the criminals were being crucified for the same reason.

† **Matthew 27:38** *Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.*

Both were robbers or thieves, both had committed the same crimes, both were found guilty and both were paying for their crime the same way. They both heard Jesus speak from the cross, and heard everything that others were saying about Him. They both saw Jesus' mother there at the cross, and John standing with her, along with Jesus' aunt and other women there at the foot of the cross.

† **John 19:25** *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

They both had nails or spikes driven through their wrists and feet like Jesus did, and they were both beaten before being hung on the cross.

Now before we go any further, I am not trying to belittle what Jesus went through, because the beatings and what Jesus went through on the cross was way worse than what these two robbers went through.

But, did they even know each other, or were they caught committing the robbery together, the bible doesn't say, but the key is that they were both guilty of the same crime and deserved the same punishment. But when they both were hanging on the cross with Jesus there between them, there was a conversation that went on that we are also familiar with, which was:

† **Luke 23:39-43** *Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

Look at the first guys statement: *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."* When you read his words to Jesus, they are not words of repentance or loving Jesus, he simply wanted off the cross. He wanted Jesus to save him so he could enjoy life here on the earth, but he could care less about Jesus or heaven.

But if you read the second guys words; *But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."* You find out that he didn't care about this world or the things of it, and he knew that Jesus was King of heaven, and only cared about being where Jesus was, which right then was next to Jesus on the cross, and eventually in heaven when they both died. The second guy never told Jesus to get him off the cross, instead *he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."*

We read Jesus' response where *Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."* But did you ever notice that Jesus is only talking to the second guy who loved Jesus, but Jesus never, I repeat, Jesus never responded to the first guy. Also, the first guy heard Jesus' response to the second guy, but still he did not repent. Think about it, the King of Heaven says, *"today you will be with Me in Paradise."* You would think that the first guy would say, *"Hey, Jesus, I want to go to there too."* But no, he just kept on looking for a way off the cross, caring only about the here and now, and not eternity with Jesus.

What this tells us is that everyone will go through tough times, and some will call upon Jesus to help them with the here and now, and to make them comfy in this world. But then there are those of us that don't care about the here and now, we just want to be with Jesus. And like the second guy, we know that Jesus is with us in whatever we are going through.

But I think the first guy may have thought, *"Jesus doesn't care about me, because if He did, He would have heard me when I talked to Him (Prayed) and would have gotten me out of this mess that I was in."* Because those who refuse Jesus yet pray to Him, only do so because they want help here on this earth for whatever trouble they are in, but they could care less about Jesus or heaven. Like the first guy, it was more, *"Hey Jesus, show me one of them miracles by getting us off this cross"* who only wants the miracle for their own benefit.

So, should we be surprised when some come to Jesus and others don't, even though they are going through the same issue or problem? All hear the same gospel message and all hear Jesus' words of, *"today you will be with Me in Paradise."* And all they have to do is repent and believe that. But so many do hear the message, but refuse it, because it doesn't fit their agenda, all they think is *"Maybe later Jesus but right now I need help with You getting me out of this mess I'm in"*.

Everyone on this earth is a sinner, just like the two robbers on the cross, and all know about Jesus, but not all will call out to Jesus with repentant hearts, only those who truly Love Jesus and want to be with Jesus.

† **Matthew 7:21-23** *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

† **Romans 10:13 (KJV)** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*