

Luke 23:43

And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

I just love, love, love this verse, because it reminds me of God's love for us, and no matter how much I do or don't do, Jesus loves me all the same.

If you are unfamiliar with this verse, this was Jesus on the cross speaking to one of the two thief's. Here is the conversation leading up to today's devotional verse.

† **Luke 23:39-42** *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."*

Did you ever notice that both the thieves spoke to Jesus, but Jesus only answered one of them?

The first one said to Jesus *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."* Did you notice that this is full of mocking *"If You are the Christ"* and no repentance but only self seeking. Therefore Jesus did not even respond to him. It makes you wonder that those who just come to Jesus for fire insurance, if Jesus really hears or acknowledges their prayer?

Fire Insurance, what's that? It's those who go forward at an altar call just to be saved from hell, but they don't want to change or repent and they don't want a relationship with Jesus at all, they just don't want to burn in hell, hence, fire insurance.

Ah, but the other thief said *"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."*

This thief knew what he did was wrong and that he deserved the punishment he was getting. The other thief wanted to just get down off the cross right then and there, but this thief didn't want to get off the cross, but wanted to be forgiven for his sins, and to be with his Savior, Jesus, even if it meant staying on the cross until they died. And this second man, Jesus spoke to with words of love, ***"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."***

So, if you never ever went to church, never tithed one penny, never got baptized, why should God let you into heaven? Remember, the thief of the cross never did any of those things, and why did Jesus tell him that he would be in heaven or Paradise with Him?

† **John 14:6** *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

Now it's not wrong, but rather good to go to church, tithe, and get baptized, but the question we need to ask ourselves anytime we do anything for the Lord is, why am I doing this, to earn God's favor and love, or because I already have God's favor and love?

Before Jesus healed one person or fed anyone or did any ministry, God said this about Him. May God say it about us, simply because He loves us for who we are, not what we do.

† **Matthew 3:17** *And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*