

From A Cross To Paradise With Jesus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 April 2025

Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

- [0 : 0 0] And as they led him away, two others who were criminals were led away to be put to death with him.!
- As it's written in Psalm 22. For dogs encompass me, a company of evildoers encircle me. They have pierced my hands and feet.
- I can count all my bones. They stare and glow over me. They divide my garments among them. And for my clothing they cast lots. And so people stood by, watching.
- But the rulers scoffed at him, saying, He saved others, let him save himself. If he is the Christ of God, his chosen one. The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering sour wine.
- And saying, If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. There was also an inscription over him. This is the king of the Jews.
- [1 : 2 2] One of the criminals who were hanged, railed at him. Saying, Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us. But the other rebuked him, saying, Do you not fear God?
- Since you are under the same sentence of condemnation. We indeed justly. For we are receiving the due reward for our deeds. But this man, he has done nothing wrong.
- And he said to Jesus, Jesus, Remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, Today you will be with me in paradise.
- Well, let me now briefly talk to you about a journey. Where will you be at the end of today?
- The truth is, none of us know. How will you be in your last moments? There was a man called Barabbas.
- [2 : 3 3] He should have been crucified. But because of Jesus, his day changed. Completely changed. But what if Jesus was let go? And Barabbas was crucified.
- Imagine you were one of the criminals on the cross. And Jesus wasn't next to you. But Barabbas was instead. Could he offer you any hope?
- Barabbas avoided the cross that day. But I wonder if Barabbas had any hope in life. Yet there was another criminal who did not avoid the cross that day.
- But even on a cross, he found more hope than Barabbas did that day. Because he was on a cross next to Jesus. While Barabbas avoided the cross and the thief did not, the day ended far better for the thief than it did Barabbas.
- Now the thief was dying for his sins. But because of who was on the cross next to him, he did not need to die in his sins.
- [3 : 4 6] We are all going to die for our sins. For the wages of sin is death. But are you going to die in your sins? Where will you be at the end of that day?
- If Jesus had not gone to the cross, we would have no other choice. We would die not just for our sins, but we would all die in our sins. Yet even for this thief hanging on a cross, the end of his story was suddenly filled with immense hope because of who was on the cross next to him.

And while people were mocking him, saying, save yourself to Jesus, in the agony of his own crucifixion, his dying interest was not to save himself, but to save anyone who would come to him, even a criminal on the cross next to him.

Did you know that both criminals were mocking Jesus at first? Matthew and Mark record both of them mocking. But something happened. Even on a cross, even in your very last moments, things can change.

You can change. Even at the very end, you can wake up to the reality of God and the truth of Jesus. Some people just want to mock what they cannot understand.

[5 : 13] Fellow Jews mocked him. Roman soldiers mocked him. Even those sharing the same fate on a cross mocked Jesus. Darkness was mocking the light.

Yet in doing so, darkness was exposed. But there was something about his suffering and death. Something about the manner in which he volunteered his life. That on a cross, silent to the mocking, silent to the accusations, all the while asking God to forgive his executioners.

There was something about his manner that spoke volumes. Save yourself if you're the Messiah. But most people didn't realize that he was keeping himself on the cross to save others.

You see, only the guilty need saving. And Jesus was not guilty. He was righteous. Most people in this story are only looking at this world.

Avoid death. Come down off the cross. Yet one man, in the midst of his last moments, begins looking beyond death.

[6 : 29] One criminal only wanted this world, but the other one wanted another world. One criminal thought that Jesus might be able to prevent them from dying, but the other thief began to realize that if Jesus really was king, then even death was no hindrance to him entering his kingdom.

One criminal wanted rescued today. The other criminal only wished to be remembered whenever Jesus entered his glory. One criminal had a hard heart, a disregard for his sins, completely blind to who Jesus was.

But the other thief began to feel the weight of his sin. He began to fear God in the face of death, began to recognize the king. The thief was about to meet his maker and suddenly he finds hope in the presence of Christ.

What hope there is in Jesus. One criminal lacks faith. If, if you are the Christ, if, yet the other one believes you are the king.

And recognizing the king can change everything. Even in your final moments, the end of your story can change if you will only recognize Jesus as the only one who can change it.

[7 : 56] He's the one who can change your story. Despite being on a cross, the thief can hardly believe this opportunity to be crucified at the same time as his king.

He is somehow better off than Barabbas who was let go. He's better off because of who he's next to. The thief realizes that dying with Jesus is better than all of his days living without Jesus.

And his day began today you will be crucified. Yet even on a cross Jesus was able to change how his day would end. Today you will be with me in paradise.

And that tells us a great amount. It tells us that death is only the death of the body, not the end of our conscious existence. The soul will exist separately from the body.

It also tells us that those who believe in Jesus will immediately enter a joyful and glorious state after the body dies. And it tells us that this joyful and glorious state is dependent on two things.

[9 : 11] Number one, the kingdom of heaven and number two, the king. And it tells us that this state will be different from that of the wicked. and it tells us that the chief glory of this state is not just being in the place of paradise, but being in the presence of King Jesus.

To be with him where he is, is the glory and joy of that place. The difference between the two criminals was that one did not see his own sin and he did not see his only saviour.

he did not see who Jesus really was. There was no fear of God, no regard or regret of sin, and no belief in Christ, and no hope in life or death.

Yet for the other criminal, he anticipates God, facing his maker. He admits his guilt. He accepts justice.

He acknowledges Jesus as king and he asks for mercy when Jesus enters his kingdom. He anticipates, admits, accepts, acknowledges, and asks.

[10 : 22] For one criminal, for one criminal on the cross, there is nothing but deathly silence. Deafening silence.

Jesus has no words for him, no words at all, nor will he respond to the mocking requests. But for the other criminal, for the sorrowful sinner who shows faith in Christ and asks for forgiveness, Jesus uses his dying breath to give him a promise of glorious hope today.

Something far greater than merely getting off the cross. Not only will he actually allow this man to enter into his kingdom, he promises that this very day, today, he will be in paradise and he will be there with his king, Jesus.

Friends, if Jesus took those criminals off of the cross that day, not only would that man not be in paradise, but none of us would have that hope.

So whatever your today is, know that when you acknowledge the king on the cross, even if you are in the last page of your story on earth, Jesus can give you hope of being with him in paradise.

[11 : 53] For this thief, today was the day of salvation. Today, you will be with me in paradise. how will today end for me and you?

Have faith in Jesus. Let's sing another song.