

# Today Shalt Thou Be With Me in Paradise

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Chapter 23 Verses 39 to 43 Continuing the theme that we learned last Sabbath evening, the saying of Christ from the cross This one which is considered by many to be the second saying For the word he addressed to the thief Today shalt verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise Now we...

Now we... You know that the Lord addressed seven, spoke seven things from the cross The first one was the one which was addressed to God on behalf of his enemies which we saw last week Father forgive them for they know not what they do And this second saying is one which addressed to the narrower circle of those of one who had come to a faith in Christ To him, Jesus said, today you will be with me in paradise And the third saying is one which was addressed to the more intimate circle of his friends Addressed to his mother, Mary, and to his disciple John Mother, behold thy son, son, behold thy mother And then the other four which were particularly addressed to God himself

I searched My God who hath have forsaken me And into thy hand I commit my spirit And the final one when he cried, saying It is finished Now, on the cross The circumstances around the cross Were circumstances Which were quite unique in themselves There was a tremendous tumult A babble of nine And a Lots of a Cussing and swearing Blasphemy The whole A Um Trit of ungodliness Seemed to be opened out Upon Christ there On the cross And He was being put to death there In the name Of the Religious In the name of religion really It was the religious leaders The Pharisees who were principally and particularly involved in the death of Christ

And After that time we find our Lord here in the company of a These malefactors Or a What would probably be referred to today as a Criminal The Perhaps the question has been asked Why was it That our Lord was Put to death in the company of a criminal These men were probably Accomplices of a Barabbas Fincest We know that they were Condemned to death Because they were Manufacturers Because they were Murderers They would probably be referred to today as terrorists Perhaps even as muggers Who had been guilty of murder Anyway We find Jesus being put to death in the company of people like that Now in some respects

That isn't itself all that difficult to understand Because during his earthly ministry He had spent a lot of his time in the company of people who were the outcasts of society He had spoken openly with publicans and sinners He had dined with them as well With all the accusations drawn against them by the Jewish authorities This man received a sinner unto himself and he with them He had never been in a company to condone their practices But rather to deliver them To rescue them as a saviour from their sins And the Jews had hated him for that They just couldn't square this thinking The Messiah being seen in company like that

[ 4 : 52 ] And so it was but an extension of the whole of his life That he should now be numbered with people like this in his death And so they were saying, well, if he lived with them, he can die with them And here we have an evidence yet again of the evil and the sin that is in the human heart That is in the heart of man Our Lord Jesus Christ was condemned to be crucified to death In the company of those who were criminals He had lived with them So they said, he can die with them But you see, there was another factor here Many hundreds of years before this The prophet Isaiah had prophesied That he would be numbered amongst the transgressors It had been said then That he would die in this way And here the glorious purpose of God is fulfilled

Being fulfilled in Christ Being crucified in circumstances like that And it is in these circumstances That we come across this wonderful and this quite unique experience Of one man to be saved At the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ I want to look with you, seeing we have already introduced the subject At two or three points First of all, the men who were crucified with Christ The man who was saved by Christ And the assurance that this man received from Christ First of all then, the men who were crucified with him He was crucified with two malefactors This passage in case you have forgotten Is in Luke chapter 23, reading at verse 39

Now we know that these men were, as I said They were the worst malefactors The worst used elsewhere That we would do today for bandits Perhaps even some kind of terrorist Who had been guilty of murder And they had been condemned to death Now we read in Matthew and Mark and Luke Particularly in Matthew That these two terrorists, these two thieves These two murderers Were rebellious and good-toed and hard men Ungodly, unfeeling, uncaring Men who blasphemed the Lord together They did this They were irreligious They were ridiculed and they reviled And they poured scorn upon the Lord They were that kind of men The type of men of whom we have read some time ago Recently at least in the opinion of some people Those men who were ringleaders in these revolts Was in scotland prison

Men who cared nothing For authority For law For society For God For Christ For the Bible They are past healing And embittered And embittered in the sin that has ruined their lives Now these men were like that Both doubted the deity of the Lord If thou be the Son of God Both ridiculed Christ And both hated what Christ stood hard Both lends for this world Save thyself Right now And us That was the kind of people These were the That was the kind of people that Jesus was put to death with He was numbered with the transgress But one man One of them His life has changed dramatically

And in the space of a few hours He is brought from the brink of hell To the very gate of glory And within a few minutes he passed through These gates At nine o'clock in the morning They were put to death By midday This man Was wonderfully Converted By midday The man who had screamed at Jesus Doubting his deity Challenging him To save them at nine in the morning By midday All that man was concerned about Was to enter into the gate Was to enter into the presence of Christ In heaven above The man who was so bitter So unrepentant Becomes a believing penitent The man who was ungodly

[ 10 : 03 ] And a damned rebel Becomes concerned for his salvation Now that is the second point This man who was saved by Jesus And you will notice that In the saving process Two things took place in his life He became a penitent And he became a believer And it was the penitent believer Or the believing penitent Who prayed to the Lord And these words Remember me When thou comest into thy kingdom Now how does this penitent Now how does this penitent come to life How do we know That this man became a penitent Well in several ways First of all He refuted his accomplice At one moment They were together In reviling And taunting And blaspheming And in pouring scorn upon Jesus One moment One moment The two of them were ungodly

Hell deterred And on the bridge of hell On the way through The next He is turning round And he is rebuking his accomplice For his own ungodliness In one moment In one moment He recognizes His own sinnership He accepts That he is a sinner Who deserves to be punished He accepts the guilt Of his position In the light Of the law In one moment He feels the awfulness Of his own sins In one moment His conscience is awakened Not to be afraid Of the punishment of sins But to seek deliverance From sin He quarrels for his sin He hates his sin And he wants deliverance From his sin And so As a penitent He confesses his sins

Fully He makes no excuses He doesn't accept That it is because Of his environment Or because Of his associations With other people Nor because Of any deprivation In his life That he wants That he was Where he was He was there Simply and surely Because he was a sinner Now someone put it He looked back Over the whole panorama Of his past And he saw sin For what it was And he saw himself For what he was And in his brokenness And in his brokenness And in this conviction He turned to Christ For help And that's it That's it That's it Conviction of sin Is having that awareness Of your own sin To such an extent To such an extent That you must Appeal to Jesus For help And so he turned And he cried

Remember me Lord When thou comest Into thy kingdom Now of course And I don't want to spend Too much time on this Seeing time It's already gone There is a tremendous depth Of faith in this man's cry Lord Remember me When thou comest Into thy kingdom Now you remember The circumstances Three men Nailed to three crosses On Golgotha One of them The one in the middle It was said of him That he was the son of God That he had served others It was said right above the cross That he was the king Of the Jews No it didn't look like that At the home of the cross They didn't see much evidence Or any evidence Of kingship Or of lordship And yet Here's a man Who faith penetrates

Through the external evidence And recognizes The lordship of Jesus Christ Faith penetrated The outward way Of the suffering And the shame And the degradation That was associated with that man The lord Jesus Christ And faith recognized the lordship And the kingship Of Jesus This is a wonderful example of faith In the essence of some people The most wonderful example of faith In the essence of some people The most wonderful example of faith In the whole of the new testament May be apart From Mary of Bethany The most wonderful example of faith Recognizing that this person was the saint of God Recognizing his lord Recognizing that he was to inherit a kingdom And as such he cried to him

[ 15 : 11 ] Remember me Now of course the great question is this How did this man come to faith in Christ? Well we believe in his company with others That he came to faith in Christ In the same way as everybody else comes to faith in Christ On the basis of his acceptance of the truth concerning Jesus Christ Some of you people here tonight think That you must have a wonderful experience Like the thief on the cross Or the sword of Tarsus Or someone like that Before you can ever be converted You've got a preconceived idea of what conversion is It comes as a result of some experience Let me remind you As you've been reminded often That it comes as a result of the acceptance Of the truth concerning Jesus Christ But then someone may say How did the thief know the truth about Jesus?

When did he hear it? Well he heard it It has been said from three sources He heard it from the enemies of Christ He saw it in the friends of Christ And he heard it from the lips of Christ himself On the very cross He heard this testimony He saved us He heard on the cross He is the son of God This is the claim that was made He saw written above it On the authority of Pilate Jesus The king of the Jews He heard from the lips of Jesus himself The evidence of a say The gaitive father forgives For they know not what they do And there was sufficient truth And there was sufficient truth Conveyed to his mind And conveyed to his mind And conveyed to his mind We believe With the convicting power of the spirit To convince him That this person

Was none other Than the Lord of glory Even though he had no scepter in his hand Even though he had no crown in his head Even though he was revived and mocked by the musket He recognized the lordship and the kingship of Jesus Someone put it like this He was built on fragments of truth Loosely cast it before his eyes And that faith Was best to define Than the faith of many Who sat at the feet of Jesus And heard his word And in faith he cried Remember me That was his only plea His only hope His only desire His only need His great need Was that of remembering His great discovery Was that he was a sinner

His great concern Was the salvation of his own soul And his great appeal Was to the lordship Of Jesus Christ Remember me He was lifted above Any desire to be given another chance in this world All he wanted was to be embraced By the remembrance of this lord As he entered into his kingdom And there you are A man who is a penitent A man who is a believer Whose concern for this world Is replaced by a concern for the next His interest in materialism Is replaced by an instance in spiritual things His mockery is turned to prayer His defiance is turned to submission His denial is turned to confession And his rejection Is replaced by an acceptance

Of the lord Of the lord In Jesus Christ With a sense of his sin And of his remarriage With a sense of his God And with the fear of God in his heart With trust in Christ And in the spirit of prayer He cries Lord Remember me May I say Before we come into the final point here That if you are a believer here tonight You must have these things in your own life as well A penitent of heart Penitent Manifest not turning away from sin You know a penitent is a person who is For what it is To desire to be loosed from it Free from it Delivered from it Remember how someone put it Penitent

[ 20 : 14 ] Isn't just being sorry for sin It is being so sorry for sin That you turn your back on sin That you want to have nothing more to do You turn from it Then you turn to Christ in pain You acknowledge his lordship as saviour His king And that is accompanied with a spirit of prayer in your heart As you cry to him Lord Remember And you that type of person Do you know what it is to be that penitent Do you know what it is to come and that prayer And do you know what it is to cry That prayer Know that It was an answer to that prayer That our Lord gave this assurance To verily I say unto thee Today Shalt thou be with me In paradise Today

Verily I say unto thee Now you know that this is one of the favourite ways of The Lord In which the Lord spoke While he was in this world Verily I say to you Truly When the word verily Is used by your Lord It draws attention To the fact that Something of tremendous importance Is going to be said by him Something very important Truly Followed by the infallible assurance Giving an answer Giving an answer which far exceeded this man's request to be remembered I say to you Words which stress The authority And the power Of the Lord Jesus Christ You may say this Speak with reverence

When he was at the height of his power in the world When he was in the very prime of life At the very height Of his service In Palisca Frequently He was heard saying I say to you He has said it To a boy Who had died I say to you Arise He has said it In similar circumstances To a girl Jane is a daughter I say to you Arise He has said it To Lazarus In the In the In the In the conference of death Arise I say to you Arise He has said it To the temple To the stars To the elements I say to you Peace Be still And here he is The same person But in all In very different circumstances Now Ridiculous Now

We Physically Exhausted In pain Being crucified On a cross But he is still The Lord of glory He is still At the same power And the same authority He is still At the same power He still says I Say To you It emphasizes Not only the power And the authority But the deity Of the Lord Jesus Christ When he is forth The elements And the people obey And here is a word That comes to him And here is a word That comes to him now With power and with authority To the heart of the thief I say to you And here was a man Who knew The power which the Lord Spaced And a man who could Save with the enemies Of Christ And never man Spaced Like this man

And this is something Which every single planet And every single believer Can testify to us That there never came To their lives To their hearts To their minds And to their conscience There never came And all that experience A word quite like The word of the Lord Speaking In power This is what makes This is why so many people In this building tonight Looking fast over the lines Of periods Seasons Experiences That they speak of us Bethel They know places in this world Which have arrowed to them Because of their association With the revelation Of the power of the Lord In their lives Through the world And by the world I am sure that there are people Who have sat in this church Looking back over the years

[ 25 : 20 ] And who have often Known the word of God Coming to their hearts With power With conviction With meaning With authority Convincing them Yet again Of the deity And the lordship Of the one Who was speaking to them I say to you And these are things That you can never take Out of the believer's experience These are things Which are dotted along his history His life's history And though his circumstances Tonight are different Yet he can go back To these places In his history And know the blessedness And the power and the authority Of the Lord Of the Lord Having spoken at night Merrily I send unto you And this is the glory of the gospel That the word of the Lord Comes with power To the sinners And this is the victory Today Thou shalt be with me

In paradise In paradise In paradise In paradise Now the word paradise Is one of the Jewish words For heaven It is associated with the word In paradise In paradise Now the word paradise Is one of the Jewish words For heaven It is associated with the word Garden The garden of Eden A place of delight And a place of pleasure And a place of rest And a place of blessedness But above all The place where the Lord is Thou shalt be with me In paradise In paradise This is what makes heaven What it is For the people of God Thus Christ is there Paul Paul made that emphasis When he said When he was asked the question And so he was asked the question Mentally Well if you're delivered from prison now Facing dead And if you're not delivered How do you react to the prospect Of being put to death Well there's a way that I react to this To be with Christ It's our death That's heaven

That's paradise To be at home With the Lord As he says again Paul In 2 Corinthians chapter 5 You see There are some people Who would have you believe That Jesus teaching Regarding What happens After death Isn't very clear That the Bible isn't too clear On this issue Now that's a lot of nonsense Because of the New Testament It's clear on anything You just hear on this And just hear on the lips Of Jesus himself That at death The soul of an individual Goes either to heaven Or to hell There's nothing plainer In the New Testament On that issue There's nothing plainer Than that Jesus That Jesus soul itself Went to heaven After his death People raise all sorts of questions As to whether it went into a state of limbo Or whether it even went to hell Well let us say categorically from the teaching of the word of God That Jesus soul went to heaven at his death In the same way as the soul of every believer goes to heaven

At his death In the same way as the soul of every believer goes to heaven At his death And the soul of the unbeliever goes to hell At his death There is no intermeative state There is no intermeative state There is no divinity of this issue Churches may bring teachings as they will to confuse the minds of people But the Bible is clear on this And none more so than Jesus in the Bible After you go to either your soul goes to heaven Or to heaven Or to hell But Jesus our precious chief And he says I say to thee Today thou shalt be with me in paradise Oh I know that there are some expositors

And there are some men Who will say ah the commas in the wrong place What it ought to read us is Jesus I say to thee today Thou shalt be with me in paradise When? Well we don't know Well don't bother about commas And either come up where it is Or put it where you will But the plain teaching of Jesus is And this is the assurance he gives the man I say to thee today thou shalt be with me in paradise In the realm of the dead as someone has put it There are a shadowy waiting rooms But a blissful abode within the very course of heaven Is heaven Where there is unbroken fellowship Where the soul is beyond the reach of sin And of suffering and of shame and of ungodliness And of rejection The soul is beyond all

[ 30 : 29 ] Know what assurance this was for a man Who hated sin A man who was dying in excruciating pain And yet his great concern Was that his sin had brought of where he was And a man who wants to stingy now Not deliverance from the condition in which he was crucified on the cross But deliverance from sin In all its own And in all its own Someone once asked Augustus Toplady Is it right For a Christian just to want To get away from sin And he would answer again

He says I don't know He says What Christian Wouldn't want To get away from sin Is that what you want tonight Are you tired of sin?

Are you Do you feel a sense of abhorrence because of your sin? Do you hate yourself tonight? Are there times when you long to get away from yourself?

Just because you are sin Remember what John Bunyan said When God, he said, convicted John Bunyan of sin It wasn't just that he convicted John Bunyan that he was a sinner But he convicted John Bunyan that he was a sinner In paradise Deliverance from sin The place where sin shall be no more But the other side of it is With Christ Thou shalt be with me In paradise How well What a transformation for this man As I said earlier Crucified at 9 in the morning A rabbet Ungodly Unfeeling Uncared By midday Converted to Christ And before night one In glory With God Jesus, you know, died before the peace Seen as the preparation day of the Sabbath The Jews want to get the bodies down from the cross quickly

So authority was given for the soldiers to break their chin bones to his and death And they came to the two thieves and they broke their chin bones so that the throes of death would be hidden But when they came to Jesus, they discovered that he was already dead And that's an interesting thought Jesus entered paradise Before the thief We don't know how long the thief lived after Jesus died We don't know But I'm sure of this That however long as far it was All he longed for was to follow Jesus into paradise He was a man in the space of a few hours

[ 34 : 09 ] Born again Justified Adopted Transformed by grace And Transformed by grace And Waiting For glory It was a sudden start The change was as dramatic as that The man who was put on the cross As a rebel And As a Bandit As a terrorist And as a murderer When his body was taken away His body was taken off His soul Was in the presence of Christ In heaven Above As someone put it He was lifted to the cross And his soul was carried Into glory He left sin and crime behind

And he entered And he entered Into paradise Now then Is there any lesson That you and I can gain from this tonight Well then I said And one of them is this Let us never forget the power of Christ To save Let us never forget the authority of Jesus To say to any man or woman Any boy or girl I say to you And today You Can be saved You will be with me In paradise Let us never forget That we are not to give up On sheep We are not to give up On sheep I wonder how people felt There was a thief As he was nailed to the cross That was the end The chapter was The last chapter And the last page Of that man's life Was written

The end Had been written He was nailed to the cross But it wasn't the end It was the beginning Of the most wonderful existence That he has ever had And still going on In the presence of Christ Above With the soul Don't you give up on sheep And may I say this to you as well I think at the distance There is this lesson To be green from it You know that Do you find yourself depressed And distressed When you consider the number of people Who never come to church Do you realize that there are more and more people Who upset themselves Of the means of grace And storn away Than there ever used to be No matter how full out church may be Do you realize that?

Do you realize that there are lots of people Who abandon the church Together with the people Who have never dashed into store Do you realize that there are people Who are so far on the Broadway tonight That people are more or less given up They stop speaking to me They stop talking to me They stop counting to me You should never do that No man tonight Is so far away from Christ That the power of Christ cannot play hold on No man has gone so far into sin And so deep into sin That he cannot be saved You have heard the saying You have heard the saying One man was saved on the cross That none may be spared But you have also heard the other line of that saying One man was lost

So that none may be spared So that none may be spared You know there are some people I don't want to hurt the feelings of anybody As I have said often enough in this pulpit The role of the minister is never Should never be to deliberately to pain or to hurt him That should never be his role Nevertheless the truth that he proclaims will hurt It is not his role to hurt It is his role to win It is his role to win But the truth that he conveys Will often pain and hurt The other side of this saying is this One man was lost so that none may pursue And I say that for this reason You know that there are some people who probably say Ah well the thief on the cross was saved just before he died As far as we know

[ 39 : 11 ] This is the only instance Of what you would call a deathbed conversion That we have in the whole of the Bible Do you realise that? The only instance Of a deathbed conversion Is in the whole of the Bible Now I am not astounding at all That in the sovereign grace of God By the sovereign grace of God People can be and are converted on a deathbed But the point I want to make to use this The Bible never encourages you to wait till you get to your deathbed Now is the accepted time Now is the day of salvation And the assurance that you have here is this That if you cry in faith to the Lord The Lord The Lord will hear and the Lord will save

And that is the question Have you thus proud? Have you thus repented? Have you thus believed?

Have you thus believed? Have you thus been saved? Let us pray O God we bless thee that thou art King and Lord We thank thee for thy power to save For thy grace to enrich your life We pray for thy presence and thy blessing tonight With and upon all who need thee in special circumstances We pray for those who are mentally ill Whose minds are disturbed O to thou in thy mercy say to them I say to thee Peace be straight We commit them to thee As we commit ourselves to thee this night

Seeking thy forgiveness Thy presence and thy power For Jesus sake Amen ■ git Gue Pot ■ Marques Conduct