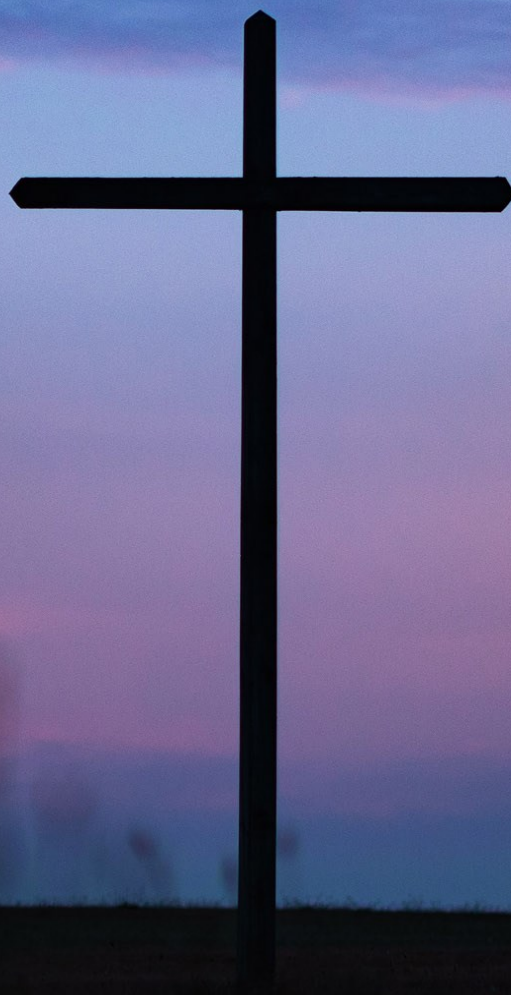


THE CROSS

FAMILY DEVOS



You will Be with Me in Paradise

Scripture: Luke 23:39:43

Memory Verse: Luke 23:43

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’”

For My Family

Last time, we read that Jesus had been crucified alongside two criminals, one on His left and another on His right. The crowd was mocking Jesus and laughing at His pain, but Jesus, instead of rebuking them or calling fire down from Heaven to smite them, called out to His Father, “Forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.”

Amazingly, after this act of stunning forgiveness, one of the thieves joined in with the abuse. Even though the thief was in the exact same situation as Jesus, he started to mock Jesus too, telling Him to prove He was the Messiah by getting the three of them down from the cross. Verse 39 tells us that he “blasphemed” Jesus. This shows us that the thief was not asking Jesus to save Him, but was calling Jesus a liar. He was effectively saying, “You aren’t the Savior. You can’t even save yourself, let alone us!”

The second thief defended Jesus, telling his companion that Jesus was innocent, but they deserved to be there for the things that they had done wrong. He turned to Jesus and pleaded with Him, “Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” This man feared God. He believed that not only could Jesus save, but that He could save from something even worse than death. He believed that Jesus could save for eternity. When this thief died, he wanted to be in God’s Kingdom with Jesus forever.

Jesus turned back to this man and made Him a promise: “*Assuredly* (this means it will definitely happen) I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Two men were both presented with exactly the same situation and information. One of them chose to mock Jesus and call Him a liar. The other feared God, trusted that Jesus could save Him, and humbled himself before Jesus. One of these men is standing around the throne of God worshipping Jesus right now, the other stepped out of this world into outer darkness.

You and I are like the two thieves on the cross. We have all sinned against God and need someone to save us and forgive us. We all have a choice to make: was Jesus a liar who couldn’t even save Himself, or was He Lord? Will we join the crowd and mock Him, or will we ask Him to take us into His Kingdom so that we can be with Him in Paradise?

Questions for Young Children:

What did the two thieves say to Jesus?

What did Jesus say to the second thief?

What did Jesus mean when He said “You will be with Me in Paradise?”

Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

Have you ever heard someone mock Jesus or His followers? What did they say?

What does the story of the thief being saved teach us about salvation?

Did the second thief do anything to deserve Heaven? Was He a good person? Why did Jesus say that this thief could go to Heaven even though he wasn't a good person?