



## DESPERATE “The Unworthy” Luke 23:39-43 April 13, 2014

### The 2 Thieves Shared in Common

- ✓ They were Criminals
- ✓ They were Crucified
- ✓ They were Critical
- ✓ They had a Choice

### Thief #1

- ✓ Rationalized
- ✓ Refused to Admit His Need for a Savior
- ✓ Ridiculed
- ✓ Rejected the Offer - **His 180° Moment**
- ✓ Result – He Died Without Christ

### Thief # 2

- ✓ Angry
- ✓ Attitude Was Changed
- ✓ Amazed – Awe
- ✓ Aware of His Position - **His 180° Moment**
- ✓ Ashamed of His Sin
- ✓ Asks the Right Question
- ✓ Asks for Forgiveness & Accepts Christ's Offer
- ✓ Awarded the Gift of Eternal Life in Heaven.
- ✓ Astounded That It Could Possibly Be Offered to Him

### OUR 180° MOMENT

1. Jesus is calling out your name today. He is looking from heaven's throne and His call echoes from the cross today. Do you hear Him? Do you see Him? You have the choice to choose to accept His amazing offer or to reject. The choice is yours today and be reminded that you may not have the same opportunity tomorrow! What will your response be? Remember, it is as easy as ABC – Draw near to Jesus and He will draw near to you! **Admit** you are sinner, **Believe** that Jesus is God's Son who came to die for you, **Confess** Him as Savior and Lord, and **Commit** your life to Him!
2. Would you be challenged this morning and this week to help people to hear the truth, to help them see and realize the amazing truth that Christ died for them and His arms are wide open waiting to welcome them home?
3. Name that person that you will share with this week. Start praying this morning for them and a chance to share the love of Jesus with them and of course invite them to join you next Sunday for Easter! Pray that they will be receptive to the message of the Gospel!
4. Be willing to step over the line this morning and be obedient in what He is calling you to do. Maybe it is join this church family and honor Him by not attending but joining His family and being a part of bringing the good news to the world. Perhaps it is to refocus your life, for you have wandered away from the cross, and you need to come back home. Maybe it is to respond to God's call on your life to serve Him in full time Christian service. Whatever it is, do it!
5. Spend time today and this week rejoicing and thanking the Lord for the fact that Jesus offered us this gift and that all of us have come by the way of the cross. There is nothing that we have done to earn it, we just simply accepted this incredible gift of grace and mercy.

## U-TURN: 180° THE TURNED AROUND LIFE

DESPERATE

“The Unworthy”

*Luke 23:39-43*

April 12, 2014 AM Service

We have been on a journey with the Jesus Christ own His was to face the cross. We have looked so far at Disease and Jesus touching the Untouchable, and Death and the Unbelievable as Jesus raised them from the dead and at the Despised and how Jesus meets with the Unlikable and notices the Unnoticed and today the journey Christ has been on is about to end or so they think for it is really only beginning. We see ourselves being able to identify with today's so easily the Desperate and the Unworthy! We often ask the question, well how good do I have to be to get into heaven? Which leads us to well, how good is good enough? It's really the wrong question, the real questions is how desperate are you this morning? Do you feel your unworthy of God's love? Do you think there is no way that Lord would accept you? I have an incredible word for you, for Christ is ready to meet you right where you are! Jesus had come to seek and save those who were lost and even in His dying moments He does just that! And it's never too late with Jesus. It's not how you start but how you finish. Some in the room this morning, you may have started well but you have drifted away from what it means to be a Christ Follower, well there's a word here for you today too!

### **The 2 Thieves Shared in Common**

- ✓ **They were Criminals** – they deserved to die for their crimes, they were robbers Matthew tells us and they were simply getting what the law required and it was death.
- ✓ **They were Crucified** – They were both nailed to the cross just as Jesus was, and there was one on one side and one on the other.
- ✓ **They were Critical** of Jesus  
They mocked Him and made fun of Him just the Pharisees and other religious people, the soldiers did, and even those who passed by.  
They joined their voices in the chorus.  
Why between thieves? So we could see that he was numbered among sinners (he chose to die a sinners death for me and He did so

even surrounded by them) and it Fulfills prophecy, [Isaiah 53:12](#)

✓ **They had a Choice and so do we!**

The greatest privilege we have on this earth is our choice, our choice to choose life or death. To receive Jesus or reject Jesus.

2<sup>nd</sup> Question why just 2 thieves? So that we could clearly see that each had equal access to the Savior. How could one thief hear it and the other miss it? Very simple, we have a choice, we can choose life or we can choose death. That is the amazing thing of the cross and God's amazing and undeniable love is that He allows us the choice to choose Him or to reject Him. God's love for these two thieves is the same. Many of you have already made that choice, but for some today and let me be crystal clear so that no one can say, no one ever told me, you have a choice today and you can either choose Him or reject Him. He loves you that much and I urge you with all that it is in me that you choose Jesus and life!

**ILLUS: John Booth & Edwin Booth – Abraham Todd Lincoln**

**Thief #1**

✓ **Rationalized** his decision to reject Christ. I don't deserve to be here, I am not that bad, what about all the other people that should be here, I am ok.

✓ **Refused to Admit His Need for a Savior.** – his pride had swallowed him up so that he could not even see even being right next to the Son of God that his pride had been crushed, but he chose to hang on to it until the bitter end!

✓ **Ridiculed** Christ Once he refused his need, then He makes fun of Him, He pushes Him away for if he does not then he is once again forced to look inside and see the hole in his heart and the emptiness that he feels inside. So the easier thing and people still do it today, is to push Him away. It's why people don't want to come to church even believers, (and sometimes that is us too!) because we don't want to be confronted with Christ and the truth of what He says about us and the way that we are living our lives!

✓ **Rejected the offer** – He is hard hearted. He made the decision, nobody made it for him and he could blame it on no one but himself. Notice too that Christ did not beg him but offered him the same thing he offers the

2<sup>nd</sup> thief, a simple choice! How much closer to Christ could one come? Yet, we look around us and see those who are so close in our churches, & in our country, yet they are so far! In reality though it is only 18 inches, from their knees to the floor! How much closer to you have to come face to face with Christ than right now?

✓ **Result** – He died without Christ

Because of His choice, his rejection of Christ and the truth, he therefore chose hell. God didn't send him there, he by his own free will chose hell. Don't you let people tell you, well if God is love he wouldn't send people to hell. He doesn't! He put a stumbling block so large that the world has to ignore everyday for the cross is everywhere especially right here in America! And before we get to fired up on that point, when is the last time you lovingly confronted someone with the truth so that they could make the choice?

**Thief # 2**

✓ **Angry** We see he was just like thief #1, angry, blaming someone else for the predicament he was in and find someone to focus his anger and hurt and frustration at, and that person was Christ. (By the way, He can handle it!)

✓ **Attitude was changed** Something begin to change as he was watching Jesus die. His heart of stone began to melt away and He begin to see Jesus for who He really was!

✓ **Amazed – Awe** Do you not even fear God since you are going to die? Surely you would fear God in death! This thief recognizes what the other refused to, this man was the Son of God!

✓ **Aware of his position and what he was now facing** – his sin put Jesus on the cross. (We become aware of that same truth) and that sin was going to cause him to die and then be eternally separated from Christ for all eternity.

✓ **Ashamed of His Sin** This is huge and important. He realized that he deserved to die for his sins and for his crimes, but Jesus was innocent and did not deserve to die. This is what so many in our culture will not admit that I am a sinner. We must see it and admit it and come to Jesus as we are a sinner in need of a Savior.

- ✓ **Asks the Right Question** Will you remember me when you come into Your kingdom? Great word isn't, great question. We want someone to remember us, and folks although we forget people and people will eventually forget us as well, Jesus Christ when we ask Him to will never ever forget to remember us. His promises are true!
- ✓ **Asks for Forgiveness & Accepts Christ's offer** of eternal life.
- ✓ **Awarded the gift of eternity** Yes, today you will be with me in paradise, (heaven). You will be with me. "To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord."
- ✓ **Astounded that it could possibly be offered to Him.**  
I have nothing to offer him, these disciples, now they could offer Jesus something, but not me. I am dying. Why the thief? Here's why? Because it reminds us that it is not what we do for Him, for His love does not depend on what we do for Him, but simply what He can do for us! We are valuable to Christ because He created us and wants a relationship with us!

**Two things about this story that can be misleading.**

Some will say, see preacher, I can live my life like I want to, and then I can change right before I die, and I in the same breath can take you to car wreck sites, and murder sites, and heart attacks, and so and so on, who thought they had plenty of time, but they didn't!

What a great story, and I believe that he repented of his sins before it was too late and that one day I will meet him in heaven. However, this is not promised to all of us. Most of us will not have that opportunity, nor are we promised. The word says today is the day of salvation. And we must claim it and jump at the opportunity while it is still called today, before it is too late.

**ILLUS:** (Don't use name – for several years when I was in AL, tried to share with him, I will come, works in rescue and ambulance, and I challenged him. (By the way, shared with him for 7 years)

Some of us though if we are not careful can get ticked off by this story. Well, preacher that just isn't fair. How can I live my whole life for you and be obedient and ignore the ways of the world, and yet this thief can live a sinful life, ignore you and even make fun of you, and somehow he gets to go to heaven too. Is just isn't fair, it just isn't right. Jesus

answered this very question by the way in [Matthew 20](#) and the laborers in the vineyard! Thank God He isn't fair because if He was I would be in a heap of trouble, because fair means I would have gone straight to hell, but only because He is just do I get to go! It is only by His grace and it is that same grace that He offered that thief that He offered to me

Take seriously what Jesus Christ did on the cross of Calvary for you and for me and to live our lives in such a way that it reflects our gratitude for his sacrifice, that we don't just give Him lip service, but life service!

This Thief arrived home, his life was not in vain, for he finally arrived home. Christ was waiting for Him when He got there & don't you know they were saying welcome home. What's your story, how did you get here? We all really have the same story, the story the thief had – we've all come by the way of the cross!

**Closing ILLUS: Madeline and her father**

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Maybe it is to respond to God's call on your life to serve Him in full time Christian service. Whatever it is, do it!

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