

## REMEMBER ME

**TEXT:**        *Luke 23:42: And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy Kingdom.*

The blackest and most terrifying hours that the unsaved soul spends upon earth are those just before going out into eternity. That person can see more clearly than that they are headed to the regions of the blackness and darkness of eternal night in Hell.

The awful death of Francis Newport who turned from Christ to infidelity, and his cries on that death bed.

*“Do I assert there is no Hell, while I feel one in my own bosom? Do I affirm my soul to be as mortal as my body, when this languishes, and that is vigorous as ever. Oh that anyone would restore unto me that ancient gourd of piety and innocence. Wretch that I am, whither shall I flee from this breast? All my sins and iniquities are brought to my remembrance.*

*“Oh, that I were to lie upon the fire that never is quenched a thousand years to purchase the favor of God, and be reunited to Him again. But it is a fruitless wish. Millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer to the end of my torments than one poor hour. O Eternity, Eternity!”*

No one knows more how it feels to be condemned to die and not be prepared to go than Barabbas. He was cast into the prison cell by the relentless hand of the law, with no mercy in sight. He was condemned to hang for his wretched life of sin. There was no asking for mercy — it was too late now.

**But, thank God, it is not too late if you who have sinned turn to Christ for pardon under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.**

**Sitting in his death cell beyond the help of mortal man, there are three hopeless men with nothing to look forward to but death. What a picture of every unredeemed soul in this world. We are all under the sentence of death.**

***Romans 3:23: For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.***

***Romans 6:23: The wages of sin is death.***

## Judgment Day is not far off for many of you.

Every nerve and muscle of Barabbas is tense with remorse, pains, and an aching brain from flying memories of a shaded past; finally, footsteps are coming in his direction, and down the corridor comes the call: *“Barabbas, come forth.”*

*‘Oh no, please! Don’t you have any mercy on a man who is sorry? Give me one more chance. I’ll make good my promise to live right.’*

*‘Barabbas, another is to die in your place today. You are a free man!’*

*‘Oh, please, don’t mock at my grief and terrify me with worthless hopes. I know I am guilty.’*



*‘Tis neither mocking, nor a joke, Barabbas, you are a free man. One named Jesus is to be crucified on your cross today. He was tied to a whipping post in the court. Crushing blows of the lash have disfigured Him until He is hardly recognizable. At the third hour, He is to be crucified with your friends in this cell.’*

More overcome by the terrible thought — *‘He is taking my place. He is dying for me.’* — He leaves, crying out to the crowd who asked his release and to crucify Jesus, *‘Come, See the man who is dying in my place. Today I was to be hanged upon the cross and die for my sins, but I don’t know why He, or anyone else, could love me enough to die for me.’*

They reached the foot of the cross where sobbing women mourn with grief of Him who bore their sins away, Who changed their hopes and destiny. Tender eyes filled with tears watch the nails go into the hands and feet of Jesus, and into the two thieves crucified with Him. Jesus is placed in the center, between two thieves. He has spent an awful night. From the hideous lashings, and with a crown of thorns



upon His marred and beaten head, He is so weak from loss of blood that another had to carry His cross.

At the foot of the cross, the soldiers get fixed as comfortably as possible to await their deaths. They begin dice-throwing and drinking to pass the time away. They cannot get much interested in their game, for they never before had heard such jeering, scorning, and reviling curses directed with such blasphemy or intensity. The One on the center cross



is the Receiver of all their hatred.



Who are these who are filled with such cruel wrath? They are church members, priests, scribes and elders, and their followers.

Rome has consented and condemned Jesus to death by way of the cross.

Wagging heads cry out:

***Matthew 27:40: Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.***

***Matthew 27:42-43:***

***42 He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him.***

***43 He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God.***

The thieves reviled on Him also. There had never been such a scene before. The soldiers looked on in amazement. They are not used to criminals — and church people — making such strange statements.

Mocking comments can't cut flesh, but tears the heart. They shed no blood, but make the heart bleed. They are as fetters to bind a soul.



But the scene changes so to be more miraculous than any human mind can conceive!

One of the thieves watches Jesus absorb those cruel tauntings and sees a look on His face that no human could have amidst all the physical sufferings, coupled with inside hurt and grief from mob hatred. He hears amidst the yelling voices *the words of Jesus:*

***Luke 23:34: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.***

The words of Jesus hit like a dagger. That face — so marred — and that look from His eyes! The thief breaks down.



Something inside says, “*This is not the look of a guilty man: no one can forgive such awful rantings but God. ‘If Thou be the Son of God...if Thou be the Christ...if Thou be the King of Israel’. . . . He must be! I believe He is!*”

The other thief rallies on Jesus with cruel, cutting words:

***Luke 23:39b: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself – and us.***

**Oh, how cruel unbelief really is. Every one of you outside of salvation through Christ Jesus are hurling the very same at Jesus as you go on rejecting Him.**

***John 1:12: But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name:***

***“If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us!”*** cried one thief.

It cuts like a knife into the very soul of his fellow-prisoner and companion in crime. Something miraculous has taken place there on the cross. He cries out to his companion, rebuking him.

***Luke 23:40-41:***

***<sup>40</sup> Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?***

***<sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.***

What deep insight. Where could he get it? The Roman government has condemned Jesus. Rome declares Jesus guilty of high treason — a blasphemer and imposter, a faker. The religious leaders laugh and scorn him and condemn Jesus, but this thief suffering for his crime, hearing the scorching blasphemies of the multitude, declares Jesus innocent.



**There has come into his heart a change that only Christ can bring. It does not come by reasoning or by sight.** Human reason could not play a part in this shocking statement. He has not had Jesus in a cell with him to know His defense. Sight would look upon a bruised and bleeding, hardly recognizable face, as repulsive and disgustingly offensive to try to justify.

But when that robber felt inwardly the spotlessness of this One beside him, he felt more his own guilt and saw the stains of his own soul more clearly.

He confessed his guilt in **Luke 23:41:**

***And we indeed justly.***

‘I got what was coming for my sins.’ This robber saw himself confessing his guilt, and now — miracle of all miracles — he turns to Jesus in faith that comes only from true repentance, and speaks the following words recorded in **Luke 23:42:**

***Lord, remember me.***

Every unsaved man or woman reading this study, this Bible, again declares that salvation is not a mental idea, nor is it a fairytale. People, when dying and sinking into Hell because they are condemned, and knowing they are guilty, do not foolishly trifle and trust in someone who is not true. They will not look to one only like themselves.

He had done for him what the scourge and jail could not do. When he met Jesus in such a gruesome place, the fear of God fell upon him.

***Luke 23:40: Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?***

There is not much hope for a soul being saved until the fear of God comes in, and until there are hot tears of sorrow and shame. To see Jesus, there is no good word to say about ourselves. This man saw Jesus as spotless:

***Luke 23:41b: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.***

The thief did not try to justify himself:

***Luke 23:41a: And we indeed justly.***

**No one is truly sorry for his sins unless he confesses them and does not try to justify himself.**

***1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

When a man is near to the Kingdom of Heaven, the first thing that happens in his heart is that he becomes tender toward Jesus, and he ceases talking with hatred against Him.

**Now – the miracle of salvation: “*Lord, remember me.*”**

If it were by good works, the thief could not have made it into Heaven.

If it were a religious education, he would have gone to Hell.

If it were by joining church only, he would burn in the Lake of Fire.

If it were an instantaneous conversion, he would have had to give up in despair. He calls Him “LORD!” — a strange Lord with nails thru His hands and feet, fastened to a cross.

**“*Lord remember me,*”** with blood trickling down His face, with scars and torn flesh — He is honored by a thief whose heart Jesus has given peace quite unknown to the lost enemies of the Christ of Calvary. A sinner calling Jesus “***Lord*”** when He seems to be the natural mind, anything but LORD. He did not get this out of a prayerbook. This is prayed from his heart.



Look further at the faith of this man. All the apostles have forsaken Jesus and the crowd is mocking and jeering Him. This Man says something that no mind will even think at an hour like this. It must come from God, alone Who reveals to the heart of man who Jesus is.

***John 6:44: Jesus said: No man can come to Me, except the Father Who hath sent Me draw him:***

***Luke 23:42: Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy Kingdom.***

How can he be sure Jesus is a King. This King has no crown but thorns, no throne but a cross, no subjects but a host of enemies scoffing at Him, no royal robes which the Roman crap shooters have not put their hands on. Yet this thief penetrates the disguise of shame, and sees Him as King, eternally. About Jesus, the thief thinks; *‘Since You are King, this does not end all for You. This cross cannot destroy You. I see, and I know why You are here.’*

This is the Gospel we preach. It is foolishness to them that perish. Paul said,

***Galatians 6:14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.***

**It takes only God to open our hearts to this miracle of the cross, and the salvation thru Jesus’ death for the sins of the world.**

Further notice about the prayer of the penitent thief: He believes Jesus is able to grant favors beyond the grave. He believes that this is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, he shall not perish but have everlasting life. He does not ask Jesus for a throne, nor for a special seat in Heaven.

Immediately, Jesus replies:

***“Today! Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”***

**Today – immediate salvation! It does not take Jesus long to save you. He breaks the fetters of sin in a moment when we turn and believe in Him against all mental conceptions – but believe from the heart the Lord Jesus.**

***Romans 10:10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.***

***Luke 23:43: Today, shalt thou be with Me in paradise.***

You can know NOW you are saved. Jesus, only, can save you.

***Acts 4:12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.***

***“Thou shalt be with Me...”*** Who would want to be anywhere else but with Jesus when He has done such a glorious act in delivering us out of the Kingdom of darkness, saving us from eternal damnation; NOW – to be a sharer of His Kingdom, with Christ.

**Jesus began His ministry by saving the lost, and He ended it the same. He took one of Satan’s captives from the very jaws of Hell and gave him a passport for Heaven.**

What a sudden contrast! In the morning, condemned to death and the darkness of eternity; at night – in Heaven, hearing an angelic choir, singing hallelujahs, and having a shouting-good time. In the morning, feeling the load of condemnation; at night – washed and made whiter than snow. Jesus loved him because he confessed Him as Lord in a dark hour.

**Jesus is still in the soul-saving business of making unfit and lost souls fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. At Calvary, you must meet Jesus, too, although you never set out to make Calvary your goal. It is the only place to find peace, salvation, and hope of Heaven.**



P.S. ***“Remember me”*** – was the personal request of the thief for himself. No one else can pray this for us. We must cry out to God, ***“Be merciful to me, a sinner.”*** The mob saw Jesus as a sinner. The Penitent [*a person who repents for their sins or wrongdoings and seeks forgiveness from God*] sees Him as the Saviour.

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