

INTRO

- What is a spring activity that you look forward to doing soon?
- Do you know any famous last words?

READ

Luke 23:32-43

REFLECT

Although not his last words, the seven things Jesus Christ said on the cross encapsulated much of his ministry and teachings. As we prepare for Easter, these seven sayings will draw us closer to Christ as we reflect on his life and work.

Qu: What's the significance of Christ's sayings as he hung on the cross? Do you know what they are and does any of them resonate with you?

Today we will focus on what Jesus told to the criminal being crucified at his right (v. 43): "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." This has traditionally been called the word of Salvation.

1. Salvation is by grace

Read Romans 3:23-26.

Christ's reassurance to the criminal that he would be saved is a great example of how we are saved by the grace of God. The thief acknowledged that it was just that he himself was condemned, but still drew closer to Christ as the only one capable of saving him.

Qu: When we say that we are "saved" by Jesus Christ, what do we mean by that word?

Qu: What does it mean to say that salvation is a gift from God? How does that change the way you approach God?

2. Salvation comes through faith

The thief didn't, and couldn't, save himself by doing good works. He was saved simply by

putting his trust in Christ rather than in his own deeds. This exemplifies what we mean by being saved through faith (trust) in Christ rather than by works (good deeds).

Qu: Do you ever seek salvation by doing good works? How do we live life in light of being saved by trust in Christ alone?

3. Is salvation too easy?

The saving of the thief at the cross has caused many people to question whether salvation can be really that easy. Some would say that it is unjust or even enviable, to be saved at the very last minute. However, that reveals to us that our conceptions of life, salvation, and heaven may be mistaken.

Qu: What is your conception of Heaven? Does that have any impact on how you lead your life?

Qu: What do you think is better, to live life on our own terms for as long as we can or to submit our lives to the will of God?

Qu: 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that we are made a new creation when we are saved. What is it to live like a new creation?

RESPOND & PRAY

- What encouraged/challenged you the most from this discussion?
- Spend time praying for one another and those you know who need to hear the good news of salvation.