

Nine Words from a Thief

Scripture Reading: **Luke 23: 35-43**

INTRODUCTION

- Much has been said about the dying words of mankind

- **1908—Grover Cleveland** said,
 - “I’ve tried so hard to do the right thing...”

- **April 19, 1882—Charles Darwin** said,
 - “I’m no the lest afraid to die.”

- **May 10, 1977—Joan Crawford** made this statement to her housekeeper who’d begun to pray aloud
 - “Don’t you dare ask God to help me!”

- **1603—Elizabeth Queen of England**
 - “All my possessions for a moment of time.”

- **Andrew Jackson**
 - “Oh do not cry—be good children and we will all meet in heaven”

- As I searched the subject of “Dying Words”
 - It was amazingly hurtful to see how many people used blasphemous words against God as they left this world to enter eternity
 - This morning I want to look deeper into 9 words said by the thief on the cross to Jesus

- In our time together this morning let's open our bibles to **Luke 23: 42**

- The thief said these words to Jesus...
 - “Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”
 - What the thief said to Jesus speaks volumes
 - This thief—this man who hung beside Jesus and had cast insults earlier—this man who was condemned to die—spoke with sincerity
 - He said that which worthy of God's grace
 - He said that which once he closed his eyes in this temporary world he would open them to place of Paradise
 - Jesus accepted this man's faith and belief based upon the 9 words out his mouth and responded with these words...
 - “Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

- The nine words uttered by a dying, condemned thief reveal much about his heart

DISCUSSION

- The First thing I want us to notice this morning is that the thief acknowledged Jesus as Lord
 - The very description hanging over the head of Jesus said...
 - “This is the King of the Jews”
 - You see the tilte placed above the head of the dying Christ was mankind's mockery of the Savior
 - Yet the thief and the title spoke the truth
 - **Psalm 2:6**, “Yet I have set My King on My Holy hill of Zion.”
 - **Matthew 2:1-2—READ**
 - **Revelation 19:16—READ**

- The dying man on the cross confessed by his words that Jesus was exactly who He said He was...
 - He was the Son of the Living God

- Look with me to **John 8:24 and read with me**
 - It' in that verse that Jesus said that our first step in a relationship with Him is that we must believe in Him

➤ **The thief said—“Lord remember me...”**

- The penitent dying man looked forward to the dying Savior coming again arrayed with His power and dignity
 - Imagine the scene if you will...
 - Imagine the confidence of this thief
 - Imagine the him looking upon Jesus on the cross and saying to Him
 - “Remember me...”
- Church—the thief believed with all his heart that Jesus
 - Although forsaken by men could appear as a King in His glory
 - Notice that the thief didn't ask for a special place in that kingdom
 - He only ask that Jesus remember Him

➤ Don't you think it's noteworthy for us to notice and realize that our Lord and Savior—Jesus the Christ ask us to remember Him

- We do this through the partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (**Acts 20:7**)
 - We do this because it was instituted by Jesus prior to His death
 - **READ Luke 22: 13-20**
- And now the Lord also made this statement
 - **Matthew 10:32-33—READ**
 - All who confess Him and live a faithful, obedient life in Christ will be confessed by Jesus to the Father
- Do you remember the Lord—the Savior—the propitiation of your sins each day
 - Or have you forgotten Him?
 - Do you only go to Him when times are hard and the pathway treacherous?
 - Or do you remember Him each day
 - Do you recall His sacrifice?

- Do you recall to your memory that heaven awaits ONLY those who are faithful and obedient?

➤ **The thief also said—“Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom”**

- The dying thief showed his belief in the resurrection
 - His beliefs was quite different than the beliefs of many dying words” I read to you at the start of this lesson
- There are many religious people today who believe the resurrection is only for the righteous and the just
 - They believe the grave is the eternal resting place of the unrighteous
 - They believe they will not come forth when the resurrection happens
- Brethren—
 - That is satan’s lie to this world
 - For God’s Word says...
 - John 5: 26-29—READ
 - I Corinthians 15: 51-58—READ
- There will be a resurrection and a Day of Judgment—Hebrews 9:27
 - Church—the dying word of the thief revealed that he believed in that resurrection

➤ Do you doubt the resurrection?

- Or is that something that really just scares you to think about such a thing?
 - Friends it’s going to happen
 - May not in our life time but Paul made it clear to the church in Thessalonica that it would happen
 - READ I Thessalonians 4:13-18

➤ What a day it had been to the dying thief!

- How strange a contrast between the days opening and it’s close
- It was literally day and night

➤ The morning saw him a perpetrator, a criminal, a culprit condemned before the bar of earthly judgment

- It's evening was vastly different
 - It's evening shadowed the Hill of Zion and this thief stood accepted in Paradise

- Brethren—that is the grace, mercy, and compassion of God
 - That's the kind of Savior we are blessed with
 - **II Peter 3:9**, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- There are still some today who will take this blessed event and try to justify salvation upon belief only
 - They will take this passage and say one does not need to be baptized for salvation
 - Again, satan is at work
 - Thus the common statement...
 - “If the thief was saved without baptism then I can be saved without baptism, right?”
 - Again the Word must be rightly divided
 - **II Timothy 2:15**, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

- Jesus, while on this earth, had the power to forgive sins just by His authority and command
 - “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”—**Matthew 28:18**
 - The sick man of palsy in **Matthew 9:1-8**
 - Jesus said to him—“your sins are forgiven...”
 - Look quickly with me at verses **3 - 6** of that passage
 - The thief was one of many that Jesus forgave
 - But what about baptism?
 - Is it essential?
 - As Jesus was preparing to ascend into heaven He delivered a command
 - **READ with me: Mark 16: 15-16**

- READ Matthew 28: 18-20

- On the Day of Pentecost when Peter preached he didn't depart from the command given by Jesus

- Acts 2:36-41

- And later he wrote I Peter 3:21

- It's devastating that an occasion in which Jesus saves a mans soul is an occasion for error in which satan has...

- Muddied the spiritual waters

- Satan lied to Eve in the garden when he told if she ate the fruit she would not surely die

- And now he lies to millions of people today who fail to listen to Gods Word by saying...

- "Baptism is not essential—surely you will not die in your sins if you just believe"

- And millions of people leave this world living in that lie

- Take the account of the thief on the cross being saved for what it is...

- It's an account of the love, grace, mercy, and compassion of Jesus Christ

- Take the commandment of Jesus after His death on the cross for what they are

- Words of eternal life if obeyed

CLOSING

- Nine words

- Nine words that show it's never too late to turn to God in repentance

- The love and forgiveness of God is extended to all

- The choice this morning is yours
 - One of the dying thief's choose wisely and entered into eternal rest with Jesus
 - The other...
 - He died with NO HOPE
 - LOST WITHOUT A SAVIOR

- What choice will you make this morning?
 - Have you ever confessed your belief in Jesus?
 - Have you ever repented of your sins?
 - Have you ever been baptized?
 - If not, look to the thief who made the wrong decision and don't be like him
 - Don't believe satan's lie this morning
 - Come confessing Jesus and be buried in the waters and raised in the newness of life/
 - Come this morning if you are a Christian and have been wayward
 - Come this morning if there is need of repentance in your life in a public way

- There will be a resurrection and there will be a judgment...
 - Where will you stand on that day
 - In Him
 - Not in Him

The choice is yours—but the lesson is of God

Choose this day who you will serve

Come as we stand and sing...