

**Good Friday ~ Friday, April 18, 2024**  
**“Three Crosses & Three Hearts”**

The cross was the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus’ earthly life. It was for this reason that He was born, and His whole life had been an act of \_\_\_\_\_ that culminated in His laying down His life.

Jesus came to \_\_\_\_\_—a death that was not only extremely painful, as He struggled for every breath until His lungs eventually collapsed with exhaustion, but also, \_\_\_\_\_ to the Romans and \_\_\_\_\_ to the Jews.

“Cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree.” (Deuteronomy 21:23)

“May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Galatians 6:14)

Paul was able to say this, he was able to boast in the cross, because he had a doctrine, a theology, and a belief about the Cross that went far beyond what the \_\_\_\_\_ eye could see.

He was able to see \_\_\_\_\_, beyond the physical—beyond the pain and humiliation—to a deeper spiritual \_\_\_\_\_.

“The message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Although the cross was a symbol of \_\_\_\_\_ and death, Paul says that for those who believe, the message of the cross is loud and clear: God’s ability to reveal love, life, and \_\_\_\_\_, through powerlessness, hatred, and defeat.

The crucifixion of Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ event of all human history. It isn’t something to be embarrassed about, but something that we can actually \_\_\_\_\_ in.

“Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.” (Luke 23:32-33)

**Cross #1: The \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_ Heart.**

“Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” (Luke 23:39)

These words are an like a spiritual \_\_\_\_\_, exposing the thief’s resistant heart.

His spiteful words, hurled at Jesus, echo the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Jewish religious leaders who stood watching the gory spectacle, saying, “He saved others...let Him save Himself if He is the Christ of God, His chosen one!” The Roman soldiers also join in, in verse 36, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”

These taunts are designed to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus, and to expose Him to public ridicule. The Jewish mockery highlighted His claim to be the \_\_\_\_\_, and the taunts of the Roman soldiers highlight His claim to be a \_\_\_\_\_.

The cross, in their minds, was the greatest evidence that Jesus was, in fact, a \_\_\_\_\_. It was the great \_\_\_\_\_ of their own judgment against Him.

It’s hard not to hear in their mockery the echoes of \_\_\_\_\_, who spoke similar words to Jesus at the beginning of His ministry.

This first thief, dying under the judicial sentence passed over him, doesn’t think of his own \_\_\_\_\_ in this moment. There’s no remorse, no acknowledgment of guilt, no pleading for God’s \_\_\_\_\_. Instead, he joins the religious leaders and soldiers, and the same satanic \_\_\_\_\_ and opposition to Christ that fills their mouths fills his also.

This man is the epitome of hard-hearted resistance to saving \_\_\_\_\_. After all, the one person who could deliver him was hanging right beside him, and the cross of Jesus, the appointed means that God had ordained by which his salvation could be secured, he thoroughly \_\_\_\_\_.

This is the best that an unrepentant heart can muster when it comes to Jesus. If it thinks of Jesus at all, it’s as a \_\_\_\_\_ or a good luck charm, a “Get Out of Jail Free” card or fire insurance.

**Cross #2: The \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_ Heart.**

These two guys hanging on either side of Jesus are both \_\_\_\_\_, they’ve both been convicted and sentenced to the same fate for the same crime, and they both will die in the same dreadful manner. Face to face with the dying Christ, Matthew and Mark tell us that at first, they both join in the \_\_\_\_\_ and the insults.

“The robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him in the same way.” (Matthew 27:44)

However, at some point, the second one has a change of \_\_\_\_\_. We don’t know what triggered it, but eventually the insults stop, and in their place, he makes two speeches.

The first is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the other criminal,

“Do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation and we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward for our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong.” (Luke 23:40-41)

This is a remarkable statement of both \_\_\_\_\_ and of faith in Jesus.

First, his question to his fellow condemned criminal reveals something of his own \_\_\_\_\_ motivation: “Do you not fear God...”

The \_\_\_\_\_ of God has gripped him, it has stilled his mockery, and it has made him tremble.

Secondly, he knows that his sin \_\_\_\_\_ him justly: “...we are receiving the due reward for our deeds...”

There are no \_\_\_\_\_ words here, no attempt to make excuses, or rationalize what he’s done. Instead, he owns his \_\_\_\_\_ in the sight of God.

His words reveal remarkable \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus: “This man has done nothing wrong.”

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” (Luke 23: 42)

Everyone else looking at the cross that day saw only \_\_\_\_\_.

Alone amongst all those looking on that day, the second thief didn’t see \_\_\_\_\_ or defeat. He saw in the cross of Christ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the King who was about to come into His kingdom.

He \_\_\_\_\_ God more than men. He sees the justice of God in his own \_\_\_\_\_. He owns his sin. He knows Jesus is righteous, not guilty. And he acknowledges Him to be God’s appointed King and Saviour who is coming into His kingdom. And then, confessing all of this, he casts himself completely on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ

Despite the brevity of his testimony, the second thief is a model of the true \_\_\_\_\_ we all need to imitate.

It’s never too \_\_\_\_\_ to turn from our sin to Christ. No matter who we are or what we’ve done, even if we’re in our final days on this earth, there’s still room for us to \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus, confess our sin, \_\_\_\_\_ our guilt before God,

acknowledge the justice of His judgment upon our sin, and cry with this man for mercy.

True repentance is never too late. Life is fragile and brief, and no one knows what the future holds. Indeed, tomorrow might not come. So, don’t \_\_\_\_\_. Don’t hesitate. Today is the day.

“Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Corinthians 6:2)

**Cross #3: The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ Heart.**

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

This is a word of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

What an incredible demonstration of the love and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus! After all, the man to whom these words were addressed, had done nothing to \_\_\_\_\_ them.

This guy was a nameless nobody with a violent past. He could point to nothing in his own \_\_\_\_\_. At the end of the day, all he could bring to Jesus was the guilt and shame of his \_\_\_\_\_, mingled with his cries of mercy.

The only thing that we bring to the table when it comes to our eternal salvation is the \_\_\_\_\_ which made the cross \_\_\_\_\_ necessary in the first place.

The reason Jesus was there, crucified beside two thieves was because He came to be the \_\_\_\_\_ One, bearing the \_\_\_\_\_ we deserve; treated like a criminal who was no criminal, that criminals might be treated like Him; and be pardoned, forgiven, and accepted.

We don’t come to Him putting our best foot forward, or offering our best argument as to why we should \_\_\_\_\_ for His kingdom. We come empty-handed. And the cross \_\_\_\_\_ everything we need—all the mercy, pardon, cleansing, and hope.

He did nothing to amend his ways, and there was no possibility of him turning over a new leaf. It was too late. And yet, abandoned to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ alone, he finds the mercy he needs.

It’s all a matter of the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Which one am I?**

**Do I have a resistant heart or a repentant heart?**