

Weekly Study Guide

08/04/24 - Three Crosses

Read Luke 23:32-43

32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” 36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” 38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews. 39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Questions:

1. What stands out to you in the verses above? What is the main focus? Is there anything that piques your interest? Describe these verses with a word or phrase?
2. Why was Jesus crucified with two criminals? Is there some significance to this? How is it relevant today?
3. What are the similarities between the two thieves? How are they different? What can we learn from them? How are they examples to us?
4. Share a few takeaways you learned. How can you apply all of this to your life? Is there anything you need to do in light of this?

Main Support: [Luke 23:32-43](#); [Matthew 27:38-44](#); [Mark 15:27-32](#); [Isaiah 53:12](#)

Additional Support: [Luke 18:9-14](#); [Proverbs 3:34](#); [James 4:6](#)

For later: What about you? What side of the cross are you on? Prayerfully consider how this lesson might apply to your life. Where do you place your hope? Do you trust God even when it's hard or do you constantly expect God to prove Himself to you? Do you share the message of the cross with others? What will change in your life in light of this lesson?

Key:

1. Jesus, an innocent man, was unjustly sentenced to death next to two guilty violent criminals. The focus is the cross or the means by which they were to be executed. It is a bleak and hopeless scene. A word to describe this might be "injustice." A few more words might be "forgive," "pardon," or "mercy." In the end, the innocent One died for the sins of the guilty.
2. There were three crosses erected on an obscure hill called the place of the skull, or Calvary in Latin. Even though Jesus had done nothing wrong, He was crucified between two sinners. Jesus suffers with us, alongside of us, next to us. This was staged to further humiliate Jesus but ultimately fulfilled a prophecy in [Isaiah 53:12](#). The two thieves took what wasn't theirs. So too do we steal from God's glory. But Jesus, though being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. Rather He emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant in the likeness of man ([Philippians 2:5-7](#)).
3. Both were guilty. Both deserved to be punished. Both mocked Jesus, at least it seems initially. They are different in that one had a change of heart. One humbled himself and the other did not. One acknowledged he deserved his punishment. The other blasphemed Jesus and demanded He prove Himself. One recognized Jesus for who He was. The other rejected Jesus and joined the chorus of the world. They are examples of what we should and should not do and how we should respond to the sacrifice of God's only Son.
4. The penitent thief said, "Remember me." He didn't have time to be baptized. or join a church. Jesus told him, "Today, you will be with me in paradise." Think of it, the first person that Jesus took with him to paradise was a condemned thief. On the cross, Jesus was dying for people like him and for people like you. We are all sinners in need of a Savior. It is never too late to repent and accept the free gift of salvation ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#) and [Revelation 22:17](#)). Don't waste your cross! The two men hanging on either side of Jesus had the same choice. While one rejected Jesus and took his bitterness to the grave, the other repented and cried out, "Remember me!" "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved" ([Romans 10:13](#)).