

The Gospel of Luke

The Seven Sayings of the Cross: Today in Paradise

Luke 23:39-43

1. The Character of the Crucified Men

A. The Original Three

Barabbas and two other men were all to be crucified together and they are similarly described as being taken as insurrectionists (Mk. 15:7).

B. The Innocent One

The corroborated testimony concerning Jesus is that He was innocent (Lk. 23:13-16), but He was being crucified in order to pacify a mob.

2. The Conversation of the Crucified Men

A. The Cruelty of the Criminals (Mt. 27:44)

Along with the crowd (Mt. 27:39), the religious leaders (Lk. 23:35), and the soldiers (Lk. 23:36), both of the criminals crucified with Jesus insulted Him from their own gibbets.

B. The Compassion of Christ (Lk. 23:34)

In the midst of all of the mockery from all corners, Jesus entreats the Father to act compassionately toward His persecutors (cf. Lk. 13:6-8; Rom. 2:4).

3. The Cries of the Crucified Men

A. A Cry of Contempt (v.39)

This criminal was continuing in the behavior in which he had been engaged since he was crucified. He has heard the taunts made by Jesus' religious accusers and he echoes them.

B. A Cry of Conversion (vs.40-42)

The evidence of the second thief's conversion is seen in his changed heart and attitude as he engaged his fellow criminal (cf. Lk. 6:45). By the time that he turned to Jesus to make his famous request, Jesus had already saved him (cf. Lk. 5:20; 7:50).

C. A Cry of Comfort (v.43)

The words of Jesus to the penitent thief are a source of magnificent comfort for all who look to Christ for salvation. If salvation from sin were to be based at all in good works, keeping of the Law, or in baptism, Jesus could not have comforted this man with His words.

4. The Conquering by the Crucified Man (Jn. 11:25-26, 1 Cor. 15:55)