

Sunday, 20 January 2008

[Luke 23:39-42](#)

Luke 23:39-43 Now one of the criminals hanging there kept insulting him, saying, "You are the Christ, aren't you? Save yourself and us!" But the other one rebuked him, saying, "Aren't you afraid of God, since you are suffering the same penalty? We have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he went on to say, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!" Jesus said to him, **"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."**

The Greatest forgiveness?

This scripture piece brings us to one of the darkest hours in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. A moment of incredible pain and suffering. The moment where death is the only way of getting any relief from the pain, the humiliation and scorn of the people around Him. How extremely horrific this must have been, having to experience pain that is so severe that it will kill you shortly, and having people around cursing you, insulting you, and this, while having to hang there, naked, and with no defence. Having no friend sitting by your side, holding your hand while death is immanent, and having no-one assisting you, making you as comfortable as possible during your last moments. Alone, and stripped of everything possible.

It is also in this situation where we see two people who were crucified on either side of Christ. These two deserving of what is happening to them, as they caused similar pain to others, only for personal gain. They are heartless, and mean. Even in their own moments of death, they find time to make rude and painful remarks towards Christ. If I were Christ, this would have been the moment where I would condemn the entire earth, and simply say that these people are not worth dying for, I most likely would have asked my Father in Heaven to destroy them all, and remove me from the cross. But Christ is not like me, fortunately. He was not angry at those who caused Him this humiliation, and He prayed that God would forgive them for this. And when one of those horrible murderers and robbers crucified at His side repented, and asked Christ to please think of him when He is to arrive in heaven, Christ accepted him without hesitation. This is true forgiveness.

Why should Christ have shown this man forgiveness? Was this man going to be a great witness to Christ in the days to come? Was this man going to be a great preacher who was going to bring so many others to the Lord? Was this man in a position to help Christ in His hour of pain and suffering? Was there any reason why Christ should do this? What would human beings have done if we were in Christ's position? Most likely we would have been so angry, as we were being crucified for something we didn't do. We would be consumed with pain and suffering, and would not care about what pain others are experiencing. Would we care about what murderers and robbers think, or would want? Christ did care. And do you know what, Christ would like to give you that same forgiveness, a forgiveness that is undeserving, and complete. A forgiveness that will provide you with eternal life. It is yours, all you need do is ask for it, just like the man crucified next to Christ. No sin is too great to be forgiven, and, as long as you are alive, it is never too late to ask for it. Christ is waiting to give this to you. Maybe your time to ask for it is now, before it is too late...

* Should you wish to write me, and are in need of someone who would listen and pray with you... Please do. [david@davidniebuhr.com](mailto:david@ davidniebuhr.com)

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