

The Triumphant Word of the Crucified Saviour

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[0 : 0 0] end. Well, we're going to turn now to our Bibles. As I said, we're looking in Luke's Gospel. And if you'd turn with me to Luke chapter 23. We're reading this morning from verse 26 to the end of the chapter. And our title over this Sunday and next Sunday is the word of the cross. And this morning we're focusing on the words of Jesus himself spoken from the cross, speaking of it, telling us what it means and its great implications for us. So we're going to read this account from Luke chapter 23, beginning at verse 26. And if anybody needs a Bible, this Bible's outside the door there. And you can pop out and somebody will gladly give one to you. Luke 23 at verse 26. And as they led him away, they seized one

Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country. And they laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. And they followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them, Jesus said, daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breast that never nursed. Then they will begin to say to the mountains, fall on us and to the hills, cover us. But if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it's dry? Two others who were criminals were led away to be put to death with him. And when he came to the place that is called the skull, there they crucified him and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do. And they, that's the soldiers, they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by watching. But the ruler scoffed at him, saying, he saved others. Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one. The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, if you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. And there was also an inscription over him, this is the king of the Jews. One of the criminals who were hanged, railed at him, saying, are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us. But the other rebuked him, saying, 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 of our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong.

And he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And he said to him, truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. And it was now about the sixth hour and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. And then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he breathed his last. And when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, certainly this man was innocent, righteous. And all the crowds that had assembled for the spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance, watching these things. And there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man who had not consented to their decision and action. And he was looking for the kingdom of God. And this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone where no one had ever yet been laid. It was a day of preparation and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. Amen. May God bless us this his word.

Well do turn with me if you would to the passage we read together to Luke chapter 23. which focuses on the triumphant words of the crucified Savior, the words of Jesus himself from the cross.

Now a gospel is an announcement of news. That's what the word gospel means. And Luke's gospel of course is the announcement of the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God.

[6 : 14] Right at the start of his book, if you read there later on, you'll see that he says that he wants his readers to have certainty. Certainty about this word of the gospel.

And so he says he has written deliberately a carefully ordered account using eyewitnesses who he says from the very beginning were servants of that word of truth.

Now Luke, Luke himself was a physician. A doctor. So that means he was someone who spent his life observing. Observing signs and symptoms.

And diagnosing reality on the basis of that evidence. That's what a doctor does. At least what he's supposed to do. And that I think is what Luke does all the way through this gospel that he's written. And here we are at the climax really of that gospel. And we see that he has a very clear focus on what the Apostle Paul later calls the word of the cross.

[7 : 23] Not just the events of Calvary and that first Easter. But the explanation of what it all means. And Luke is determined that we won't misunderstand it.

As many do. Indeed, if you look at verses 27 and 28 in our passage here. As these women of Jerusalem did misunderstand. They were weeping.

They were lamenting. But Jesus himself says to them, Look, don't weep for me. Because you obviously don't understand what this means. If you did, you'd be weeping for yourselves.

Not for me. And Luke's purpose, you see, is to explain the cross. Not so that we'll see it in terms of just emotion and devotion.

But he wants us to see its evangel and its doctrine. To understand what it really means. He wants us to see and to understand the great word that the cross of Jesus speaks to the whole world.

[8 : 29] And so Luke records for us, yes, the public events. But he also gives us a powerful explanation so that we will see what it all means in terms of our own personal experience as frail human beings.

Because we must all understand what Jesus' death means. There is nothing more important in this whole wide world. So let's listen to Dr. Luke's report then.

And let's see what he wants us to be certain about. And first of all, he does make absolutely plain that the death of Jesus Christ was a public event.

It was a public event. What he's saying is at the cross, we have a careful witness to history. Now Luke tells us, as I said at the start of the book, that he wrote an orderly account.

And that is certainly evident here. Notice that his account begins, verse 26, and it ends with named men. And there was a group of women who were witnesses to everything that happened.

[9 : 36] Look at the first paragraph and the last paragraphs that bracket this account. Verse 26, there's Simon of Cyrene in Libya. Name and address noted. Verifiable witness.

Then in verse 50, we've got Joseph from Arimathea. Again, a verifiable witness. He was a very well-known person, we're told. He was a counselor. He was a very public witness.

We're told there in verses 51 that Joseph had dissented from that twisted decision of the council of Jerusalem to condemn Jesus. You can see that back in Luke 22, verse 66.

So this Joseph was a marked man, wasn't he? Nobody would forget his name. A very powerful witness to have. Now, of course, there's more, I think, than just history in Luke's choice of the witnesses here, because when you read about Simon, you can hardly not be reminded of the other Simon, Peter.

Just a few hours before, if you read beforehand, you'll see that he was the one who was saying that he would go everywhere, even to the death with Jesus. But alas, that beloved friend of Jesus suddenly is nowhere to be found, is he?

[10 : 46] Because he's scarpered. He's run away like all the rest. But there is a Simon with Jesus at the cross, but it's Simon the stranger. And he has to help him under compulsion.

Very easy. It's just a reminder, isn't it? It's very easy to make vows of commitment to Jesus, zealous vows. But it's all too common, isn't it, for that zeal to quickly fall away when the reality of the cross of Jesus, when the cost of real Christian service suddenly becomes evident.

But if verse 26 should sober every Christian, then surely verse 22 should gladden our hearts, because here's Joseph, the genuine seeker, and he is taking a public stand with Jesus.

At last, in John's Gospel, we're told that previously this Joseph had followed Jesus secretly for fear of the Jews. And yet here what we see is the power of the cross overcoming that fear.

It's a wonderful thing. But Luke's main point is absolutely clear, isn't it? What he is saying is all of this is verifiable public history.

[12:02] Notice also the multitude of people and the women, verse 27, who saw it all. Notice verse 49, these women who knew him ever since his ministry began in Galilee and were following him.

They followed him, verse 55, to the tomb. They saw absolutely everything. They saw where he was laid. There's no chance, is there, that these people mistook Jesus for some other body.

Of course not. Look at the precise details there in verses 53 and 54. The exact day and the time. The description of the place and the tomb.

Everything, everything is so carefully recorded. A careful witness to real history. There's no chance, was there, of a mistake being made here.

There's no mass graves with all the other criminals. There's a clear witness to Jesus' burial. There's no chance, is there, that that body was swapped on the cross.

[13:02] That's, you know, that's what Muslims are taught to believe. The body was swapped. Somebody else was crucified, not Jesus. But it's quite impossible. There is no chance of that kind of thing.

There's no chance of foul play to concoct a story about a resurrection for the simple reason that not one of these followers of Jesus here was expecting any such thing.

Look at verse 56. It's clear. What did they go and do? They went to prepare spices and ointments for a dead body, to put on it, to curb the stench of a rotting corpse. Nobody there was expecting anything other than death.

And these are just a few of Luke's precise details. If you look hard, you'll find there's many more. It's replete with detailed reportage. The two criminals.

The exact place. The nickname, verse 33, the skull. The casting lots for his clothes, verse 34. The inscription above his head, verse 38. The soldier's actions.

[14:03] And on and on. There's so many witnesses to the public events in history. And you know, given that, friends, it really is astonishing, isn't it, that there are actually so many people today who don't even believe that Jesus Christ was a historical figure at all.

probably does say more about our education system than anything else. But there is a mountain of evidence about the life of Jesus Christ.

It far outweighs the evidence for virtually any other historical figure in world history. Luke is just one of those who's recorded this careful witness to history and his precise, verifiable record of events so that we can be certain, certain of what the Creed says, that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, that he was crucified, that he was dead, and that he was buried.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary was a public event. It's a matter of history. And these words of Luke just give us a careful witness to that history.

But of course, that alone does not make his message a gospel of good news, does it? Even if many people are ignorant that Christ died, well, at least an informed person, an educated person, we hope, does know that.

[15:34] Jews know, and they believe that Jesus Christ was crucified. Jesus of Nazareth. atheists know, they've read the history. Jesus was crucified.

But that doesn't make them Christian. No, it's the significance of the death of Jesus that's all important. It's the explanation of what these events mean that makes Luke's gospel a message, a message of good news.

And that, again, is what Luke's report offers us, as well as showing us that it was clearly an undeniable public event, Luke gives us also, secondly, a powerful explanation.

A powerful explanation because in the cross, we have not simply a careful witness to history, but we have a clear word to humanity. It's a word from heaven itself.

Now, if you read the four gospels, you'll very quickly see that each gospel preacher has his own particular style, just as all different preachers do. You know that here.

[16:43] We all preach the same message, but we do it in our own way. Phil Copeland, we're up here talking about this passage. It'd be going on about sandwiches and meat and things like that.

If it was Edward, well, great uncle Sebastian would make an appearance. And as for me, well, you know very well all my own eccentricities and oddities. But it's that way with the Bible writers, isn't it?

You see, Luke loves clarity and structure. I have a lot of respect for him. And Luke's also very interested in people, people of all types.

I think that perhaps is his physician's slant coming through. You've seen how he mentions many different people in this account already. The women of Jerusalem there, verse 28.

The two criminals, verse 39. Nobody else mentions those two things. But look at this careful structure here. Five paragraphs. And there's no meat and sandwiches here.

[17:38] Just five paragraphs. First two and the last two both start exactly the same way. And they have a movement in time or in place. Paragraph one, verse 26.

Leading Jesus away. Paragraph two, verse 32. Leading the criminals away. And paragraph four, verse 44. You've got the darkness drawing in.

The six hour. And then verse 50. Again, it's coming evening and Joseph is taking the body away as the day ends and the Sabbath approaches. And in the middle, the middle paragraph, right at the heart of it, verse 39 to 43, is a little cameo which is totally unique to Luke's gospel.

Nobody else has this. The two criminals. And in each of these four paragraphs, the first four paragraphs, you will see that there's a word of Jesus himself at its very heart.

Obviously not in the last paragraph because it's about Jesus' burial. But in the first four, there are. And these sayings are all unique to Luke's account. So clearly, Luke wants us very much to focus on them because what he is giving us here is Jesus' own explanatory words.

[18:50] A clear word to humanity. From the cross. giving a powerful explanation of the cross. The word of the cross definitively from Jesus' own mouth.

Isn't that worth listening to? I think so. We'll come back to that little central paragraph. Let's focus first of all on what these others tell us about what all of this means.

First look at Jesus' words there in verse 28 in the first paragraph. Because these words tell us that in the cross we see that God's punishment is real.

Weep for yourselves and for your children. Says Jesus to a generation who persist in rejecting the Son of God Himself. Rejecting their own King come to give them salvation.

All through Luke's Gospel if you read it you'll find that Jesus is warning this generation. This privileged generation of Israel that saw with their own eyes the Messiah in their midst.

[19:53] and heard His voice and yet were so perverse in rejecting the very cornerstone of God's promised kingdom. Seven times throughout His Gospel Luke records Jesus warning them explicitly of wrath and of judgment to come if they will not repent if they will not welcome Him as their Savior and Lord.

And in Luke chapter 21 if you read that Jesus foretells a coming terrible destruction of the city and of their temple if they don't. And what He says there is this listen Alas for women who are pregnant and for those nursing infants in those days for there will be great distress and wrath against this people.

And those are Jesus' words and that's you see that's what He's saying again here look at verses 29 and 30 Far better He says to be childless in that day than bear the added pain of seeing your children suffering for your sins at the hands of the Roman armies.

Far better for the mountains to fall on you than to suffer more of what's going to come. That is a terrible word is it not? But these are Jesus' words from the cross about the judgment of God which is real and which is terrible for those who insist on rejecting His gracious rule and His gracious mercy as the only Savior for sin.

Because friends to reject that is to spit in the face of God. And if you read the history books you'll see that everything that Jesus spoke of here did come to pass.

[21:45] In AD 70 the Romans under the emperor Titus sacked Jerusalem destroyed the temple and wreaked terrible suffering on the populace including the children.

God's punishment God's wrath on those who hate Him and spurn His Son is a real and terrible thing. That's the clear word to humanity that Jesus Himself speaks from the cross.

His warning of course was given directly to that generation of Israel. But all through His ministry Jesus is very clear that His words are also for every generation indeed for every person in this world.

God's love is the Lord Look at verse 30 again. Look at verse 30 and listen to me as I read some of the Apostle John's words from his vision of the coming of Jesus to judge this whole earth at the last day.

John sees men and women the world over who have rejected Jesus as these people had done and he hears them crying calling out to the mountains and the rocks and saying follow us and hide us

from the wrath of the Lamb.

[23 : 06] From the wrath of the Lamb. You see friends if the judgment in history on that generation for their rejection of Christ if it was real and terrible and it was if that is real verse 31 when the green tree of hope that is God's mercy is still abroad in the world before the end before the last day how much more terrible how much more terrible will be the wrath of God upon the rejecters of his Christ when all time for hope is now gone when only judgment remains.

Jesus' own first word from the cross is to tell us so clearly that God's judgment is real terrible and we see it in the cross in the terrible judgment that falls on Jesus himself as he the green tree of life becomes the one who bears the wrath of heaven in himself for all those that he came to save.

But we can't miss Jesus' warning that if we will not have him as that savior then how much more does that terror of his wrath and judgment await those who have refused him in a judgment that is not just temporal but everlasting.

That's his word to all humanity from the cross it's crystal clear isn't it? If you wholly refuse if you crucify the son of God then weep not for him but weep for yourself and for your children because one day you will discover just what a terrible terrible thing that is that you have done.

God's punishment is real it is terrible it is unavoidable for everyone who rejects the Lord Jesus Christ. But there's another word from the cross that Luke records for us in this second paragraph look at verse 34 because he tells us that in the cross we see also that God's pardon is real that real forgiveness is possible even for those who put the son of God on the cross.

[25 : 32] Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Astonishing words aren't they for someone being murdered by brutal soldiers.

It's the soldiers that Jesus utters this prayer for. We shouldn't be mistaken this doesn't contradict or negate what he's just said about judgment because many there did know exactly what they were doing purposefully.

As alas did much of the Jewish nation it seems who were quite unrepentant about it and remained so. And what Jesus said about their judgment did come about but look his words here do affirm that even amid that coming judgment on all men there can be pardoned even for the most terrible sin.

Because Jesus' very reason for coming was to call sinners to repentance and to forgive those sinners who do repent. For the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sin.

Luke 5 verse 24. And that's why you see in Acts chapter 3 in Luke's second book at Pentecost Peter proclaims Christ's resurrection and says to the people you acted in ignorance crucifying Jesus so repent repent of your sin.

[26 : 52] Notice ignorance is not an excuse it's culpable sinful ignorance but in God's mercy he says if you repent pardon can be real for you as well because in his death is a powerful word of forgiveness of sins.

How does Jesus' death offer forgiveness so powerfully? Well not through the world's mistaken understanding of power.

Look at verse 35. Some spectacular display of saving himself and saving others physically. That's what they taunted him to do. That's what they mocked him to do. But not that.

No. To save people from sin for eternity Jesus must stay on the cross and pay the terrible price the cost of sin. You see forgiveness forgiveness that brings real reconciliation from the rupture of a real relationship that can never be free can it?

It's always costly a terribly costly thing. You know that if you've ever really forgiven someone who has deep deep hurt and brought terrible pain to your life.

[28 : 08] you have to bear the pain you have to absorb the pain you have to wrestle with the pain overcome it yourself don't you? If there's ever going to be real forgiveness real reconciliation can't be real if we save ourselves from bearing the cost of that reconciliation so it is with God you see and the rupture that our sin has caused in our relationship with him God himself in the person of his own son must bear the wrath must pay the cost of our sins if ever we are going to receive forgiveness that's real and not just sham and because Jesus in his agony resisted the crescendo of temptation that there was to save himself which he could have done because he was obedient instead to the last that forgiveness God's pardon is real and is possible only because in our place just as in the Passover the perfect lamb died and shed his precious blood only because of that can we have redemption the forgiveness of sins but that's what we see at the cross of Jesus pardon is real and that's because you see look at verse 46 as Jesus last word proclaims in the cross

God's plan and purpose is at last realized that's a cry isn't it of great accomplishment in fact in John's gospel he records Jesus actually saying it is finished it is accomplished but Jesus words here recorded by Luke are from Psalm 31 and they carry exactly the same meaning don't they King David in that Psalm is proclaiming how God will deliver him from all his enemies and bless his faithful people here's his words into your hands I commit my spirit they scheme together against me they plot to take my life but I trust in you oh Lord my times are in your hand be strong take courage all you who wait for the Lord you see what Jesus is saying including that Psalm he is saying I've done your will I've been faithful to the last and now I commit myself into your hands knowing that you will honor me to bless all who are waiting in faith for your salvation and

Luke also records for us the great affirmation and the vindication of that perfect offering of the Son of God which comes from both heaven and earth you see verse 44 and 45 there's vindication isn't there direct heavenly revelation the darkness the miraculous darkness in the middle of the day that the prophet Joel and others foresaw and foretold that would mark the coming day of the Lord and the temple curtain do you see that barred sinful man's way into the holiest place the presence of God that too is torn away now there is no barrier all may go in because the repeated sacrifices of atonement that were needed always to enter anywhere near the presence of God they are now fulfilled forever in the sacrifice of Jesus himself the Lamb of God and God's glory now breaks out of his temple breaks out from Jerusalem to carry its saving light to the very ends of the earth to all peoples peoples like us sitting in this room

God's purpose of salvation has been realized it's been fulfilled in the cross of Jesus Christ and that is what's being affirmed by heaven itself in these mighty signs and it's also being affirmed on the earth look at verse 47 in the centurion his confession certainly this man was righteous praises God and verse 48 likewise in the people's conviction beating their beating their breasts in shame Jesus had said hadn't he repeatedly the scriptures must be fulfilled in me that he was numbered among the transgressors and here he is the perfect son of God crucified between two criminals among the transgressors to tell us with certainty with utter certainty but although his punishment is real and sin must and will be judged through

Christ's death for sins God's pardon is also real for every sinner who does repent that's God's clear word to humanity that's spoken through this careful witness to history that Luke gives us at the cross of Christ that's what it makes his message a gospel it's a word of joy it's a word of hope it's a word of wonder it's a word of love God has fulfilled his promise but what does it mean really for you and me for us sitting here today that's the real question isn't it well look at this central paragraph verses 39 to 43 the very heart of Luke's account because there you see we see that none of this is distinct from us even though it is a story about time and eternity about God and man about God's great purposes for the whole world all of that is true but Luke's message is unmistakable that above all it is also for every single human being every one of us he shows us the cross as a public event yes he's given us a powerful explanation on

[34 : 02] Jesus own lips of exactly what it is here about the cross of Jesus as a personal experience as a personal experience you see in the cross we can find a certain welcome to heaven or of course we can reject it forever look at verse 39 these verses reveal an extraordinary picture don't they of the great division at the cross of Jesus forces on all people one criminal rails at him literally blasphemes him while the other wonderfully receives him and blesses Jesus as his savior do you see that see that first criminal he shows the pride the pride of autonomous man who has no fear of God despite his dire situation save yourself and us if you're the Christ he sneers save my skin and I'll believe in you

Jesus is what he's saying this is a man who wants rescue from the consequences of his sins of course as we all do but crucially he does not want rescue from the cause of his sin which is his own evil heart his own rebellious heart there's no sign of penitence is there he's scornful he's proud to the very last a great example isn't he of so many people who want God to save them who want a sort of fairy godmother kind of God a get out of jail free kind of God for all the scrapes in life heal my body God sort out my love life God get me out of this mess God anything but change my evil heart and corrupted mind oh God such a common view of God isn't it if God is even in people's minds at all save my skin

God and maybe I'll do something for you imagine if God did do that imagine if he offered a gospel of no consequences for sin and for selfishness a God who said live as you please live as selfishly as you like and I'll sort it all out so there's no consequences none forever what kind of world would that

be if all moral consequences are eliminated if every selfish ideal of the human heart can reign utterly freely and utterly autonomously that was the world that the serpent offered man wasn't it right in the beginning at Eden and it turned out of course not to be paradise turned out in fact to bring the end of paradise on earth turned out to be the world that gives us our daily news day after day after day in this world that we live in and friends the continuation of that forever would indeed be hell on earth would it not the reign of unremitting infinite horrific unjust justice no you see the salvation that Jesus offers on the cross is not that it is the very antithesis of that and the second criminal came to see that look at verse 40 seems at first as Matthew's gospel tells us that he also scorned

Jesus but clearly his experience at Calvary changed him was it Jesus' demeanor was it that prayer of forgiveness I'm sure it was everything that he saw and he heard but through the cross somehow this man came to understand his own sin look at verse 41 he knew that his punishment was just and right for his crimes and he made no plea to be saved from that no prayer to save his skin but rather what does he do he asked Jesus to save his soul Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom those words express the death of pride don't they the dawn of real penitence he confesses his sin he throws himself on Christ as his savior and king Lord remember me that's a great cry isn't it of true saving faith remember the songs in chapter 1 of Luke's gospel when eyes are opened to the wonder of the gospel unfolding

Mary saying God has helped Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers Zachariah he's shown the mercy promised to our fathers to remember his holy covenant and here we have from this dying sinner a vision of a personal experience Jesus remember me remember me can hardly not recall the words of Jesus the very night before can we in the upper room about his coming death and that new covenant sealed in his own blood this is my body which is given for you do this as a remembrance of me and this man this criminal would never share the Lord's supper on this earth would he but in his dying breath he understood its message and he truly ate and drank of its truth remember me Lord let me also share in your glorious kingdom and he received didn't he then and there a certain promise of God's welcome to paradise restored the cross and all its power to say became real for him became powerful to him and he received from Jesus himself a powerful absolute assurance of pardon of acceptance with God of admission to his kingdom forever and ever you see friends do you see what Luke's telling us here in his gospel he's saying that the cross of

[40 : 25] Jesus can become in fact it must become a personal experience for every one of us because it's through the cross and it's only through the cross that we can find a certain welcome to heaven even if our life has been as black and as bleak with sin and guilt that deserves punishment not only from this world's authorities but also at the bar of heaven's ultimate justice and even if we're never going to have anything ever to offer back to God to serve God because our life is almost at its very end if ever there was evidence that somebody is saved by grace and by grace alone and by Christ alone with nothing to offer God then surely it's this passage here but in the cross we can find a certain welcome to heaven wherever we are and whatever we've done not that is escape from mortal suffering or death or indeed the punishment for earthly crimes this man was punished and he did die but something far greater deliverance from the fear of death deliverance from the terror of God's judgment ultimately on our sins as the old chorus says so simply but so truly there is a way back to God from the dark pass of sin there's a door that is open and all may go in at Calvary's cross is where it begins when you come as a sinner to Jesus and when you say to him

Lord Jesus remember me remember me when you come into your kingdom you may go in but you must go in and the only way in is bowing it's kneeling at the cross at Jesus feet you see the door is low to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ you have to stoop to enter it you cannot enter his kingdom proudly you cannot walk tall into the kingdom of God you cannot go in unbroken only bowed low in penitent faith only confessing your sin only crying out Lord Jesus remember me remember even me there were two guilty sinners crucified with Jesus but only one was saved and Luke means us to ponder that to never forget that J.C.

Ryle said one thief was saved that no sinner might despair but only one that no sinner might presume to the one the word of the cross was folly he scorned it he blasphemed but to the other it was the power of God unto salvation it was the pledge of life everlasting and friends my question this morning is what is it to you what is it to you the word of the crucified savior Luke has given us

so clearly the public witness to history is expanded so clearly God's powerful word to all humanity the cross of Jesus Christ the son of God and it is all because he wants you and me to have so certainly Christ's personal welcome to heaven it's true none can ever presume on the mercy of God but it's also true none need ever despair of that mercy if you will kneel at the cross of Jesus Christ if you will call out in faith and trust Lord Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom he will give you the same promise the same assurance as he gave that man so I'm asking you will you do that will you do that today you can do that right now in a moment because we're coming to the Lord's table to hear his wonderful words of redeeming grace and we're going to sing together in trusting faith see the bread see the wine Lord remember me Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom let's pray together pass me not oh gentle savior hear my humble cry while on others thou art calling do not pass me by savior savior hear my humble cry while on others thou art calling do not pass me by we trust you Lord Jesus and so in your mercy will you hear our prayer will you remember us also when you come into your glorious kingdom of life forever on that great day Lord remember us for Jesus sake amen