

Remembering

“Remember me” - a thief turns to Jesus

Foundation

Bible passage: Luke 23.35-43

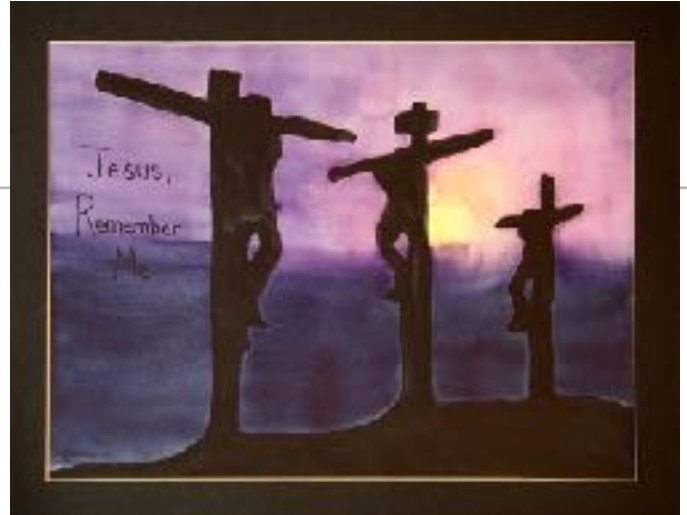
All four gospels tell us that when Jesus was crucified there were two others put to death at the same time. They were robbers and although we don't know the details of their crimes the Romans at that time put such criminals to death. Matthew suggests that at first the two mocked Jesus along with many others (Mtt 27.44) but one of them changed his tune.

Luke, who compiled his gospel from eyewitness accounts, explains what happened later. One of the robbers mocked Jesus along with many of the onlookers, rulers and soldiers. But the other robber rebuked his fellow criminal and then asked Jesus to remember Him.

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

In these few brief words, we see four important things.

- First the robber knew that he had done wrong and was being justly punished (v41).
- Secondly, he knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong. The crowds and rulers had wanted Jesus dead because of what He had been teaching. But this robber, who knows he himself has done wrong, also realises that Jesus has not.
- Thirdly, he knew that the sign above Jesus' which read “this the king of the Jews”, though written to mock Jesus, was true.
- Fourthly, though Jesus was dying the thief believed Jesus was entering His Kingdom. So he pleaded: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”.



We don't know what exactly the man meant by “remember me” but it is an example to us of faith. He believed something about Jesus which others did not, and he acted on that belief, asking that Jesus remember Him.

What makes this incident truly extraordinary was what Jesus said next. Here was a man who was dying because of his crimes, as far as we know he knew nothing else about Jesus, he had not lived a good life and he knew it. As his life ebbed away there was nothing he could do except turn to Jesus.

There are many wonderful promises in the Bible, but none is so simple and so clear as what Jesus said to the thief on the cross *“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise”*.

This shines a spotlight on the amazing nature of God's grace; the man who could do nothing except recognise His sin and Jesus' lordship and turn to Jesus for help received the most wonderful promise of all. Saving faith is not about what we do, but about recognising our spiritual need and that Jesus is the King and so turning to Him for help.



Jesus died as a criminal but is a King. Unlike others the thief saw that Jesus is a King and turned to Him in simple faith.