

The Other Thief On The Cross

Introduction. We often hear of the thief Christ saved, but there was also another thief. This thief's true character is plainly revealed by his experience on the cross. Man's true nature is often manifested and magnified by crises of life and this man's words and attitude identify him as an enemy of God (Luke 23:33, 39).

I. He Had Sold Himself To Satan

- A. The transaction took place long before he ever came to the cross (Ecclesiastes 12:1; cp. Psalm 34:11; Proverbs 4:1).
 - 1. Admittedly, others may have failed him.
 - a) His parents (Ephesians 6:4).
 - b) His friends (1 Corinthians 15:33).
 - 2. Men do not serve God in life only to lash out against Him in death.
- B. In choosing Satan, he had rejected God (Romans 6:16).
 - 1. He was not ready to live a godly life, but was he ready to be lost?
 - 2. He did not know that Satan's demands are greater than God's.
 - 3. He agreed to a terrible consequence (Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8).
- C. Man has a choice, but this choice leads to bondage — the good kind of bondage (Romans 1:1; Ephesians 3:1; 4:1).

II. He Had Hardened His Heart

- A. The instrument used to harden his heart was sin (Hebrews 3:13; James 1:14-15).
- B. The effect of sin in his life:
 - 1. Shame and suffering (Genesis 2:25; 3:10; 1 John 2:28).
 - 2. Irrationalism.
 - a) He could not fear God (Luke 23:40).
 - b) He could not hear a plea for righteousness (Luke 23:40; Acts 28:27).
 - c) He could not see his sinfulness (Luke 23:41).
- C. Satan had prepared him for his service (Acts 8:23; 2 Timothy 2:26; 2 Peter 2:19).

III. He Had Rebelled And Was Doomed

- A. "Save thyself and us."
 - 1. He wanted to save his life, not his soul.
 - 2. He had no perception of his need of salvation from sin.
 - 3. He wanted to save his life only to continue in service to Satan.
- B. Men in a chaotic condition want to be saved.
 - 1. Men plead with God — He spares them — they forget God (Judges 3:7-12).
 - 2. The goodness of God should lead to repentance (Romans 2:4).
- C. He was selfish, yet denied himself everlasting life.
 - 1. Christ had saved one thief and would surely save this one too (Luke 23:42-43).
 - 2. The thief rejected the saving power of Jesus, much like the Jews would do several years later (Acts 13:44-46).

D. A lot today will spend eternity with the thief for the same cause — they reject the power of the gospel (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Hebrews 4:12).

Conclusion. The thief died without hope because sin had consumed him (Ephesians 2:12). The thief died in rebellion and God will not save man in rebellion (John 12:48; 1 Corinthians 15:55-56; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). He never had another chance (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27). He could have had a victory in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14), but what he did not accept can be yours now.