

Lessons Taught By Thieves
by Jack Thompson – 11/10/1974

INTRODUCTION

1. Lk. 23:33-43
2. The central act in the history of humanity is the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ Jesus
3. Many important lessons around the cross.
4. But, what about the thieves: Are there any lessons we might learn from them???

BODY

1. THEY TEACH THE NECESSITY OF SORROW FOR SIN AND REPENTANCE:
 - A. 2nd thief quick to state they were receiving what they deserved. (Vs. 44)
 - B. Man must realize his sinful condition requires the cleansing blood of Christ.
 - C. Until heart is convicted of sin, TRANSGRESSION OF GOD'S LAW, it will never be humbled to OBEY.
 1. 1st thief – Shows most are not willing to make this admission, ONE REVILED THE LORD, SAVE US
 2. MANY TODAY HAVE THIS ATTITUDE:
 - a. “Why doesn't God do something about my problem?”
 - b. Many base their faith on “What has Jehovah done for me lately?”
 - c. Unless God pays their bills, solves all their problems – NO HUMILITY ON THEIR PART.
 - D. Yet, the penitent thief saw himself for what he was – just punishment for his deeds.
 - E. Rom. 6:23 – Wages of sin is death.
2. THEY TEACH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN IN THE EXERCISE OF FREE WILL:
 - A. No one can make us believe. Cannot force us to determine what we will do about salvation.
 - B. Each thief had same opportunity to confess Christ.
 - C. Only one did, Why?? Because we are free moral agents
 - D. YOU HAVE ABILITY TO CHOOSE – INTELLECT TO KNOW...
 1. Some teach Holy Spirit as a force that directly influences men to obey, accept Christ
 2. Some say God sends dreams, visions, still small voices to move individuals to salvation.
 3. THESE DESTROY THE FREE WILL OF MAN,
 - E. God sent His Son – Word Written – ALL HAVE SAME OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.
 1. Dreams, visions, etc. – God would be a respecter of persons for the one who did not see or feel.
 - F. Both thieves looked at same evidence. One was moved, the other not.
 1. We must examine the evidence today – WORD OF GOD
 - a. Some will accept, obey; some will not - How sad!!

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- b. Jn. 20:30 – Examine His Credentials.
3. THEY TEACH THE SOVEREIGN POWER OF CHRIST:
- A. Christ was still living at this point.
 - B. His testament was not yet in effect . Heb 9:16
 - C. By His sovereign power He made a place for the thief
 - D. By His sovereign power He has made a place for you and me.
 - E. Then – a special degree; BUT the same authority has given a plan of salvation for all me to.
 - F. We would not want to rob Him of his power to act then, nor would we want to deny Him the RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHAT MAN MUST DO TO OBEY NOW.
 - G. When His will, testament, became effective at His death, then it became law for all men to follow CANNOT EXPECT EXCEPTION.
4. THEY TEACH THE LESSON THAT WE MUST STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD:
- A. 1. Death-bed salvation? Is that the lesson of the penitent thief?
 - B. 2. Consider the circumstances (His example hard to follow): He professed faith when seemingly no OTHER VOICE was willing to so do.
 - 1. Disciples not ready for such a confession.
 - 2. Peter denied Him, Judas betrayed Him.
 - 3. World crying “Dome down if you are the Son of God.
 - 4. YET: This man confessed faith in Him.
 - a. Note: Mt. 27:42 – Do what we want and we will obey.
 - C. Is this the kind of man to put off confession until the time of death?
 - 1. The faith which will act when opportunity us presented to respond.
 - D. NO – NOT DEATH-BED REPENTANCE. A response when this man was convinced of Sonship of Christ.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Some desire to use the thief as a pattern of salvation – since, they claim, he was not baptized. (Would be difficult to prove.)
- 2. He lived and died before Christ’s will became effective (Heb. 9:16)
- 3. NOW CHRIST’S WILL IS LAW – WHAT DOES IT REQUIRE???
- A. God’s plan to save. — Sovereign power of Christ.