

## **When Being Good Is Not Enough**

### **Series: How God Changes Our Attitudes**

**What reason do most people give why they think they will get into heaven?**

**Christians publicly proclaim that we are needy, we cannot save ourselves.**

### **What Does The Bible Say?**

6 Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner—anyone the people requested. 7 One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary who had committed murder in an uprising. 8 The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual.

9 “Would you like me to release to you this ‘King of the Jews’?” Pilate asked. 10 (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.) 11 But at this point the leading

priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. 12 Pilate asked them, “Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?”

13 They shouted back, “Crucify him!”

14 “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?”

But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

15 So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. (Mark 15:6–15 NLT)

**Barabbas was not good enough for Jesus to die in his place.**

32 Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. 33 When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

35 The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” 36 The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. 37 They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” 38 A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.” (Luke 23:32–38 NLT)

41 The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. 42 “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him! 43 He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” 44 Even the

revolutionaries who were crucified with him ridiculed him in the same way. (Matthew 27:41–44 NLT)

**These two criminals were not good enough for Jesus to die alongside of them.**

39 One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”

40 But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? 41 We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” 43 And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:39–43 NLT)

**You are not good enough for Jesus to die in your place.**

**How Can You Obey?**

23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. (Romans 3:23–24 NLT)

**Understand that Christianity is the only faith in the world where you can go to heaven based on what God did for you instead of what you did.**

**Additional Notes:**

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at [www.crosswaveschurch.com/host](http://www.crosswaveschurch.com/host). Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

**Explore:**

Today's Talking Theology comes from Forlines, F. L. (1975). *Biblical Systematics: A Study of the Christian System of Life*

and Thought (p. 56). Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications.

### **Explore:**

23:33 The place called the Skull. As usual Luke omitted the Aramaic term found in his Markan source (cf. 22:39; see Introduction 3). The word for skull in Greek is Kranion; in Aramaic, Golgotha (Mark 15:22; Matt 27:33; John 19:17); and in Latin, Calvariae, i.e., Calvary. The place probably was so-called because it looked like a skull. This is most likely the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. In Jesus' day this site was outside the walled city.

Stein, R. H. (1992). Luke (Vol. 24, p. 588). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

### **Explore:**

23:33. Three men carried crossbeams to Calvary. All arrived at the deathly destination, aptly named Golgotha, “Place of the Skull.” Modern tourists join the pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to find Golgotha. Nothing proves or disproves this ancient tradition. Ironically as Jesus was ushered into his glory on the mount of crucifixion, two criminals claimed the position on the right and the left, positions over which his disciples had argued so vehemently. Meanwhile, the disciples had fled the area, afraid of being identified with this criminal. Two thieves took up crosses and followed Jesus to Golgotha, while his chosen disciples hid in fear.

Butler, T. C. (2000). Luke (Vol. 3, p. 392). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

**Explore:**

36–37. After the taunts of the rulers, Roman soldiers say much the same: If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. Their offer of wine vinegar fulfills the Greek translation of Psalm 69:21, in which the righteous sufferer is given vinegar for his thirst. Even though this wine was apparently drunk by soldiers, their offer is meant to ridicule Jesus.

Black, M. C. (1995). Luke (Lk 23:36–37). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub.

### **Explore:**

At first those crucified with Jesus urged him, ‘If you are the Christ, save yourself and us’ (v. 39). It is strange to consider that, if he had saved himself, they and all mankind would have been lost. Matthew and Mark record that both criminals rebuked Jesus. ‘Even the robbers who were crucified with him reviled



him with the same thing' (Matt. 27:44). Only Luke points out that later one of them came to faith in him.

The second thief rebuked the first, pointing out that the thieves were suffering 'justly' but that the Lord 'has done nothing wrong' (v. 41). The thief knew, as did Pilate, that Jesus was innocent. Next he asked a special favour: 'Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' It seems surprising that the thief had the eyes of faith to see the true identity of Jesus. He knew that, even though Jesus looked helpless, he was a king. His lifestyle had been unlike that of any royal person that has ever lived. The thief could see no fine clothing (the Lord would have been naked); he could see no visible following—his friends had long since fled for their lives. His only crown, such as it was, was made of thorns. Yet the thief recognized his true identity.

Childress, G. (2006). *Opening up Luke's Gospel* (p. 207).

Leominster: Day One Publications.

## **Explore:**

23:44–49. Luke noted four things that occurred at the time Jesus died. First, two symbolic events took place while Jesus was on the cross. Darkness came over the whole land for three hours, from the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.). Jesus had already told those who arrested Him that “this is your hour —when darkness reigns” (22:53). Darkness was reigning because of His crucifixion. The other symbolic event was the tearing in two of the curtain of the temple, which separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple. The curtain divided people from the place V 2, p 263 where God had localized His presence. The tearing from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51) symbolized the fact that now, because of Jesus’ death, people had freer access to God as they no longer had to go through the

sacrificial system (cf. Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; 3:12). Jesus was the only Sacrifice needed to enable people to have a proper relationship with God.

Martin, J. A. (1985). Luke. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 262–263). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

### **Explore:**

It was providential that Jesus was crucified between the two thieves, for this gave both of them equal access to the Saviour.

Both could read Pilate's superscription, "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," and both could watch Him as He graciously gave His life for the sins of the world.

The one thief imitated the mockery of the religious leaders and asked Jesus to rescue him from the cross, but the other thief had different ideas. He may have reasoned, “If this Man is indeed the Christ, and if He has a kingdom, and if He has saved others, then He can meet my greatest need which is salvation from sin. I am not ready to die!” It took courage for this thief to defy the influence of his friend and the mockery of the crowd, and it took faith for him to trust a dying King! When you consider all that he had to overcome, the faith of this thief is astounding.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 275). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

### **Explore:**

Two criminals, possibly members of Barabbas’ band, were crucified on Jesus’ right and left. The message was intentional—

Jesus was a criminal among criminals. Unwittingly, the intentional disgrace fulfilled Jesus' Upper-Room prophecy in which he applied Isaiah 53:12, the final word of Isaiah 53, to himself: "It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching fulfillment" (Luke 22:37). Jesus fulfilled every line of Isaiah 53.

Hughes, R. K. (1998). Luke: that you may know the truth (p. 378). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

### **Explore:**

We, like the thief, have one more prayer. And we, like the thief, pray.

And we, like the thief, hear the voice of grace. Today you will be with me in my kingdom.

And we, like the thief, are able to endure the pain knowing he'll soon take us home.

Lucado, M. (1999). He still moves stones. Nashville: Word Pub.

### **Question 1 of 5**

Do most of your friends and acquaintances believe in heaven?

What do they think it's like?

### **Question 2 of 5**

How do most of the people you know believe someone "makes it" to heaven? What is on their "list"?

### **Question 3 of 5**

How did one of the thieves crucified with Jesus go so quickly from reviling the Lord to asking for a reservation in paradise?

Doesn't this sound like a contradiction?

### **Question 4 of 5**

Do you see yourself on the cross, naked, desolate, hopeless, and estranged? Is this insulting or accurate? Explain your answer.

### **Question 5 of 5**

Do you agree that like the thief, you are able to endure the pain knowing that one day Christ will take you home”? Why or why not?