

Face to Face with Jesus

Pt. 1 – Thief on the Cross

Lk. 23:39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve."

The steps to relationship with Jesus:

Confess my guilt.

Lk. 23:41 "We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve."

Rom. 3:23 ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

1 Jn. 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives.

Confession of guilt comes before forgiveness.

Confess Jesus' innocence.

Lk. 23:41 "We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Declare my faith in Jesus

Lk. 23:42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

Three elements of faith in the thief's statement:

The spirit does not die with the body.

Jesus has a kingdom.

Jesus can help me.

Result: I am accepted and forgiven by Jesus.

Lk. 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise."

Mt. 20:1-15 "God's kingdom is like an estate manager who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. They agreed on a wage of a dollar a day, and went to work. "Later, about nine o'clock, the manager saw some other men hanging around the town square unemployed. He told them to go to work in his vineyard

and he would pay them a fair wage. They went. "He did the same thing at noon, and again at three o'clock. At five o'clock he went back and found still others standing around. He said, 'Why are you standing around all day doing nothing?' "They said, 'Because no one hired us.' "He told them to go to work in his vineyard. "When the day's work was over, the owner of the vineyard instructed his foreman, 'Call the workers in and pay them their wages. Start with the last hired and go on to the first.' "Those hired at five o'clock came up and were each given a dollar. When those who were hired first saw that, they assumed they would get far more. But they got the same, each of them one dollar. Taking the dollar, they groused angrily to the manager, 'These last workers put in only one easy hour, and you just made them equal to us, who slaved all day under a scorching sun.' "He replied to the one speaking for the rest, 'Friend, I haven't been unfair. We agreed on the wage of a dollar, didn't we? So take it and go. I decided to give to the one who came last the same as you. Can't I do what I want with my own money? (The Message)

Principle: I am never too far gone. It's never too late to follow Jesus.

Who is a candidate for God's forgiveness and grace?

Everyone.