**There Were Three Crosses**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday March 20th, 2022

Text: Luke 23:33

### Intro

1. Calvary *(Latin calvaria: “The Skull;” Heb. Golgotha: “A Skull;” Gr. kranion: “The Skull”)*
   1. Inspires sermons and songs, and stirs our emotions at its mention.
   2. The word is found one time in the N.T. in Lk. 23:33 (KJV & NKJV).
   3. NASB *Lk. 23:33* gives Calvary’s translation: “The Skull” *(G2898 kranion).*
   4. Mt. 27:33; Mk. 15:22; Jn. 19:17: Three gospels record the Hebrew word “Golgotha.”
      1. *Golgotha (G1115) is H1538: “gulgoleth”:* A skull *(G2898 kranion).*
   5. *(Apparently Golgotha doesn’t have the poetic ring as far as inspiration for songs goes!)*
2. There were three crosses at Calvary (Golgotha)
   1. Mt. 27:38; Mk. 15:27; Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:18: All four gospels record the three crosses!
3. Each cross of Calvary represents a different death scene with its own lesson!

#### The Cross of Impenitence

* 1. This is the picture of one dying ***in*** sin. Over this cross could be written 3 words…
  2. Lawlessness
     1. Mt. 27:38; Mk. 15:27; Lk. 23:33: He was a robber, a criminal
     2. He lived outside of God’s laws as well as man’s, and was now to die a thief.
     3. He showed no remorse for his actions and remained impenitent to the end.
  3. Hardness
     1. Mt. 27:44: He hurled the same insults as the Jewish leaders (27:41-43).
     2. He hardened his heart against the Savior of the world dying unjustly.
     3. Despite the closeness to God’s love, pain wracking his body, and eternity staring him in the face, his only appeal was one of contempt!
     4. Lk. 23:39: “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!”
     5. His last recorded words were “abuse” against the Son of God – impenitence!
  4. Temporal (Carnal)
     1. Lk. 23:39: He wasn’t thinking of his soul and eternity, but the saving of his body (carnal minded).
     2. He wasn’t thinking of his soul’s salvation but temporal salvation.
     3. He wanted saving from the cross, but on his terms – “Abused,” and demanded.
     4. He remained impenitent.
  5. The Lesson:
     1. Jesus never promised to save us from the cross, but through His cross – Eph. 2:16
     2. We cannot be saved on our own terms, but must submit to Christ – Heb. 5:9
     3. The impenitent & lawless heart will die in its sins – Mt. 7:21-23; Lk. 13:3; Mk. 16:16; Jn. 8:24
     4. Saints should suffer for being Christ-like (for being Christians), not as lawbreakers – I Pet. 4:14-16
  6. The death of the impenitent heart is a picture of judgment and eternal punishment!

#### The Cross of Repentance

* 1. This is the picture of one dying ***to*** sin.
     1. He was also a “robber,” a “criminal” – *Mt. 27:38; Mk. 15:27; Lk. 23:33*
     2. In the beginning he also insulted Christ – *Mt. 27:43-44*
     3. But he had a repentant heart, and over this cross could be written 3 words…
  2. Belief
     1. Lk. 23:40-41: He rebuked the impenitent thief out of righteous indignation!
     2. He is the first recorded to vindicate the Lord (Pilate declared Him innocent but sentenced Him to death by crucifixion).
     3. He rebuked the other robber, showing he believed in and feared God!
  3. Remorse
     1. Lk. 23:40-41: He admitted guilt and accepted the punishment as just.
     2. He bore no hatred for the authorities (those who sentenced him).
     3. He bore no hatred for God.
     4. He admitted his own guilt and the justice of his execution.
  4. Eternal
     1. Lk. 23:42: Unlike the thief that thought of temporal salvation, this man looked to Jesus for eternal salvation.
     2. His words expressed his belief not only in God, but also in His Son!
     3. He made no demands, but called out to the Lord for mercy.
     4. Lk. 23:43: He received an eternal promise: “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”
        1. Lived and died under Old Law, before commandment to be baptized.
        2. Jesus rose from the dead then gave command for baptism – Mk. 16:16
        3. Jesus had to die first to nail the Old Law to the cross – Col. 2:13-14
        4. *Cannot be used as it is today to prove salvation without baptism!*
  5. The Lesson:
     1. Must believe in Christ and fear God (Eccl. 12:13-14).
     2. Make no demands, or try to be saved our way, but submit to Christ’s authority.
        1. Today, His authority says to “Believe and be baptized” *(Mk. 16:16).*
     3. Accept responsibility for our actions and sins, and turn to Christ! (Acts 2:38)
  6. The death of a repentant heart is the picture of pardon and eternal reward!

#### The Cross of Sacrifice

* 1. This is the picture of one dying ***for*** sin. Over His cross could be written…
  2. Sinless
     1. II Cor. 5:21: Enough to make us ashamed of our former lives of sin.
     2. For us He endured the mockery, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the humiliation, and the cross of criminals, the Just for unjust! (I Pet. 3:18)
     3. He died in our stead!
  3. Forgiveness
     1. Lk. 23:34: He prayed for forgiveness for His accusers and abusers.
     2. Eph. 1:7: He shed His blood to grant man forgiveness of sin!
  4. Love
     1. Jn. 3:16: The motivation for such sacrifice: Love!
     2. Rom. 5:8: Love is sacrificial, and that day Christ demonstrated the love of God.
  5. The Lesson:
     1. In Christ is forgiveness, love, and hope; No other name! – Acts 4:10, 12
  6. The death of Christ is a picture of the love of God & the eternal hope of man!

## Conclusion

1. The crosses of the thieves demonstrate two attitudes:
   1. The **impenitent** person who hardens his heart in the presence of Christ.
   2. The **penitent** person who breaks down and submits in the presence of Christ.
2. When we look at the center cross (Jn. 19:18):
   1. We see **“there is salvation in no one else”** – Acts 4:12
   2. We see an example of humility and obedience – Phil. 2:5, 8
3. Jesus died for us and offers mercy and pardon and an eternal reward (Rev. 22:12)!
4. We must believe and confess our sins, repent and obey the word of the Lord! *(Heb. 5:9)*
5. From Christ's side one person may go to Heaven and another to Hell*…(Mt. 25:31-46)*
6. Which side of the cross are you on?
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!