

## **Gospel Truths of the Crucifixion**

### ***Luke 23:32–49***

**32** *“Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.*

**33** *And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.*

**34** *And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ And they cast lots to divide his garments.*

**35** *And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!’*

**36** *The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine*  
**37** *and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’*

**38** *There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’*

**39** *One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’*

**40** *But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?’*

**41** *And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’*

**42** *And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’*

**43** *And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’*

**44** *It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour,*

**45** *while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.*

*46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this he breathed his last.*

*47 Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent!'*

*48 And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts.*

*49 And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things."*

## **Introduction**

There has never been a darker moment in human history than the scene before us in this passage.

I had the privilege of preaching the Triumphal Entry a few months back, and I pointed out how that event was deeply oxymoronic. The crowds hailed Jesus as though He were on His way to be publicly crowned as King, yet less than a week later many of those same voices were crying out for His death.

And the crucifixion itself continues that same oxymoronic theme.

The Jewish leaders and Roman soldiers seized this moment as an opportunity to make a mockery of Jesus and of His ministry. They were not content simply to execute Him as they would any other criminal. In their bloodthirst and in what I might call their Jesus derangement syndrome, they turned this execution into a mock coronation of a king.

But little did they know, what they intended as mockery, God intended as a divine coronation of the King of kings.

When I sat down to divide this text, I found at least four different sermons I would love to preach. But I do not have that option. As I mentioned in *A View From My Study* earlier this week, I spent the week at the beach with my three boys. This is not the kind of text you normally want to marinate on while on vacation at the beach. It is dark. It is dreadful. As I said, this is the worst of the worst events in human history. This is depravity at its climax.

But as I continued to read through the text, I noticed sparkling jewels of gospel truth shining through the darkness.

And this morning, I want to hold those jewels up before you.

It is my prayer that we will adorn ourselves with them in such a way that we continue to look upon them and find strength for our faith every single day.

As we unpack this passage, I pray that we will see the sovereignty and providence of God in a whole new way—so clearly that we walk away with an unwavering confidence that, no matter the circumstance, **God's got it.**

I pray that we will see our worst afflictions as nothing compared to what the Suffering Servant endured on our behalf, and that we will find strength to endure knowing that He is our **Great Sympathizer.**

I pray that the Holy Spirit will remind us of the simplicity of saving grace—how that grace appeared the hour we first believed. And perhaps, if it

pleases the Lord, He will grant sinners among us to see the King of glory and experience that same simple saving grace.

And lastly, I pray that we will find rest from our labors, knowing that because of what Jesus accomplished on that cross, our salvation work is finished.

May God feed us this morning from this text.

## **I. God's Got This**

One of the first jewels that shines through the darkness of the crucifixion is the absolute sovereignty of God.

Peter preached in **Acts 2:23**:

“this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”

Do not miss the force of that verse.

Jesus was crucified by the hands of **lawless men**. They were morally responsible. They were wicked. They acted out of hatred, envy, and unbelief.

And yet at the very same time, Jesus was delivered up according to the **definite plan and foreknowledge of God**.

What looked like chaos was actually precision.

What looked like evil triumphing was actually God ruling.

What looked like the unraveling of the ministry of Christ was actually the execution of the eternal decree of God.

The cross is not a tragedy spiraling out of control. It is the sovereign plan of God unfolding exactly as He decreed.

Let me show you how many prophecies are being fulfilled in this passage.

### **A. Numbered with Transgressors**

#### **Luke 23:32–33**

“Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him... one on his right and one on his left.”

#### **Prophecy: Isaiah 53:12**

“He was numbered with the transgressors...”

Jesus, though sinless, is executed alongside criminals. This is not incidental. This is the fulfillment of the Suffering Servant being counted among the guilty.

### **B. Interceding for His Enemies**

#### **Luke 23:34**

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

#### **Prophecy: Isaiah 53:12**

“He... makes intercession for the transgressors.”

Even while being crucified, Jesus is acting as mediator—praying for those who are actively murdering Him.

### **C. Division of His Garments**

#### **Luke 23:34**

“And they cast lots to divide his garments.”

#### **Prophecy: Psalm 22:18**

“They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

This is one of the most precise and literal fulfillments of prophecy in the crucifixion narrative.

### **D. Mockery by the People and Rulers**

#### **Luke 23:35**

“And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him...”

#### **Prophecy: Psalm 22:6–8**

“But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

‘He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!’”

The exact language and tone of the mockery echo Psalm 22 almost word for word.

## **E. Mockery by Soldiers**

### **Luke 23:36–37**

“The soldiers also mocked him... ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’”

### **Prophecy: Psalm 69:19–21**

“You know my reproach, and my shame and my dishonor; my foes are all known to you.

Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair.

I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none.

They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.”

Both civil authorities and religious authorities participate in mocking the Messiah. Universal rejection is part of the prophetic picture.

## **F. Darkness Over the Land**

### **Luke 23:44–45**

“It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed.”

**Prophecy: Amos 8:9**

“And on that day,” declares the Lord God, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.”

This darkness is not merely atmospheric. It is theological. It is a sign of divine judgment.

**G. The Cry of Trust**

**Luke 23:46**

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”

**Prophecy: Psalm 31:5**

“Into your hand I commit my spirit...”

Jesus dies quoting Scripture, identifying Himself as the righteous sufferer who entrusts Himself fully to God.

**H. The Whole Scene: Isaiah 52–53 Unfolding in Real Time**

The entire passage is the Suffering Servant scene of **Isaiah 52:13–53:12** unfolding before our eyes:

- Innocent suffering

- Numbered with transgressors
- Bearing sin
- Rejected and despised
- Silent endurance
- Stricken by God

So let me say it plainly:

**What looks like chaos at the cross is actually precision. Every detail—His suffering, His silence, the mockery, the darkness, even the gambling for His clothes—was written hundreds of years before it happened. This is not a tragedy spinning out of control. This is the sovereign plan of God unfolding exactly as He decreed.**

And here is the point:

If God is in control of **this** situation, do you not believe He is in control of yours?

He took the worst expression of human depravity and brought about eternal salvation.

There is no greater example of God using sin and the curse to bring about good for His people.

Take comfort in that.

As Joseph said to his brothers in **Genesis 50:20**:

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good...”

If He did that at Calvary, He can certainly be trusted with your affliction.

## II. The Great Sympathizer

Another jewel shining through this darkness is this: **Jesus is our Great Sympathizer.**

In our most difficult circumstances, we can take comfort knowing that Jesus suffered in every category in which we suffer, yet without sin.

The writer of Hebrews says in **Hebrews 4:15–16**:

*“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

And again in **Hebrews 2:17–18**:

*“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God... For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*

Jesus did not suffer merely to inspire us to persevere, though He does. He suffered so that when we suffer, we know that He is not distant from us. He is the One who endures with us and through us.

Let's consider what He endured.

## **A. Physical Suffering**

### **Scourging Before the Cross**

#### **Matthew 27:26**

“Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.”

Roman scourging tore flesh open, often exposing muscle and bone. Severe blood loss occurred before the crucifixion even began.

### **Beating and Physical Abuse**

#### **Matthew 27:27–30**

“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head.”

Repeated blows. Spitting. Mockery. Likely the tearing of the beard as foretold in **Isaiah 50:6**:

“I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard...”

### **Crown of Thorns**

Thorns driven into the scalp. Intense nerve pain. Head wounds bleed heavily.

## **Carrying the Cross**

### **John 19:17 / Luke 23:26**

Already weakened from scourging, He likely collapsed under the weight. Simon of Cyrene had to carry it.

## **Nails Through Hands and Feet**

### **John 20:25**

“Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails...”

Nails driven through hands and feet brought unimaginable nerve trauma and agony.

## **Crucifixion Itself**

### **Psalm 22:14–15**

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws...”

Crucifixion was a slow suffocation. Every breath required pushing up against nails. Dehydration. Shock. Exposure. Shame.

## **Final Agony**

## **Luke 23:44–46**

Three hours of darkness. Final cry. Physical death.

## **B. Emotional and Psychological Suffering**

### **Betrayal by a Close Friend**

#### **Luke 22:48**

“Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”

### **Abandonment by Disciples**

#### **Matthew 26:56**

“Then all the disciples left him and fled.”

### **Denial by Peter**

#### **Luke 22:61–62**

Jesus watched Peter deny Him.

### **False Accusations and Injustice**

Sham trials. Lies. Slander. No justice.

### **Mockery and Public Shame**

#### **Luke 23:35–37**

Religious leaders mocked Him. Soldiers mocked Him. Crowds joined in.

### **Rejection by His Own People**

## **John 1:11**

“He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.”

## **Counted Among Criminals**

He was treated as the worst of sinners.

## **C. Spiritual Suffering — The Ultimate Suffering**

### **Bearing the Sin of the World**

#### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin...”

Not just physical pain. Not just emotional agony. The weight of sin itself was laid upon Him.

### **Experiencing the Wrath of God**

#### **Isaiah 53:5–6, 10**

“He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities...”

“Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him...”

### **Sense of Abandonment by the Father**

#### **Matthew 27:46**

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

This is the deepest suffering of all.

So let me summarize it this way:

Jesus did not just suffer physically on the cross—He suffered relationally, emotionally, and most profoundly, spiritually, as He bore the full weight of sin and the wrath of God in our place.

And here is the point:

**There is no category of suffering you carry that Christ has not entered into—except one: He suffered under the full wrath of God so that you never would.**

That means when you hurt, He understands and heals.

When you are betrayed, He understands and comforts.

When you are abandoned, He understands and remains close.

When you are falsely accused, He understands and vindicates.

When your body suffers, He understands and offers hope.

He is not a distant Savior. He is the ever-present suffering Savior.

### **III. The Simplicity of Saving Grace**

You would think that because life can be so complicated and stressful as an unregenerate sinner, then once we are saved life should become easier and more simple. In one sense, it should. But it does not always feel that way.

Sometimes we unnecessarily complicate Christianity.

There are times when faith is a struggle. But grace itself is meant to be simple.

And nowhere is the simplicity of saving grace more evident than in the salvation of the thief on the cross.

Let me show you how he came to faith, and then we will look at the evidences that it was true saving faith.

According to **Matthew 27:44** and **Mark 15:32**, both criminals were mocking Jesus at first.

But at some point, one of them had a radical change of heart while hanging on the cross.

He rebuked the other criminal, saying:

*“Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.”*

This man stopped mocking long enough to really look at Jesus.

And this time he saw Him through the eyes of faith—faith granted to him by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

He could now hear with ears that hear.

He saw a man who refused to resist, even though He had done nothing wrong.

He heard a man praying for the forgiveness of the very people mocking, torturing and murdering Him.

The thief came to see that this man was not just a man.

He recognized that it was God next to him, suffering the same consequences he was suffering—except Jesus did not deserve them.

He knew this man was not merely innocent. He was righteous through and through.

The thief had his eyes opened to see this event for what it was spiritually: the humble coronation of the King of kings.

He believed Jesus was the King. He believed Jesus was ushering in His kingdom. And this thief wanted to be a part of it.

Notice: he no longer asked to be saved **from the cross**. He simply wanted to be where Jesus was going.

*“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

And Jesus said to him:

*“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

What a stunning display of grace.

This man did not go to seminary.

He did not walk a church aisle.

He did not take a membership class.

He did not even get baptized.

And yet Jesus gave him the greatest assurance a sinner could ever receive.

The thief is a testimony to the simplicity of saving grace.

When the Spirit of God regenerates you and grants you faith in Christ, you are saved.

**Ephesians 2:8–9** says:

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Simple faith. Real faith. Saving faith.

#### **IV. The Finality of Our Salvation**

Now we come to the darkest moment in the text.

#### **Luke 23:44–46**

*“It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last.”*

The Bible does not dwell in graphic detail on the gruesome mechanics of crucifixion the way we often do. That is because the most significant aspect of what occurred was not merely the physical brutality.

One could argue that some people have endured worse physical torture than crucifixion.

But no one has ever endured what Jesus endured in those three hours of darkness.

The most significant suffering did not come at the hands of men.

It came under the wrath of God.

Isaiah says in **Isaiah 53:10**:

*“Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him...”*

We have no idea the depth of misery those three hours held.

I am persuaded that in a mystery beyond our ability to comprehend, Jesus absorbed in those hours the eternal judgment that we deserved.

It was there that He bore hell for His people.

It was there that He drank the cup to its dregs.

It was there that He defeated Satan, death, and sin.

And when the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, God was declaring that the barrier between Himself and His people had been removed.

Only God could tear that curtain from top to bottom.

Hebrews later explains what that means. **Hebrews 10:19–22** says:

*“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh...”*

It is finished.

There is nothing left for us to do but, like the thief, believe it and rest in it.

Jesus accomplished what no sinner could ever accomplish.

Our salvation does not rest on our religious performance.

It rests on Christ's finished work.

## **Conclusion: The Gospel Demands a Response**

I mentioned in last week's sermon that the gospel demands a response.

And this passage makes that plain.

Look at the different responses to the crucifixion.

### **1. The Mocking and Hardened**

The rulers, the soldiers, and one criminal mocked Him.

They rejected Jesus outright.

They demanded a self-serving Messiah.

They were blind to who He truly was.

Their response was rejection, mockery, unbelief.

### **2. The Repentant Believer**

The other criminal acknowledged his own guilt, declared Jesus' innocence, recognized Jesus as King, and appealed for mercy.

His response was repentance and faith.

And Jesus said:

“Today you will be with me in paradise.”

### **3. The Confessing Outsider**

The centurion saw what others missed. He praised God and publicly declared:

“Certainly this man was innocent!”

His response was recognition and confession.

### **4. The Convicted Crowd**

The watching multitudes returned home beating their breasts.

They were moved with grief and conviction. They realized something terrible had happened.

There is conviction there, though not yet full clarity.

### **5. The Distant but Devoted**

Jesus’ acquaintances and the women stood at a distance watching.

They loved Him, but they were fearful and confused. Their response was faith mixed with fear and uncertainty.

And so the question is this:

**How are you going to respond this morning?**

Will you respond like the mockers—hard, cynical, unbelieving?

Will you respond like the convicted crowd—troubled, but not yet surrendered?

Will you respond like the fearful followers—loving Him, but keeping your distance?

Or will you respond like the thief and the Centurion?

Seeing your guilt.

Seeing His innocence.

Seeing His kingship.

Praising God and saying, “Jesus, remember me.”

Brothers and sisters, the cross is not merely an event to be studied.

It is a reality to be believed.

It is a Savior to be trusted.

It is a King to be adored.

It is GOOD NEWS!

So come to Him.

Rest in Him.

Marvel at His sovereignty.

Take comfort in His sympathy.

Rejoice in the simplicity of His grace.

And find peace in the finality of His finished work.

Amen.

## Community Group Discussion Questions

### Gospel Truths of the Crucifixion — Luke 23:32–49

1. As you read Luke 23:32–49, what stands out to you most about the crucifixion account, and why?
2. The sermon emphasized that what looked like chaos at the cross was actually the precise fulfillment of God's sovereign plan. How does seeing God's sovereignty at Calvary strengthen your confidence in His control over your own life?
3. Which prophecy fulfilled in this passage most encourages or amazes you, and what does it reveal about God's faithfulness?
4. The crucifixion shows us the worst display of human depravity, yet God used it to accomplish the greatest good. How does that truth help you think differently about suffering, injustice, or evil in the world?
5. The sermon described Jesus as our "Great Sympathizer." In what specific ways does His suffering give you comfort in your own afflictions?
6. Which category of Christ's suffering—physical, emotional, or spiritual—most deepens your appreciation for what He endured on your behalf?
7. The thief on the cross is one of the clearest pictures of the simplicity of saving grace. What do we learn from him about true repentance and saving faith?
8. Why do you think people so often complicate salvation when the gospel is presented so simply in the account of the repentant thief?
9. The tearing of the temple curtain shows that access to God has been opened through Christ. How should that truth affect the way we approach God in prayer, worship, and daily life?
10. The sermon emphasized that Jesus' work on the cross was final and sufficient. What are some ways we still practically live as if something more must be added to His finished work?
11. Luke shows several different responses to the crucifixion: mockery, repentance, confession, conviction, and fearful devotion. Which of these responses do you think best describes where you are right now in your walk with Christ?
12. How should meditating on the crucifixion this week shape the way we live, suffer, worship, and speak about Jesus to others?

## Daily Devotional

### Day 1 — God’s Sovereign Plan at the Cross

#### Scripture

##### Acts 2:23

“this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”

##### Luke 23:33

“And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him...”

#### Devotional Thought

At first glance, the crucifixion looks like everything has gone wrong. The Son of God is betrayed, falsely accused, brutally beaten, and executed. It appears chaotic, tragic, and unjust. But Scripture tells us something radically different. Jesus was not a victim of circumstance—He was the center of God’s eternal plan. Every detail of the cross unfolded according to the “definite plan and foreknowledge of God.” What looked like chaos was actually divine precision. This changes how we view not only the cross, but our lives. If God was sovereign over the darkest moment in history, then He is sovereign over every moment in your life—especially the difficult ones.

#### Reflection Questions

- Where in your life does it feel like things are out of control?
- How does the sovereignty of God at the cross challenge that perception?

#### Prayer

“Lord, help me to trust that You are in control, even when I cannot see what You are doing. Remind me that if You governed the cross for my good, You are governing my life for Your glory and my good as well.”

### Day 2 — The Great Sympathizer

#### Scripture

##### Hebrews 4:15–16

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses... Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace...”

##### Isaiah 53:3

“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...”

#### Devotional Thought

Jesus is not distant from your suffering. He knows betrayal. He knows rejection. He knows physical pain. He knows emotional anguish. He knows what it is to be misunderstood, abandoned, and crushed under pressure. But there is one way His suffering is different—He suffered as the innocent, and He bore the wrath of God so that you never would. Because of that, you can come to Him with confidence. Not hesitation. Not fear. Confidence. You are not bringing your pain to someone who merely understands it intellectually—you are bringing it to Someone who has lived it.

### Reflection Questions

- What kind of suffering are you currently facing?
- How does knowing Jesus has experienced suffering change the way you approach Him?

### Prayer

“Jesus, thank You that You understand my pain. Help me to run to You instead of away from You. Teach me to find comfort in Your presence.”

## Day 3 — The Simplicity of Saving Grace

### Scripture

**Luke 23:42–43**

“And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’  
And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

**Ephesians 2:8–9**

“For by grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God...”

### Devotional Thought

The thief on the cross had nothing to offer. No good works. No religious history. No opportunity to “prove” his faith. All he had was a recognition of his sin and a belief in who Jesus was. And that was enough. This is the beauty and simplicity of saving grace. Salvation is not earned—it is received. It is not achieved—it is granted. We often complicate what God has made simple. Saving faith is seeing your guilt, seeing Christ’s righteousness, and trusting Him completely.

### Reflection Questions

- Do you ever feel like you need to “earn” God’s favor?
- What does the thief’s salvation teach you about grace?

### Prayer

“Lord, thank You for the simplicity of Your grace. Help me to rest fully in what Christ has done and not in what I can do.”

## Day 4 — The Finished Work of Christ

### Scripture

**Luke 23:44–46**

“Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last.”

**Hebrews 10:19–20**

“We have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus... through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.”

### Devotional Thought

When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom. That curtain represented separation between God and man. And when it tore, God was declaring something profound: The way is open. The work is finished. There is nothing left to be done. We often live as though we still need to earn access to God—as though we need to prove ourselves worthy. But the cross declares the opposite. Because of Jesus, you already have access. You already have acceptance. You already have peace with God.

### Reflection Questions

- In what ways do you still try to “earn” your standing with God?
- What would it look like to truly rest in Christ’s finished work?

### Prayer

“Father, thank You that the work is finished. Help me to stop striving and to rest in what Jesus has already accomplished for me.”

## Day 5 — The Cross Demands a Response

### Scripture

**Luke 23:47–48**

“Certainly this man was innocent!”

“...they returned home beating their breasts.”

**2 Corinthians 5:15**

“that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

### Devotional Thought

At the cross, everyone responded. Some mocked. Some rejected. One believed. One confessed. Others were convicted. Some stood at a distance. No one was neutral. And the same is true today.

The cross does not allow for passive observation. It demands a response. The question is not whether you will respond—but how. Will you harden your heart? Will you delay? Will you keep your distance?

Or will you come like the thief—humbly, honestly, and in faith?

### Reflection Questions

- Which response to the cross do you most identify with right now?
- What would it look like to respond more fully in faith and surrender?

### Prayer

“Lord, soften my heart. Help me not to stand at a distance, but to come fully to You in faith, surrender, and devotion.”