When Our Great Need Meets Jesus' Great Grace

Luke 23:39-43
February 9, 2025

The Big Idea: We come to the Cross and see our King who is willing to die so that we can live. Jesus saves those who acknowledge their great need – their guilt, repent, and put faith in Him.

Luke 23:39-43 (ESV)

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."

The History of God's Saving Work Through the Gardens of the Bible

- ◊ God planted a Garden in Eden [Genesis 2:8] and placed Adam and Eve there. The garden had every good thing they needed for life. They enjoyed perfect union with their Creator and one another until … they sinned. Paradise was lost. God escorted Adam & Eve out of the garden [Genesis 3:23], telling them their sin has brought death. But He promised a future Savior [Genesis 3:15]
- ◊ That Savior is Jesus. In a Garden called Gethsemane Jesus submitted Himself to the Father's plan that He would suffer and die on the Cross. Christ took on the curse pronounced by the Father, dying in payment for our sin. Jesus promises the repentant, believing thief that on that very day he will take him to Paradise.
- ◊ In the Garden of the Tomb, God raised His Son back to Life. Jesus has conquered sin, Satan, and death itself! Salvation has been secured for those who will trust Him.
- ◊ Revelation ends with description of the River of the Water ofLife flowing from the Throne of Grace where the Lamb sits. Planted there is the Tree of Life bearing God's never-ending Fruit and the leaves that are for the healing of the Nations. God's Eternal Garden – Paradise is restored for eternity.

Our Great Need

+ We all stand guilty before a righteous and holy God. [Rom. 3:23]
+ We are all deserving of the punishment of death for our sin. [Rom. 6:23]
+ We can no more save ourselves from death than the men on either side of Jesus could save themselves. There isn't a thing we can do to rescue ourselves from the sentence. We need a Savior.

Jesus' Great Grace

+ The "Great Exchange" is made possible by what Jesus did.

  "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. [2 Corinthians 5:21]

+ Christ takes our sin and gives us His righteousness.
  - ◊ Through the story of Barabbas we actually see a picture of what God offers to us – an innocent Jesus suffers and dies in the place of an unrighteous man who deserves to die but is given life and freedom.
  - ◊ Romans 3:21-26
+ The man on the cross, unlike Barabbas, acknowledges his sin and Jesus' righteousness. He appeals for mercy and grace, not on the basis of his goodness, but on the basis of the goodness of Jesus.
+ Jesus saves a man or woman who trusts Him.
  Will you turn from your sin and trust Jesus as your Savior?

"Hell will be filled with people who didn't drink, who didn't cuss, and who may have even been baptized. Why? Because no one of those things makes you a Christian."
– Voddie Baucham