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Trusting Jesus

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Trusting Jesus

“Two other criminals were also led away to be executed with him. One of the criminals who was hanging there railed at him, saying, ‘Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Don’t you fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we rightly so, for we are getting what we deserve for what we did, but this man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’” —Luke 23:32, 39-40

In these few verses, we see all the steps necessary for our salvation. Here are a few truths I see in the conversation between Jesus and the second criminal on the cross:

- The criminal actually feared God. He showed this by not insulting Jesus nor blaspheming or reviling Him, but by turning to Him.
- The criminal was aware of his own sin and his inability to save himself.
- The criminal realized that his sin had to be punished.
- The criminal realized Jesus was without sin.
- The criminal also realized Jesus was going to another kingdom.
- The criminal asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom.
- The criminal actually rebuked the other criminal.
- The criminal is with Jesus in paradise and has been since that day.

Maintaining a confidence in Jesus, committing his way to Him, expecting help from Him, rejoicing in the hope of being with Him forever, the criminal on the cross sets for us a good example.

Do we maintain such a confidence in Jesus? Have we committed our way to the One who is more than sufficient to meet our every need? Do we expect Jesus to grant us the grace to accomplish whatever He allows into our lives with contentment, peace, and joy?

Paul reminds us of the source of his supernatural strength when he proclaims:

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in any circumstance. I have experienced times of need and times of abundance. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment, whether I go satisfied

or hungry, have plenty or nothing. I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you did well to share with me in my trouble.” — Philippians 4:11-13

Do we rejoice in the hope of being with Him forever—holding fast in confidence to our future eternal bliss? Jesus desires for us to be encouraged and strengthened by this truth. Just as He told His first disciples, He tells us:

“Do not let your hearts be distressed. You believe in God; believe also in me. There are many dwelling places in my Father’s house. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going away to make ready a place for you. And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that where I am you may be too.” —John 14:1-3

Become More

“Even youths get tired and weary; even strong young men clumsily stumble. But those who wait for the Lord’s help find renewed strength; they rise up as if they had eagles’ wings, they run without growing weary, they walk without getting tired.”— Isaiah 40:29-31

Further Reflections

“Nothing can harm us, including death, when we have trusted Christ as Savior, because Christ has conquered death—and so shall we.” —Billy Graham

“The only ground on which God can forgive our sin and reinstate us to His favor is through the Cross of Christ. There is no other way! Forgiveness, which is so easy for us to accept, cost the agony at Calvary. We should never take the forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and our sanctification in simple faith, and then forget the enormous cost to God that made all of this ours. Forgiveness is the divine miracle of grace. The cost to God was the Cross of Christ. To forgive sin, while remaining a holy God, this price had to be paid. Never accept a view of the fatherhood of God if it blots out the atonement. The revealed truth of God is that without the atonement He cannot forgive—He would contradict His nature if He did. The only way we can be forgiven is by being brought back to God through the atonement of the Cross. God’s forgiveness is possible only in the supernatural realm. Once you realize all that it cost God to forgive you, you will be held as in a vise, constrained by the love of God.” —Oswald Chambers