

LIFE LESSONS

David Welsh | "Destination: Golgotha" | Luke 23:32-34, 39-43 | April 9-10, 2011

The Cross of Rebellion

"Save Us"

What prevents many people from turning to Jesus? We don't know much about the background of the first criminal crucified with Jesus but we know he was bitter and cynical. We know that he saw and heard what was happening to Jesus and how Jesus responded. **Share** why you think he was not affected by this. Can you think of people in your life to whom you have witnessed about Christ and yet they turn away in bitterness and criticism? Share how you could be praying for them. **Discuss** what you think they need to see in your life to change their minds about Jesus.

"Blame"

When we get in trouble, what causes us to try to shift the blame to others? The first criminal's words to Jesus were "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" Why do you think he did not plea for mercy? **Discuss** why you think some people are like that today. Something in their lives has made them bitter and instead of turning to Jesus for mercy, they blame everyone and everything else for their situation. They have the chance to turn things around but throw it away. What about you? What opportunities for redemption could we be wasting because of bitterness? **Discuss** how we can trust God to turn our life around.

The Cross of Repentance

"Kind words"

In what way are we like the criminals on the cross? According to the Scripture, both men mocked Jesus at first. (Matthew 27:39-44). What do you think changed the second criminal? We can be sure that Jesus prayed for both men and both must have experienced God's influence in response to His prayer. **Discuss:** Christ is not so absorbed in His own struggle that He cannot hear the cry of a dying thief. However, one refused but the other responded in kindness. What evidence do you see of this man's repentance? Can you share what you saw in Jesus Christ that caused you to repent?

"Hope"

Who do you listen to when you are in trouble? Do you listen to your family? To public opinion? Whose advice is most important to you? The dying thief who looked to Jesus by faith received one of the most wonderful promises ever recorded in the Bible. He was hoping that when the kingdom was established Jesus would somehow remember him. Jesus tells him that this very day they will be together in paradise! There will be no waiting. There will be nothing but joy, and glory and the presence of the Savior. He got far more than he asked for! **Discuss:** This man was not saved by works or by baptism. He was saved purely through the power of grace alone. This how everyone gets saved. (Eph. 2:8-9.) When you reach the end of life all that will matter is what you did with Jesus Christ. **Discuss:** The only difference between these men was that they died on different sides of Jesus. The same will be true of all of us.

The Cross of Redemption

"Glory"

What is your motivation to give God glory? Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat, drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." When Jesus finished His work of redemption on the cross, God got the glory. He had finished what God called Him to do. How does that apply to us? **Discuss:** Everything we do, everything we say, every relationship, every motive, every thought is to give God glory. Wow! Everything? When you become the person God has called you to be, you give Him glory. **Share:** Who is the person God has called you to be? Do you know? Have you asked Him? If you know, are you there yet? **Share** what you think you need to do this week to give God glory.

Written by Sandy Hooper