As they lead Jesus toward Golgotha it was evident that He could not carry the crossbeam all the way, as was prescribe for those being crucified. So, a man was selected to carry it for Him. From a human perspective this was a random selection. However, what looks random was anything but. The man’s name was Simon, a North African man from the city of Cyrene, in what is now known as Libya.

Although the text does not say Simon came to trust in Jesus as The Christ, we have reason to believe he did.

Mark 15:21 identifies Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus, signifying that his original audience, gentiles in the church in Rome, knew them.

Romans 16:13 names Rufus as a prominent member of that church and his mother, Simon’s wife, as a women whom Paul looked to as a Mother figure.

**TRUTH POINT #1:** While events may look random to us, be assured that God is in some way ____________ in them. He utilizes the most ___________ of events to mold, shape and move us according to His will.

**SYMPATHETIC CRIES – REBUKING RESPONSE VS27-31**

As the entourage moved Jesus along, Luke tells us there was a collection of women who were “mourning – lamenting” for Jesus. This was not Mary His mother, or the other women who followed Him during His ministry. They were sympathetic mourners, regulars at such events to cry for the condemned, even providing pain killing drugs to ease their suffering.

*Don’t weep for Me,* Jesus said, *weep for yourselves…*

Jesus knew that God’s judgment was on the horizon for Jerusalem. A time so horrendous that women who were barren of children would be
congratulated for being childless so they would not have to endure the pain of seeing them slaughtered in their presence. Scripture tells us that there is such a time still it come when world will convulse under the wrath of God, desiring to be crushed by mountains falling on them rather than facing God’s fury for their rejection of Him.

- The first came to pass in 70 AD when Rome sacked Jerusalem, slaughtering up to 1.1 million of its residence men, women, and children.
- The second is prophesied in Revelation 6:15-17 during the days of the, yet future, Great Tribulation.

**TRUTH POINT #2:** Although Jesus’ 1st Advent saw Him as a _______________ ______________ for the work of redemption, His 2nd Advent will see Him as the ____________________________, unleashing judgment on those who reject Him, ushering in His kingdom for those who follow Him.

If you are wondering about Jesus’ statement about green and dry wood, it’s a proverb that Jesus used to say…

...if this is what they do to Me (spiritually green = life) imagine what they will do to you (spiritually dry = dead).

**GRACE FILLED INTERCESSION – VS32-34**

As Jesus was being nailed to the cross, hosted vertical for all to see, He offered a grace filled prayer for those Roman Soldiers who were crucifying Him.

To be clear… Jesus is not praying for their salvation from their sin nature or any of the myriad of personal sins they had committed in their lifetime. He was praying that The Father not hold them accountable for what they were doing to Him in that moment.
Unlike the religious elite, and many of the Jews present that day, people who had heard His teaching, witnessed His miracles, and then rejected Him, they were simply ignorant Roman Gentile Soldiers who were following orders from those in authority over them. They had not heard Jesus teaching, they had not seen His miraculous works, therefore they were not rejecting Jesus as The Messiah.

Jesus’ compassionate prayer bore fruit! In VS47 of we find that as Jesus breathed His last, one of the Roman Soldiers confessed Jesus as innocent. Matthew and Mark record Him confessing Jesus as God’s Son.

**TRUTH POINT #3:** Jesus’ sacrifice is powerful and effective so as to save __________________________ who will trust in Him. Even one who played a part in crucifying Him.

**TRUE FAITH AMID MOCKING VOICES – VS35-43**

This scene is recorded only in Luke. The Religious Elite scoffed at Him, the Roman Soldiers mocked Him, the two thieves railed against Him.

But for one of the robbers, there was a change of heart. He went from cursing and mocking Jesus, to defending Him. Not only did he defend Jesus, but He confessed His own crimes, owned His guilt, then humbly asked Jesus for saving Grace.

**TRUTH POINT #4:** Owning one’s guilt is the “______________” that stands between the many who need saving grace, but will never get it.

**WHY?:** because doing so requires that we do what we naturally do not want to do…

- confess our helplessness – surely I’ve got something to offer!
- admit our total depravity – I’ve made mistakes, but not sin!
- surrender to Jesus as sovereign Lord – can’t I drive my own bus?
Jesus’ call is …take up your cross daily and follow Me. While that doesn’t sound very appealing to our fallen worldview, consider where Jesus leads those who humble themselves to Him.

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

**TRUTH POINT #5:** Jesus leads repentant sinners to only one place. He leads them into the __________, __________, __________, and _________________ of God.

**WRAP UP**

There were 3 men being crucified on Golgotha.

- One died clinging to his pride, hatred, and bitterness and he passed from life into eternal death without God and thus without hope.
- One died in humble faith focused on Jesus, trusting in His righteousness alone for the salvation he so desperately needed. He passed from life into eternal life with God, possessing eternal joy.
- **The One in the middle**… He died too, but His death was unique in that His life wasn’t taken from Him, He gave it willingly as an offering to God for the sin of fallen man. In Him God’s wrath for sin was satisfied and those who come to Him find peace with God and eternal life in His presence.

Do you have peace with God though faith in The Lord Jesus Christ? – If no, can I talk with you about that?

You say yes Pastor, I have peace with God through Jesus… WONDERFUL!! – Is your spiritual light shining to guide those still in darkness to The Savior?

Can we equip you for that good work?

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