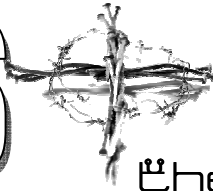


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HE CHOSE THE NAILS Lesson on The choice of the thieves

Introduction

- A. Illustration of brothers, Edwin and John (John killed Lincoln, Edwin saved his son, Todd)
- B. 2 choices are often given in Scripture. In each one, God let's the INDIVIDUAL choose
 - *Cain & Abel
 - *Abraham & Lot
 - *Peter & Judas
 - *The narrow & wide gate/road (**Matthew 7:13-14**)
 - *The rock or sand (**Matthew 7:24-27**)
 - *God or riches (**Matthew 6:24**)
 - *Heaven or Hell (**Matthew 25:46**)

I. The Two Thieves (**Luke 23:39-43**)

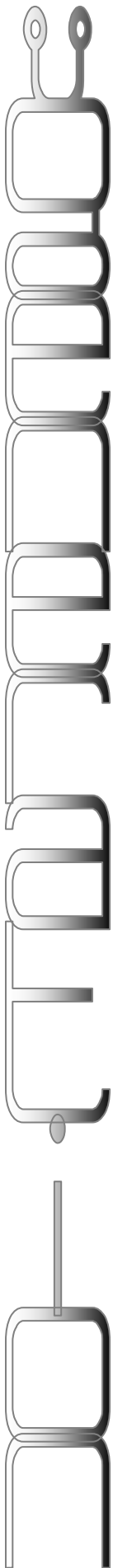
- A. Both were equally SINNERS facing the same punishment
 - both probably had chosen the wrong crowd, got caught up in the wrong things, etc.
- B. Both had same CHOICE to how they would view Christ (Jesus never tried to convince him)
 - 1. One chose to mock Jesus in DISBELIEF (**vs 39**)
 - 2. The other chose to BELIEVE that Jesus was who He said (**vs 40-42**)
 - *He realized his sin and what he deserved, and Jesus' perfection and sacrifice
- C. The simple faith of the repentant thief, called Jesus to whisper powerful words
 - 1. Jesus was THIRSTY; He hadn't had anything to drink since the Last Supper and endured intense sweating from Gethsemane, through the beating, and through hanging in the sun on a cross.
 - 2. Jesus was EXHAUSTED; Jesus endured intense beating, carrying His cross, and then being hung on that cross, and was kept up throughout the night without sleep
 - *His lips were chapped, dry, as if filled with cotton
 - *He later says from the cross, "I am thirsty"
 - *His body is weak, barely strong enough to breathe
 - *He can barely talk, as He only says 7 things while on the cross
 - 3. Jesus said to the thief with faith, "Today you will be with Me in PARADISE." (**vs 43**)

II. My 2 Choices

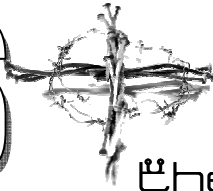
- A. Jesus has done everything needed for ME to go to Heaven
- B. Just like the thieves, the decision is up to ME

Take it Home: Read Luke 22:39-23:56

Also read "Listless Christianity" on the Lessons Page at www.Generation246.com.



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HE CHOSE THE NAILS

Lesson on
the choice of the thieves

Small group discussion

Talk About It: Think about the thief who accepted Christ. In the world's eyes (and even in our own eyes), is it fair that someone who has lived a life of sin could be accepted into Heaven so easily?

Read **Romans 3:10-12, 23**

Discuss: We might be able to say that we aren't as bad as the thief, but when we examine our hearts, we realize that we aren't "worthy" of heaven. God wants us to see that none of us are "worthy" of salvation, but He offers it to even the worst of sinners.

"There are times when God sends thunder to stir us. There are times when God sends blessings to lure us. But then there are times when God sends nothing but silence as he honors us with the freedom to choose where we spend eternity." -Max Lucado

Question: Jesus could force us to believe or even do a miracle so big that we don't have a choice but to believe. Why wouldn't He do that when it could "save" so many more people?

Ask Yourself: Christ has done His part for you for salvation. Have you done your part?

Ask Yourself: If you have accepted Christ for salvation, are you living a life that honors the one who paid the price for you?

Take it Home: Read Luke 22:39-23:56

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