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WARM UP

Think about two people from years ago that you haven't seen for a while, but you are finding yourself asking "Where are they now?". Who would those two people be and what would be the reason you want to find out where they are now?

WORD

Read **Luke 23:32-43**

Jesus at this point is being crucified with two thieves on crosses; on his left and right. Whilst Roman soldiers are casting lots for his clothes, Jesus makes the statement on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." One thief scoffed Jesus as the Christ, pleading him to save himself and the thieves. The other thief simply acknowledges that he has done wrong and is deserving of his punishment, and then asks Jesus to remember him when he comes into his kingdom.

NOTES

1 Who's the "them"

*³⁴And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
And they cast lots to divide his garments.*

Luke 23:34 (ESV)

Who is the "them?" that Jesus is asking the Father to forgive? Could it be those Roman soldiers who were casting lots for his clothes? Could it be the Jewish authorities who had Jesus arrested in the first place? Could it be Judas or even Peter for denying and betraying him after 3 years of discipleship investment? The answer is all of the above. Every single one of us, according to Romans 3:23, have fallen short of the glory of God because of our sin. Jesus, in the final act of his life, pleads on our behalf to the Father for forgiveness.

- Have you ever been in a situation where you've had to forgive someone who'd done something wrong to you? How did you respond?
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2 Paradise rediscovered

⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" ⁴¹And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing

wrong." ⁴²And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:40-43 (ESV)

Isn't it fascinating that the earliest encounter with the Gospel and promised salvation comes to a crucified thief who realises that he is serving not only the sentenced punishment for his earthly misdemeanours, but also that Jesus is being punished for doing nothing wrong. He then, by the power of God's grace, asks Jesus to remember him. Jesus promises that this thief will be with him on that day in paradise.

- Have you ever had to admit that you've done something wrong? Have you ever had to ask for forgiveness? Was it easy or hard?
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PRAYER

- Pray for the grace to forgive those who have sinned against you.
- Pray that you'll walk in humility and have the grace to ask for forgiveness when you wrong someone.
- Pray that you'll have the grace to walk in constant awareness of God's forgiveness and walk worthy of the price he paid on the cross for our sin.