

**Series Overview** - people's responses when encountering Jesus face to face.

- We've looked at 7 people's face to face encounter, last week was Judas & Peter
- Today we look at the account of three men facing their own mortality.

**Theme:** Every person stands before the cross — rejecting or receiving — and what we do with Jesus determines everything.

### Context of the Story

- Crucifixion
  - o Roman Government:
    - The Roman penal system recognized different classes and the status of each. Citizens, crucifixion being saved for the lowest and worst people and crimes.
  - o Jewish perspective: dying on a tree, you're cursed. Deuteronomy 21:22-23
  - o Crucifixions usually took place in a very public place, crossroads or intersections just outside the city.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Century Robbers & Thieves: "The Good Samaritan" Luke 10:30-37
- Jesus' Final Week Face to Face
  - o Triumphal Entry; Cleanses the Temple; Multiple challenges by Jewish leaders; The Last Supper; Garden of Gethsemane; Betrayed by Judas & arrested; Peter's denial; Before Sanhedrin, Pontius Pilate, and Herod Antipas; Before the crowd that chooses Barabbas; Mocked by crowd and Roman soldiers

### Face to Face – The Three Crosses: Luke 23:32-43

**Luke 23:32–43 (ESV)** — <sup>32</sup> Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. <sup>33</sup> And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup> And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. <sup>35</sup> And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup> and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup> There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." <sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" <sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

### Jesus

- An innocent man
- Son of God
- Took on the sins of the whole of creation

**Mark 15:34 (ESV)** — <sup>34</sup> And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

- Reference to Psalm 22

**Deuteronomy 21:22–23 (ESV)** — <sup>22</sup> “And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, <sup>23</sup> his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

- On the Cross by His choice

**Matthew 26:53–54 (ESV)** — <sup>53</sup> Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

### First Thief

- Are you not the Christ?
- Unbelief and mocking – Rejection Jesus

### Second Thief

- Believes v.40
- Confesses v.40
- Repents v.41 – Receives Jesus
- Jesus’s Response
  - Saved by Grace – Through Faith in Jesus
  - Laborers in the Vineyard Matt 20:1-16

### Conclusion

- Is your response that of the First or Second Thief?
- What do you do with Jesus?
  - Receive Jesus as Lord and Savior?
  - Live daily for Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Luke 9:23-24

### Discussion Questions:

1. Remember and describe your first ‘face to face’ encounter with Jesus.
2. What is it from that encounter that gives you strength, hope, peace, etc.?
3. When you have been questioned as to who Jesus is or why you’re a Christian, what has been your response?
4. Every day you face choices to reject or follow Jesus. In what areas are you struggling and what areas are you succeeding?