

Sermon Title: The Crook He Took

Sermon Text: Luke 23:32-43

Introduction

*At the Place of the Skull as the sky became dull,*

*The Savior at last was impaled;*

*The thief at His side began to deride,*

*And joined with the throngs as he railed.*

*When the sign at His head the passersby read*

*“The Savior and King of the Jews”*

*Their bitterness flowed as they danced in the road,*

*And wagged with their head, “It’s untrue.”*

*The anguish of torture and loved ones’ departure*

*Increased in its misery untold;*

*Then Heaven recoiled while wicked hands toiled,*

*And the pangs of Hell got hold.*

God put Him to grief for sinners' relief,  
And bruised Him with wrath from above;  
He was smitten of God with the heaviest rod,  
And there proved the depth of His love.

They offered Him gall in the presence of all,  
His senses while there to confuse;  
But He turned His dear head as He suffered and bled  
And died as the King of the Jews.

But its more than the Jews who need the Good News  
That sins can be washed all away;  
So, God put Him to grief for all our relief  
When Jesus so suffered that day.

### Background

I want to take you on an trip this morning to an place called calvary where  
the son of god was slain for the sin of the world but I must warn you the

trip were about to take is not for the weak at heart for the crucifixion of christ was an act of sheer brutality and barbarism such the world has never seen.

I'm sure everyone here has seen the movie the passion of christ and yet no movie can describe what took place that day upon an skull shaped hill called calvary. For years there have been many who have studied the physical aspect of the crucifixion and I want to share them with you this morning.

After his trial they took him and scouraged him which means they tied him to an pole and used an leather strap with pieces of bone and metal and strike him from the bottom of the neck to the back of the knees.

They would take turns striking him while the bone and metal ripped into his flesh. All three men who were crucified that day were scouraged but the soliders put an robe on him that would have irritated his wounds.

During some point they would tear his robe off which would open the wounds. The bloody sweat made his skin very sensitive which made every strike more brutal and bloody.

The crucifixion was a slow death designed to inflict as much pain and agony as possible. Each victim would carry his own cross or at least his cross piece across the back of his neck and shoulders but that was not the case with the lord.

He received help from a man by the name of Simon from Cyrene because he was too weak to carry to carry it. As they arrive at the place of crucifixion they would be offered sedation which our lord refused and then thrown down to the ground on their backs.

The crosspiece would be pulled under their shoulders and their arms nailed to it using tapered iron spikes five to seven inches long and about a half inch square.

Each nail was drive through the wrist rather than the palms so they could carry the full weight of the body. Next they were raised up and the crosspiece was attached to the upright post.

Last their feet were nailed with one with the knees bent up so they could push up and breathe. However the way the body was position would make it almost impossible to breathe.

In order to breathe they would have to pull and push themselves up which caused the wounds on the back to rub painfully on the wood of the cross. The nails that were in both the wrist and feet would crush the nerves causing relentless bolts of pain throughout the body.

As they struggled to push and pull up in order to breathe the weight on the nails would cause so much pain they could not survive long. As death approached the soldiers would take an spear and pierce through the chest of the victim causing water and blood to gush out which indicated they were dead.

Even though they had died they would leave them on the cross so the birds and dogs could devour the body but that was not the case with our lord. He was taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb and on the third day he rose again.

It was worse way to die and yet our savior died this way so we may have everlasting life. Isaiah the prophet prophesied centuries before the crucifixion of Christ and said he would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid our faces from him.

He was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted but he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed. There once was a man who had the desire to teach. During those days when you had an education greater than anyone else you could teach and one day

an school hired this young man. On his first day he noticed most of the students were bigger than he was especially an student by the name of big tom who was the bully of the school house and so he knew if he was going to stay there he would need some rules.

For the first assignment he decided he would let the class come up with the rules. One young man stood up and said I don't think anyone should lie and so the teacher wrote on the black board there will be no lying in our class.

Another young man stood up and said I don't think anything should steal and so the teacher wrote on the black board there will be no stealing in our class.

Before the day was over there were ten rules on the blackboard. The teacher told the class if were going to have these rules were going to need something to enforce them with and that's when big tom stood up and said teacher if anyone breaks these rules they should receive ten stripes on their bear back. Even though he did not want to put that on the blackboard he knew if he

was going to stay there long he would need something to enforce these rules with and so he wrote on the board anyone who breaks any of these rules will have ten stripes placed upon his bear back.

A few days passed by and everyone was obeying the rules but one day big tom came into the classroom and told the teacher someone had stolen his lunch box.

The class looked everywhere but no one had his lunch. The teacher noticed an young boy standing at the back of the room. He was wearing an ragged jacket and the teacher went up to him and asked him had he seen big toms lunch.

The boy reached into his jacket and pulled out big toms lunch and sat it on top of the desk. The teacher said you know the rules. Because you stole his lunch you will receive ten stripes upon your bear back.



The boy began to cry and said teacher I don't mind taking the stripes but do not make me take my jacket off. The teacher said son you know the rules you must receive ten stripes upon your bear back.

The boy started to cry even more and said I don't care to take the stripes. I'll take double stripes but please don't make me take my jacket off. The teacher said you know the rules and forced him to take the jacket off but when the boy took his coat off he did not have an underclothes on.

His body was bear and he laid his naked body on the desk but as the teacher raised the limb to give him ten stripes upon his bear back big tom the bully of the school came and pushed him off the desk.

He ripped his shirt off and laid on the desk and said teacher whip me. Hear me when I tell you there was an day when I should have bore my sín so I might have life and have it more abundantly.

The scripture says he did not sin neither was guile found in his mouth who when he was reviled reviled not again when he suffered he threatened not but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously

Who in his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree that we who are dead to sin should live unto righteousness by whose stripe you are healed. In other words you and I have been saved by the stripes of the savior.

I believe every time he took an stripe he was thinking about me and thinking about you and I want to share that with you this morning. I want to share with you an story about an man who was saved not by the skin of his teeth but by the stripes of his savior. I want to share with you an story about an crook he took. There were three crosses that day:

There Was The Cross Of Rejection

Which Belonged To The Dying Sinner

There Was The Cross Of Reception

Which Belonged To The Dying Saint

*There Was The Cross Of Redemption*

*Which Belonged To The Dying Savior*

*There were three men who were crucified that day but I only want to talk about two. Because they were at the right place at the right time and as they hung next to the only one who could save them they would make a choice that would impact their eternal destination*

*And you have the same choice which means you can reject the truth and spend eternity in hell or you can receive the truth and spend eternity in heaven either way you will have to make a choice.*

*During his sermon on the mount the lord said one must strive to enter into the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there be which find it but straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life and few there be that find it.*

In other words you only have two choices you can choose the broad way or the narrow way but you only have two choices and notice what the lord said about these choice.

He said one road would lead you into hell while the other road would lead you into heaven but notice with me the words many and few because he said many would end up on the broad road while only few would end up on the narrow road which means more people are going to die and spend eternity in hell.

By the way the scripture says that hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure. In other words the abyss we call hell enlarges everyday with people who reject the truth of the gospel.

There is not an more frightening statement made throughout the scripture and yet the chances of you spending eternity in hell are greater than the chances of you spending eternity in heaven and I believe that's the reason paul wrote the church at corinth and said behold now is the day of salvation.

Paul knew there was no better day to trust christ than the present and yet there were so many who continued to reject the truth of the gospel even though they did not know what the future holds and such is the case today.

There are many who have rejected the truth of the gospel even though they do not know what the future holds however that was not the case with the man we are going to talk about this morning because he knew his future but unlike the other man who rejected christ he received christ.

He went through the same exact thing that turned the other man bitter. He suffered the same pain the same guilt and the same shame that made the other man furious but he cried out lord remember me when you come into your kingdom and the lord said unto him today you will be with me in paradise.

He was nothing more than a crook but he was a crook the lord took and I want to share his story with you this morning because I believe he shows

us what takes place when the guilt of the sinner meets the grace of the savior and I want to share that story with you.

1. His Rebellion: 32-33

(v.32-33) there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death and when they had come to the place which is called calvary there they crucified him and the malefactors one on the right hand and the other on the left. There is not a lot we know about these men other than what the scriptures say about them and the scripture says they were:

*They Were Malefactors!!!*

*They Were Murderers!!!*

*They Were Mobsters!!!*

There are many scholars who believe they worked side by side with barabbas during the insurrection which was an political revolt against the roman government. The ancient historians state that barabbas headed one of the

numerous insurrections against the roman power which were constantly harassing the procurators, and giving untold trouble to the legionary troops who was stationed around the region.

During this particular insurrection there were many who lost their lives and many believe these two men who were crucified with the lord were apart of it which was the reason they were being crucified. They were vile and vicious and violent. They made the ms-13 look like an sunday school class and yet they were at the right place at the right time.

They were about to die and yet they were next to the one who said I am the resurrection and the life he that believeth in me though he was dead yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die believeth thou this.

I love this, they had taken left but they were being crucified with the one who came to give life and it does not get any better than that. By the way I agree they did not deserve the chance they had but neither did we and yet

the lord was gracious and merciful and saved us when we were lost and without christ. Therefore we are able to say I am what I am because of the grace of god even though we did not deserve it

Such was the case with these two men who were crucified with the lord. They did not deserve the grace of god and the reason they did not deserve the grace of god was because they were:

They Were Thugs!!!

They Were Thieves!!!

They Were Terrorists!!!

By the way we are no different. Before we were saved we were guilty of the same crime and deserving of the same judgment because we had sinned against the one true god



And yet you say we are not like these men but the scripture says you have sinned and come short of the glory of god which means there was an day you lived in sin and the soul that sins should die.

For the scripture says the wage of sin is death. In other words because you were born into sin you should die because of sin which means you should have been the one who paid the price that was paid on the cross by our savior because there was an day when you rebelled against the word of god, the will of god, and the way of god.

Therefore like the thief on the cross you deserve the judgment because you have rebelled against him but the scripture does not stop there. They were not only rebels but they were also robbers which means they used violence in order to steal from others but you say I have never stolen anything.

Let me ask you something have you ever taken something from someone without telling them with every intention to give it back but you didn't. If so in the eyes of the lord you are no different than someone who robs a bank

simply because you took something without asking them and you never gave it back. When I was growing up my grandfather would purchase gas during the week and place it in the garage.

It was when gas prices started soaring and so when there was gas in the garage I would walk into the garage without asking and I would take it and pour it into my truck.

Even though I knew the gas was there for anyone who asked I never asked I just walked into the garage and took it without asking and yet there are some here who are probably thinking I am being too hard on myself.

However the scripture teaches thou shalt not steal. Therefore in the eyes of the lord I was a thief because I took something without asking and many here have done the same thing and because you have taken something that did not belong to you you deserve the judgment of god but you say preacher I have been born again I do not rob the lord.

The scripture says that malachi the prophet wrote and asked the nation why they had robbed the lord and they asked him when did we rob him and he said unto them you have robbed the lord with your tithes and offerings and because you have robbed the lord he has placed an curse on the entire nation.

I know you do not want to hear this but when you do not tithe you rob the lord therefore you are an theif and that's not the gospel according to jeremy that's the gospel according to jesus.

By the way the lord still takes tithing seriously. The disciples had asked people to sell what they had and give it to the poor but there were two by the name of ananias and sapphira who sold what they had but they only brought part of what they sold unto the disciples.

In other words they lied about their giving and because they lied about what they gave the scripture says they died in the presence of the people and the church feared the lord.

*I know this is not popular preaching and I know you do not want to hear about tithing but hear me when I tell you this morning the lord does not condone any sin*

*Therefore when you lie about what you give to the work of the lord you rob the lord and deserve the same judgment that was suffered by ananias and sapphira but the scripture does not stop there.*

*They were not only rebels and robbers they were also radicals which means they had shed innocent blood. Before you say you never murdered anyone you must define the word murderer.*

*The word murderer means someone died because of you but you say you have never murdered anyone but that's where you are wrong. The scripture says we are the reason he died upon the cross.*

*Galatians 3:13: christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made an curse for us for it is written cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree.*

11 Corinthians 5:21: for he that made him to be sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of god in him.

Galatians 4:4-5: when the fullness of time was come god sent forth his son, made of woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adopt of sons.

He Paid An Debt He Did Not Owe

For Those Who Owed An Debt They Could Not Pay

11. His Repentance: 39-42

(v.39-42) and one of the malefactor which were hanged railed on him saying if thou be christ save yourself and us but the other rebuked him saying do you not fear god seeing thou art in the same condemnation and we indeed justly for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss and he said unto the lord remember me when you come into your kingdom.

The story of the penitent thief is one of the many ironies that took place at the cross. During this time the lord was mocked because he could not save himself and yet he saved others by not saving himself.

He was accused by the rulers of israel of claiming to be a king which would make him a threat to the authorities of rome. He was also accused of blasphemy against god by those who blasphemed him the true god.

As a result he was executed by the guilty turning justice on its head. He was cursed by his enemies, who hated him but cursed in a greater way by his father who loved him.

The one who gives life and is life died that those who are dead might receive life one being the thief who hung next to him on the cross. Even though he had rebuked and rejected christ at the beginning the lord opened his heart and gave him eternal life but have you ever stopped and asked what made the thief repent? He repented because

## *A. Because He Was The Sinless One: 41*

*While the other thief was rebuking the lord this thief spoke up and rebuked him saying do you not fear the lord seeing you are about to receive the same punishment? You and I deserve the punishment we are about to receive but this man had done nothing wrong.*

*The word used amiss was an musical term that spoke of the harmony between the father and the son. He walked in perfect harmony with the father and the their recongized that while he was on the cross. He recognized that he was blameless and harmless before men and before god.*

*Luke 23:14: you have brought this man unto me as one who perverts the people and I have examined him before you and I have found no fault in him concering those things you have accused him of.*

Hebrews 4:15: for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but was in all ways tempted like we were but without sin.

### B. Because He Was The Sovereign One: 42a

After he rebuke the thief he turned his attention towards the savior who had done nothing wrong and said unto him lord remember me when you come into your king. I want you to notice the first word the word lord.

No one else called him lord that day other than this thief. The reason he called him lord was because he recognized him as the sovereign son of god and knew that he would rule and reign as both the lion and the lamb.

He recognized him as the king of kings and lord of lords. He is an example of the true convert who confesses his guilt and absolute spiritual bankruptcy. He recognizes he has nothing to offer god nothing to commend himself to him.



He knew he needs mercy and grace to escape judgment and be forgiven. So he pleads with the lord host to remember him when he comes into his kingdom.

I know a lot of people who will call him savior but they will not call him lord but you will never come to know the lord until you are willing to surrender and submit unto the lordship of christ.

By the way because he was the sovereign one he had the power and authority to save himself from the cross. They asked him to come down from the cross but there was one man he refused to save and that was himself but not because he could not save himself but because he would not save himself.

He knew saving himself would have brought judgment on the human race the same human race he came to save. Therefore he willingly and voluntarily laid down his life but praise god he had the power to take it up again and because he lives we shall live also. The thief was saved because he confess with

his the lord jesus and believed in his heart that god could raise him from the dead.

### C. Because He Was The Saving One: 426

The thief cried out lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

The word remember was used in the imperfect tense which means it was a continuous action.

In other words the thief kept repeating on the cross remember me, remember me, remember me when you come into your kingdom. The phrase remember me was an plea for mercy.

During the finals moments of his life he pleaded with the son of the most high to show mercy rather than judgment. I believe he heard the savior cry out from the cross father forgive them for they know not what they are doing and he thought to himself just maybe he would forgive him too.

Therefore he cried and cried and cried and ask the son of god to save him for he knew he was the only one who could and I love the response from the savior verily I say unto you today you shall be with me in paradise which leads me to my final point.

#### 11. His Redemption: 43

(v.43) and the lord said unto him verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The word verily has been said to mean truly and that's not an wrong interpretation but there something about the word verily that is often overlooked.

It is only one or two words that are transliterated to be the same word in very language. The first word is hallelujah and the other is amen. Those two words are translated the same in any language which means the word verily is the word amen.

In other words Jesus said amen when the thief was saved and hear me when I tell you this morning the day you were saved the savior of the world shouted amen.

The thief was saved because he saw the sinless one, he saw the sovereign one and he saw the savior one. I love this when the Lord said unto him today you will be with me in paradise.

The word paradise was used three times thru the scripture and spoke of Eden once and heaven twice. When the Lord said unto the thief today thou shalt be with me in paradise he was telling the thief I will see you on the other side. I love that old hymn:

What A Day That Will Be

When My Jesus I Shall See

When I Look Upon His Face

The One Who Saved Me By His Grace

When He Takes Me By The Hand

*And Leads Me Through The Promise Land*

*What A Day What A Glorious Day That Will Be*

*I believe the day that theif entered into that celestrail city they asked him how in the world did he make it and he said unto them by the grace of god I am just another crook he took.*

*I do not know who you are and what you have done but I do know the same savior who saved the theif upon the cross is the same savior who can save you this morning.*

*When I thought about this sermon this week I thought about several who were known by the world as wicked men. I thought about jeffrey dahmer who was charged with fourtenn counts of murder.*

*He was an serial killer who preyed on young boys and molested them and then killed them but one day he came into contact with an gideon bible and repented from his sins and ask the lord to be his savior.*

Days before he was murdered he was baptized. He realized he had done terrible thing but the moment he confessed his sins he was forgiven and his name was written down in the lambs book of life. He was just another crook the lord took.

I thought about son of sam who was charged with six counts of murder. He would later explain that the name same came from an neighbor named sam who owned an dog by the name of harvey.

He claimed the dog was possessed with an host of demons and had ordered him to kill these innocent people but one day he came into contact with an gideon bible and repented from his sins and asked the lord to be his savior.

The son of sam became the son of hope. Since then he has been active in prison ministry. He's allowed to plea every two years for parole but out of respect for his victims parents he chooses to say in prison.

He is on record saying in all honesty I believe that I deserve to be in prison for the rest of my life. I have with the help of the lord accepted my punishment.

He realize he had done terrible thing but the moment he confessed his sin he was forgiven and his name was written down in the lambs book of life. He was just another crook the lord took.

I thought about ted bundy who was charged with thiry count of murder. On the day before he was executed he requested an interview with james dobson from focus on the family.

Bundy felt that there was an very real correlation between the use of pornography in his life from the time he was an young man and what he had ended up doing and he wanted to warn the world.

After he executed there was another interview that took place with james dobson and he said that ted bundy had been truly remorseful about what

he had done and in those final hours he asked christ to forgive him. He realized he had done terrible thing but the moment he confessed his sins he was forgiven and his name was written down in the lambs book of life. He was just another crook the lord took.