



CONNECTION

April, 2017

“Today You Will Be With Me in Paradise”

32 Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. 33 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. 34 And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. 35 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!” 36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine 37 and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” 38 There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” 39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:32–43 ESV)

It's not too late for one of the thieves crucified beside Jesus. He looks at Jesus and believes He is able to open the door to eternal life. “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus is the King, and the thief is bold to plead that Jesus will welcome him into heaven.

Rico Tice, in his new book, *Capturing God*, writes about the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*. Many men die to save James Ryan, who is the last surviving son in his family. As the squad leader lies dying, he tells Private Ryan, who has been rescued, “James, earn this. Earn it.” Tice compares this to what Jesus did on the cross: “He did not tell the criminal next to him that he'd need to offer something to him, some goodness or morality or achievement. He just promised him a place in his kingdom that he could never deserve...He's the God we see hanging on a cross to welcome us into heaven. He does not say, *You must earn it*. He says, *I will give it*.”

This month, we remember the events of Jesus' last week leading up to his death and glorious resurrection. Like the thief on the cross, we believe in our Savior, who is able to welcome us into his kingdom. We know we cannot bargain for this, or earn it in any way. We are, in fact, guilty sinners who do not deserve such a gift. But Jesus is pleased to offer it to us by grace. With awe and trembling, and great joy, let us receive it by faith in the Risen Lord. Trust him to be with you now, and one day, to welcome you into His kingdom.

Yours, in Him

Pastor Dave

Men's First Saturday Bible Study

April 1, at 9:00 am, in the Lounge.
Galatians 1:11-2:10

Come join us for Bible study, sharing,
spiritual conversation and prayer!

Upcoming Sermons

April 2

Celebration of the Lord's Supper
Luke 19:1-10

"The Gospel and a Changed Life"

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."
(Luke 19:8–10 ESV)

April 9

Palm Sunday

Guest Preacher: The Rev. Lisle Kauffman
Luke 19:28-45

"The Triumphal Entry Revisited: Some Thoughts for Today"

April 13

Maundy Thursday

7:30 pm

Matthew 27:32-54

"Christ's Agony and Our Salvation"

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
(Matt 27:45–46 ESV)

April 14

Good Friday Tenebrae Service
7:30 pm

April 16

Easter Sunday

Day of Resurrection

Matthew 28:1-15

"I Have Seen the Lord"

But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. (Matt 28:5–8 ESV)

April 23

Matthew 18:16-20

"Making Disciples"

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
(Matt 28:19–20 ESV)

April 30

Luke 16:19-31

"The Rich Man and Lazarus"

But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'" (Luke 16:29–31 ESV)