

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 26:47-56.**
- B. There are many ways to view the crucifixion and today we want to look at the 4 thieves of the crucifixion. When we think of the Calvary we usually only think of 2 thieves but actually there are 4 to be considered.
- C. **Jesus was treated like a thief** (Mt. 26:55).
At that time Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me."
- D. The four thieves are:
 - 1. The thief that **regretted**.
 - 2. The thief who was **replaced**.
 - 3. The thief who **rebelled**.
 - 4. The thief who **repented**.

II. THE THIEF WHO REPENTED.

- A. This is speaking of **Judas**.
- B. At one time Judas was successful, appreciated, chosen by X, held a position of trust (treasurer), and preached about the kingdom.
- C. But because of greed he fell and betrayed the Lord. Judas was a thief (Jn. 12:6). He sold out for 30 pieces of silver (Mt. 26:14-16).
(Jn 12:6) Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.
(Mt 26:14-16) Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?" And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Him.
- D. Judas "repented himself" the scripture says, but this was not true repentance. The different Greek words used to show that **true repentance looks both backward and forward**, where in Mt. 27:3, Judas **remorse only looked backward**.
Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,...

II. THE THIEF WHO WAS REPLACED.

- A. This is **Barabbas**.
- B. It was a custom to release a prisoner at Passover (Mt. 27:15).
Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the multitude any one prisoner whom they wanted.
- C. Barabbas was a notorious prisoner, distinguished for great crimes. Pilate never mentions crimes, just the name is enough (compare with Hitler).
- D. Barabbas was tried, convicted and awaiting execution while Jesus was found innocent by Pilate (Lk. 23:20).
And Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again,
- E. The crowd desired a murderer and wanted to kill the Prince of Life (Ac. 3:14-15).
"But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses."
- F. Jesus took his place at the cross.

III. THE THIEF WHO REBELLED.

- A. This is the **thief who did not ask to be remembered**.
- B. This thief kept on attacking Jesus (railed at him) expressing bitterness (Lk. 23:39).
And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"

- C. Sadly, the **man died in a state of rebellion**, in spite of rebuke and repentance of the other thief and a Savior close at hand.

IV. THE THIEF WHO **REPENTED**.

- A. This is the **thief who asked to be remembered**.
- B. This thief had **a change of heart**, must have had **a fear of God**, recognizing death was at hand, he **was concerned about his spiritual state** (Lk. 23:40-42).
But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? **41** "And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." **42** And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"
- C. This thief in affect was admitting his sin and the almighty power of **Jesus**.
- D. **Paradise was his reward** (Lk. 23:43).
And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Lessons to be learned from these four thieves:
1. The **thief who regretted** characterizes those who know of their sin but do not do anything about it.
 2. The **thief who was replaced** characterizes everyone. Jesus died for all men (2Cor. 5:15). We can escape spiritual death if we will but follow Jesus.
...and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
 3. The **thief who rebelled** characterizes those in the world who are so close to believers, hear the rebuke of the faithful against sin but persist in doing wrong with even death close at hand.
 4. The **thief who repented** characterizes those who see their need for a Savior and except Jesus to receive the reward of life after death.
- B. **Who are we like?** Thief #1, or #2 or #3 or #4?
- C. **What must** we do, to be like thief #4?
- D. To those who:
1. Know of their need to follow Jesus... come!
 2. Want to know more about following Jesus... come!
 3. Want to follow Jesus more perfectly... come!
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.