



SERIES: November – December – Walking with Jesus

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Thursday, 12/30/2021

Scripture: Luke 23:33-34, 39-43

TITLE: Passport to Paradise

A few years ago, I flew into New Delhi, India. I handed over my documents to the official. He looked at them. He looked at me. He did some typing on the computer. And he said, “Mr. Crawford, we need some more time with you.” For the next 30 minutes, I began to panic. What was wrong? Why wasn’t my passport working? What was the hold-up? Well, finally, the official called me over and said, “Welcome to India, Mr. Crawford.” And I was let in.

Jesus today offers us a passport to paradise. But He doesn’t want you to sweat if you’re getting in or not. How can you be so sure that your passport is good? Jesus gives us the answer beginning in Luke 23:33-34, 39-43 (CSB).

When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided his clothes and cast lots....

Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other answered, rebuking him: “Don’t you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? We are punished justly, because we’re getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

And he said to him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

This is why Jesus Christ came to die. He came to die for the sins of the world. Jesus was God in the flesh. He was perfect. He was tempted to sin but never did. He fulfilled the law of God that we could not. He died for you and me. But he didn’t die for the prideful, the religious elite, for the spiritually healthy. He died for the broken sinners.

You see these two men dying next to Jesus. One is prideful and spiteful. He doesn’t think he needs saving. He doesn’t think Jesus can save him. The other man is broken. He’s repentant. He sees his need, and the solution is Jesus. Jesus offered Him a passport to paradise, and he gladly received it.

This is how you can be sure of your passport to paradise. It all begins with repentance, brokenness, and a fully recognized need for Jesus. Then it's just a matter of belief or trust in Jesus' sufficiency. Ephesians 2 says we are saved by grace through faith. It's a gift that, once it is received, it can never be lost or revoked.

So here's my challenge for you today: if you've never received Jesus as Lord and Savior, do so today. It's not about what you can do. It's about what Christ did on that cross. If you're saved but are doubting your salvation, cling to the cross of Christ. Your passport is yours forever. Celebrate it and then rest in God's grace.

When we live by our passport to paradise, we win today and eternity.