

# People Jesus met

## Week 3 A thief Luke 23:38-43

### Small group questions

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**Leaders:** choose some, but not all of the following questions. Email me with any questions. Mark.

#### **Introductory question**

1. What's your initial reaction to the concept of deathbed conversions? How do you reconcile the idea of last-minute salvation with a lifetime of service to God?

#### **Save Yourself!**

2. How does the first criminal's comment, "Save yourself!" reveal his misunderstanding of Jesus' mission?
3. In what ways do people today "mock" Jesus, treating Him as less than who he truly is?
4. How does Jesus' willingness to die on the cross demonstrate his love and commitment to saving humanity?

#### **Don't You Fear God?**

5. What does the second criminal's response, "Don't you fear God?" reveal about his understanding of God and his own situation?
6. How does the concept of "fear of God" relate to our daily lives and decisions?
7. Note the three steps the second criminal took to demonstrate his faith in Jesus: acknowledging sin, recognising Jesus' for who is, and depending on him. Discuss how these match the steps for anyone today coming into relationship with God.

#### **Today You Will Be with Me!**

8. How does Jesus' response to the second criminal's request exceed his expectations?
9. On what basis does Jesus offer salvation to the second criminal, and how does this apply to us?
10. What does this account teach us about the nature of salvation and the work of Jesus on the cross?

#### **The Challenge**

11. How do we balance the idea of God's justice and mercy in the face of sin and rebellion?

#### **Take home**

14. What's one key takeaway from this passage, and how will you apply it to your life this week?

*Lord, thank you for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Help us to acknowledge our sin, recognize Jesus for who he is, and depend on your mercy. May the words of the second criminal inspire us to fear you with reverence and awe. May Jesus' promise to him – "Today you will be with me in paradise" – fill us with hope and assurance. May his promise of salvation inspire us to live with humility, faith, and reverence. Fill us with hope and assurance. In Jesus' name. Amen.*