

## The Second Word: Christ Intervenes

**"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).**

**This second word verifies the sincerity of the first.** Christ came to save, and this word imparts salvation. But do not lose the context. To whom was Jesus saying this?

Here was a criminal, justly accused and sentenced. He had obviously lived an immoral life or at least acted out what was in his wicked, covetous heart. Matthew's account has him throwing abusive insults at Christ (27:44). Here he was, in his last hours of life on earth, experiencing the cursed execution of crucifixion which, under Jewish law, removed him from any possibility of life in the hereafter. And he was cursing the only One who could save him. Somewhere in this mess, the thief's heart was changed. *"Remember me,"* he cries. In abject humility, he calls on Jesus for life in the hereafter, a recognition of Jesus as Savior, Lord, and King.

The focus, however, is Jesus' response. He could have said, "Too late, buddy. You just got done insulting Me and you want My forgiveness? You're getting exactly what you deserve." But He didn't. Instead, Christ's response was the grace-gift of eternal life. It is as if Jesus was saying, *"There is a heaven, and I control who gets there. I see your faith in Me and your repentant heart. You're in!"* It is never too late to come to Christ. No matter what you have done, He will receive you. Jesus promised in John 6:37, *"...the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."* That means you!

**Make it personal:** Take a key from the container at the foot of the cross. Put it in your pocket and carry it around as a reminder. It is only through Him that entrance into heaven is guaranteed. His promise of heaven is the only key you need! The **third word** is across the room. Follow the **red** line.