

Sermon Title: The Words of Christ on the Cross, Part II 3.8.2026

Theme: A real place called Heaven. Live-streaming and sermon notes are at trinitycg.org.

Focus Question: Will you be there?

Sermon Points:

1. Truth. Luke 23:43. To appreciate this verse, we need to understand what was happening. Jesus, and the thief to whom He was speaking, were being crucified on a cross. Crucifixion was a particularly humiliating and painful form of execution. While not inventing it, the Romans certainly perfected it. Here we have Jesus speaking to the repentant thief in the midst of excruciating pain...in fact, from the Latin word for crucifixion we derive our word for "excruciating." Excruciating in Latin is *excruciatus*, meaning "out of the cross." Despite all of that, **Luke 23:43** affirms what Jesus said in **John 14:6**. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through Him. But where are they going when they place their faith in Christ? Paradise. Heaven. The eternal presence of our Heavenly Father.

2. Paradise. Revelation 2:7. Jesus and the thief, being crucified, were far from paradise. They were in pain! So, what exactly was Jesus inviting the thief to? Jesus and the thief weren't in paradise in *that* moment! For those in Christ, the paradise for which we are destined is far better than any place in this life. An eternity with God in Heaven is a better paradise than we can even imagine. Though crucifixion involved great suffering, the paradise granted by God's grace through faith in Christ is a place of no anguish, no regret, and no suffering. **Revelation 21:4.**

How do we get to Paradise? **I Thessalonians 4:13-14, 2 Corinthians 5:7-8, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, and Ephesians 2:8-9.** It is faith plus nothing else that allows us to enter the eternal presence of Jesus Christ. The key to enter through the gates of Heaven is Jesus...plus nothing else. Just as we cannot work our way into Heaven, we cannot work our way out of Heaven. When a person gives his/her life to Christ, they did not earn their salvation, and they cannot lose their salvation. It is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. **Romans 10:9** and **John 1:12-13.** The way through the gates of Heaven and into paradise is by way of Jesus...and by Him only. The thief on the cross had nothing to give...no gift and no good works. Humbling himself before the Savior he received the gift of eternal life in paradise. He went from condemned to forgiven, from pain to praise, and from death to life in paradise with Jesus forever. He's there now. He was there yesterday. He'll be there tomorrow! He is known as *the thief on the cross*, but in reality he is *forgiven in paradise!* The paradise of Christ: a place far better than the thief had ever known! Come, now, sinner. Aren't you ready for paradise, the place Jesus has patiently prepared for His people? Are *you* counted among His people? The thief was. Paradise is waiting...will you be there with Jesus?

Reflection: Lord, give me the wisdom to know if my prayer requests are for me to be satisfied or for You to be glorified.