

# WHAT HE SAID ABOUT GRACE - 2

## Seven Sayings From the Cross

Assuredly, I say to you,  
today you will be with Me  
in paradise.  
– LUKE 23:43

**Principle #2:**  
Encourage others who are  
struggling and uncertain.

Rather than be  
preoccupied with your  
own pain, realize there  
are others experiencing  
the same struggle,  
but with even less  
resources to deal with it  
than you might have.

The Cross calls us to *Jesus*. The Cross also calls us to *a way of life*. Jesus' second statement is an expression of grace's readiness to give salvation, of God's immeasurable gentleness toward all who come to Him (promised in John 6:37). But Jesus' response to this bad day encounter is also instructive in how to live through such days of our own: Encourage others who are struggling or uncertain.

Whatever our bad day may involve, Jesus is calling us to meet fellow strugglers where they are, refusing to distance ourselves by reason of position or whatever resources we might have.

### WELCOME/WORSHIP

Share an occasion in which you witnessed someone giving out of their wealth or poverty.

**Read 2 Corinthians 8:9.** Use this passage as a focus for your worship time together which could come before or after your time in the Word. Consider songs from the "Savior's Sacrifice" section (312-387) in *Songs of Faith and Praise*.

### WORD

**Read Luke 23:38-43**

1. What do you know about these two criminals? How does knowing their background shed light on why they were so intent on jeering and mocking Jesus? [initially, both men were involved—Matthew 27:44]
2. How do you account for one criminal's sudden change of heart (vs 40)? What thinking is evident in his rebuke of the other criminal (vss 40-41) and in his request of Jesus (vs 42)?
3. Painfully, Jesus lifts Himself up, and offers the man a word of hope. What do you find outrageous or incredible about Jesus' reply (vs 43)? Why is this story a good example of the only way *anybody* is saved?
4. A gospel truth is certainly captured in this encounter (salvation by grace), but there's a discipleship principle as well: *though beset yourself, focus on encouraging others who are going through similar struggles*. Think of a time when you were encouraged by someone who had gone through a similar struggle. Share how their empathy and common experience helped you.
5. Likewise, how has God used a problem or struggle in your life to give you a perspective that enabled you to minister to others? **Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4** and reflect further on its implications for your life.
6. Often times those around us may have few, if any, spiritual resources to help them through bad days. How would this awareness help you reframe and see their situation in a more redemptive way?

### WORKS

It's easy to become preoccupied with our own situations and fail to recognize the needs of fellow strugglers. We have a tendency to think our own problems are worse than others, don't we? Take time this week to make a list and to pray for those you know who are going through "bad days." Every time you find yourself worrying about your own situation, use that as a reminder to pray for those on your list. Perhaps the Lord will use your prayer time to lead you to specific action on their behalf.