

August 23, 2020
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
Jesus Unmasked
Episode 3: The Virality Of Forgiveness
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Luke 23:32-43 (NLT)

³² Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. ³³ When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

³⁵ The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” ³⁶ The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. ³⁷ They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”³⁹ One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!” ⁴⁰ But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? ⁴¹ We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” ⁴³ And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Vs. 32 – 38 The cross & the crowd

- The paradox of the cross: The instrument used to express total rejection and dehumanization was God’s instrument for worldwide human reconciliation.

Genesis: 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.

- The result of Jesus’s death and resurrection is equal opportunity forgiveness.
- The cross is not transactional for Jesus, but the fullest expression of his heart for humanity.
- An essential element in unmasking Jesus is discovering genuine, amazement, awe, and adoration for Jesus Christ.

Vs. 39 – 43 The criminal’s conversion

- Repentance is a shifting of the heart away from Death and towards Life.
- The pathway to freedom is forgiveness.

“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.”
~ Lewis B. Smedes

- It is more important that we forgive authentically than immediately.

A Viral Gospel:

- A major contributing factor to the virality of the Gospel, is its offer of individual worth and forgiveness to the lowest in society.

Luke 7:47 *“I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.”*

- If we are forgiven of much, then in genuine gratitude, we love much; and love is contagious.

Respond

1. Spend 5-10 minutes in prayer this week searching your heart for areas in which you might need forgiveness; then ask and repent.
2. Spend 5-10 minutes in prayer this week focusing on praise.
3. Is there anyone in your life in which you need to extend forgiveness? Begin that process, even if it's slow.
4. The virality of the gospel was dependent on human beings impacted by Jesus sharing about Jesus. Pick one person this week to open up a conversation about Jesus with.