

Last Sunday of the Church Year
“Savior, remember me also when You come in Your Kingdom!”
Luke 23:39-43
November 23, 2025
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this Last Sunday in the Church Year is from our Gospel reading, Luke 23:39-43.

“39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”
40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43 And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

So far the text:

On this last day of the Church Year, our text tells us of Jesus’ last day of His life in the state of His humiliation. Jesus entered this world humbly in a wooden manger with no room for Him in an inn. And He left this world most humbly, crucified to a wooden cross. His space was confined by nails through His hands and feet.

On Jesus’ last day, He was sneered at by the rulers, by the soldiers and by the two men who were justly punished on both His right and His left. Yes, Jesus was associated with the worst of the worst of humanity on His last day of life. He was counted with them, undifferentiated from them, condemned with them.

Sinful humanity sneered at Him and taunted Him – **“He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.”**

“If”. On Jesus’ last day of His life, Jesus was surrounded with unbelief. If He really is who He says He is, then let’s see You prove it. If Jesus is the Messiah, the King, then surely it would not be a difficult thing to save Himself!

Yes, one of the suffering criminals, on his last day of his life, tried to make himself feel better by also unloading a blasphemy on Jesus.

“If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” For to not recognize Jesus as the Son of God is a blasphemy and a blatant show of unbelief. On his last day of life, he condemned himself to an eternity in hell.

And yet, on the last day of life for the other criminal, God worked a miracle of faith. There welled up a heartfelt acknowledgement of guilt. “We deserve what we’re getting”. There was a rebuke of the other criminal, “Don’t you fear God?” And there was a profession of faith, **“Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”**

Lord! The same words that Thomas would say three days later to the risen and exalted Jesus. “My Lord and my God!

Yes! Jesus was indeed saving the world and this repentant criminal by not saving Himself. It was the only way to save all of sinful humanity, including us! For Jesus was given the name which means “He will save the people from their sins.”

On this criminal’s last day of life, he professed his Savior and then lifted up a prayer to Him. “Remember me”

Yes, he feared God, and he trusted in Jesus that as unworthy as he was, Jesus would remember him in mercy. He believed that Jesus would come again in His glorious kingdom on the last day. And on that last day, which we also think on this last day of the church year, this criminal asked that he would not be forgotten.

And then comes the most beautiful response that a Christian, every believer can take much comfort from – today you will be with me in paradise!

Yes, I will remember you on that last day because I will always be with you from now and eternally. Today you will be with Me where I’m going – to heaven!

Most assuredly this is true! There are no doubts! It won’t be long now and you will be in the world from which I came from – paradise! There is no suffering there! There is no death! There is no evil or sneering or taunting! It is yours right now because you have trusted in Me as your Savior.

And those precious words, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus speaks to each of us on our last day, whenever that day may come. Today you will be with Me in paradise! Your last day is your paradise day! Your last day is your Today with Me for an eternity of joy and bliss.

There is no wait. There is no purgatory. There is no need for the help of the merits of the saints. They avail nothing. What avails is Jesus' suffering and death once and for all for all the sins of the world. It is finished, Jesus said. He accomplished the salvation of the world.

And He rose three days later to prove that He wasn't just offering empty promises on the cross. He showed the nail prints to His disciples and proclaimed peace to them! You have peace now and on your last day because Jesus has reconciled the world to Himself.

So as you wait for your last day, which may be the last day of the world, stay strong in the faith in the face of sneering and taunting. Rebuke unbelief. Proclaim Christ crucified for all people.

Receive the very body and blood of your Savior which assures you that you will be with Jesus on your last day of life. Jesus gave us this gift of His Last Supper to keep you strong in the faith until He comes again. And know for sure that He remembers your sins no longer, but will never forget or forsake you, baptized child of God.

Come Lord Jesus, come quickly to take us to Your paradise. Amen

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)