LYRICAL DEVOTIONAL · DAY 113

# Jesus' Second Word From the Cross

> *Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise.*
> **LUKE 23:43**

**Written by Bill Perkins**

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One of the most encouraging stories
in the Gospels
is about the thief
who hung on the cross
beside Jesus.

In the earliest minutes
he joined the other thief
and mocked Him.
Luke says he hurled insults:
"If You are the Christ,
save Yourself and us."
Luke 23:39

And all this time
Jesus kept repeating:
"Father, forgive them.
They don't know
what they're doing."

While slowly suffocating
that dying criminal
experienced a miracle.

He had seen the name
above Jesus' head:
Jesus of Nazareth
King of the Jews

He had heard forgiveness.
He had watched innocence
suffer without hatred.
But he had not truly seen.

Then-
in a moment-
he did.

He saw a King
with an eternal kingdom-
a King who could grant him entrance.

So he made a simple request:
"Jesus, remember me
when You come into Your kingdom."
Luke 23:42

And Jesus answered
with more than he asked:
"Today you will be with Me
in paradise."

Today.
Not tomorrow.
Not only in a place.
But with a person-the King.

Here are all the things
he didn't do-
and would never do:

He would never be baptized.
He would never join a church.
He would never take communion.
He would never give an offering.
He would never serve the poor.
He would never repair the damage he caused.
He would never study Scripture.
He would never pray.
He would never evangelize.
He would never earn salvation.

The thief on the cross
brought nothing but belief-
and Jesus gave him paradise.

You may not know this about Jesus:
lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness, He saves all who look.

What keeps me from simply looking
to the One lifted up
and believing as he did?

Just as Jesus told Nicodemus:
"As Moses lifted up the serpent,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
that whoever believes in Him
may have eternal life."
John 3:14-15.

Salvation rests not on my performance
but on a King
who saves all
who look to Him.

Father, thank You
that eternal life comes
through the One lifted up for me.
Teach me to look and believe.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.