

Message: Remember Me. Luke 23:42-43



James Tissot - The Penitent thief on the cross

Jesus' crucifixion lasted 6 hours. He was crucified around 9 am. At noon the sky darkened. At 3 pm he died. Over those 6 hours Jesus was harangued by the leaders of Jerusalem and the Roman soldiers. Even the criminals crucified with him began reviling him. But nearing noon one of the criminals had a change of heart...

Crucifixion was a brutal ugly affair, it was designed to inflict the most pain and public humiliation possible. The Romans reserved it for only the worst criminals, insurrectionist or rebellious slaves.

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The two men who were crucified with Jesus were identified by the gospel writers as “thieves” and “insurrectionists”. Likely, in the commission of their crimes a person was seriously injured or killed. Their original feeling about Jesus was a reflection of this brutal anger and a deflection of the shame and humiliation they personally felt. Yet one of them had a change of heart as he observed the character of Jesus during the hours they hung together on the Cross. Nearing the end...one of the criminals asks Jesus to “remember me, when you come into your kingdom”.

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Then he said to Jesus,
“Lord, remember me
when You come into Your
kingdom.”

And Jesus said to him,
“Assuredly, I say to you,
today you will be with
Me in Paradise.”

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Maya Lin in 1981 was an undergraduate student at Yale. Her professor tasked their architectural design class with a design for the Vietnam memorial contest.

In 1981 the Veteran's Administration in an attempt to bring closure to the Vietnam war era ran a nationwide contest to select a suitable war memorial to be installed in Washington. It was to include the names of the over 58000 military personnel who had died or were MIA during the war.

A young undergraduate student submitted her design along with over 1400 other people to the commission. The entries were assigned random numbers to allow for judges to select entrants based on merit alone. Maya Lin was surprised in her dorm room by a delegation informing her that her entry was selected.

Her professor, who had also entered the contest, had given her a "B" on the project in class.

Maya is the daughter of Chinese immigrants.

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Job 19:23-27

23 “Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!

24 That they were engraved on a rock With an iron pen and lead, forever!

25 For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;

26 And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, That in my flesh I shall see God,

27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me!

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Only 2 skeletal remains of crucifixion victims have been found. One is in such poor shape that little can be determined from the skeleton. The other was discovered in a 1st century tomb in Jerusalem in 1968. It was the skeleton of a young Jewish man about 30 years of age. His feet were severed from his body after crucifixion. One nail 7" in length was unable to be extracted from his heel bone so it was buried with his body. His name was Yehohananben Ezekiel.

Roman crucifixion was a brutal form of execution. Even though 100s of thousands were crucified we only have skeletal remain of 2 victims. One was uncovered when a dran was being put in and the skeleton is poorly preserved. The other is a surprising find from the time of Jesus in Jerusalem. The young man came from a wealthy family and for some reason was crucified. Unlike most victims of crucifixion his body was not exposed but buried in a family crypt. We even know his name Johannan son of Ezekiel. While there is some debate as to the nature of the crucifixion there is little doubt about the pain and humiliation visited upon this young man and his family. Even the leg was broken as described in the gospel accounts.

Without a doubt this young man had made some decisions that had got him crossways of the Roman government. These 2 thieves had by their own decisions gotten to the cross.

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Psalm 25:6-7

6 Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they *are* from of old.

7 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.

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The Vietnam memorial was installed in December of 1982 within 2 years it was one of the most visited monuments in Washington DC. It brought healing and closure to our nation after a difficult war.

The memorial begins at the center with the date 1959 at the top and ends again at the center bottom of the bisecting wall with the date 1975. In between are the name of over 58,000 military personell who gave their lives [or are missing in action]. The cut is intended to remind the person viewing it of a wound that is healing.

The polished black granite reflects the image of the person viewing it to make them part of the memory.


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2 Corinthians 6:1-3

1 We then, *as workers together with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.



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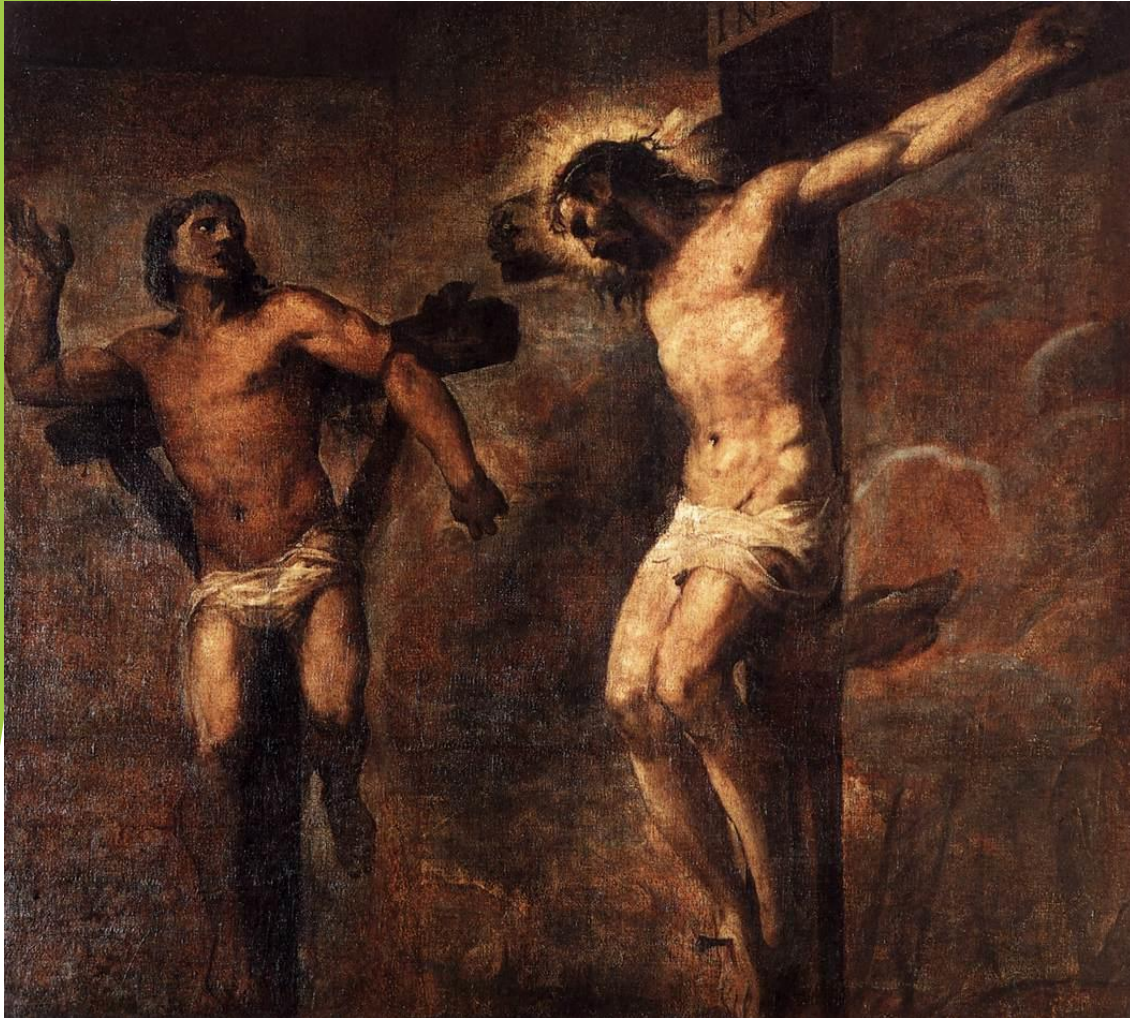
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Two additions were made to Maya's original design to address concerns. A statue of 3 Vietnam era servicemen honoring the living veterans and a flagpole with an American flag, reflecting the patriotic sacrifice of those who served. It still remains one of the most popular monuments in Washington with mementos left to remember loved ones and colleagues who are deeply missed. The mementos are carefully collected and honorable stored in memory of those who have died.

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The Good Thief - Titian 1560s

Job 14:12-15

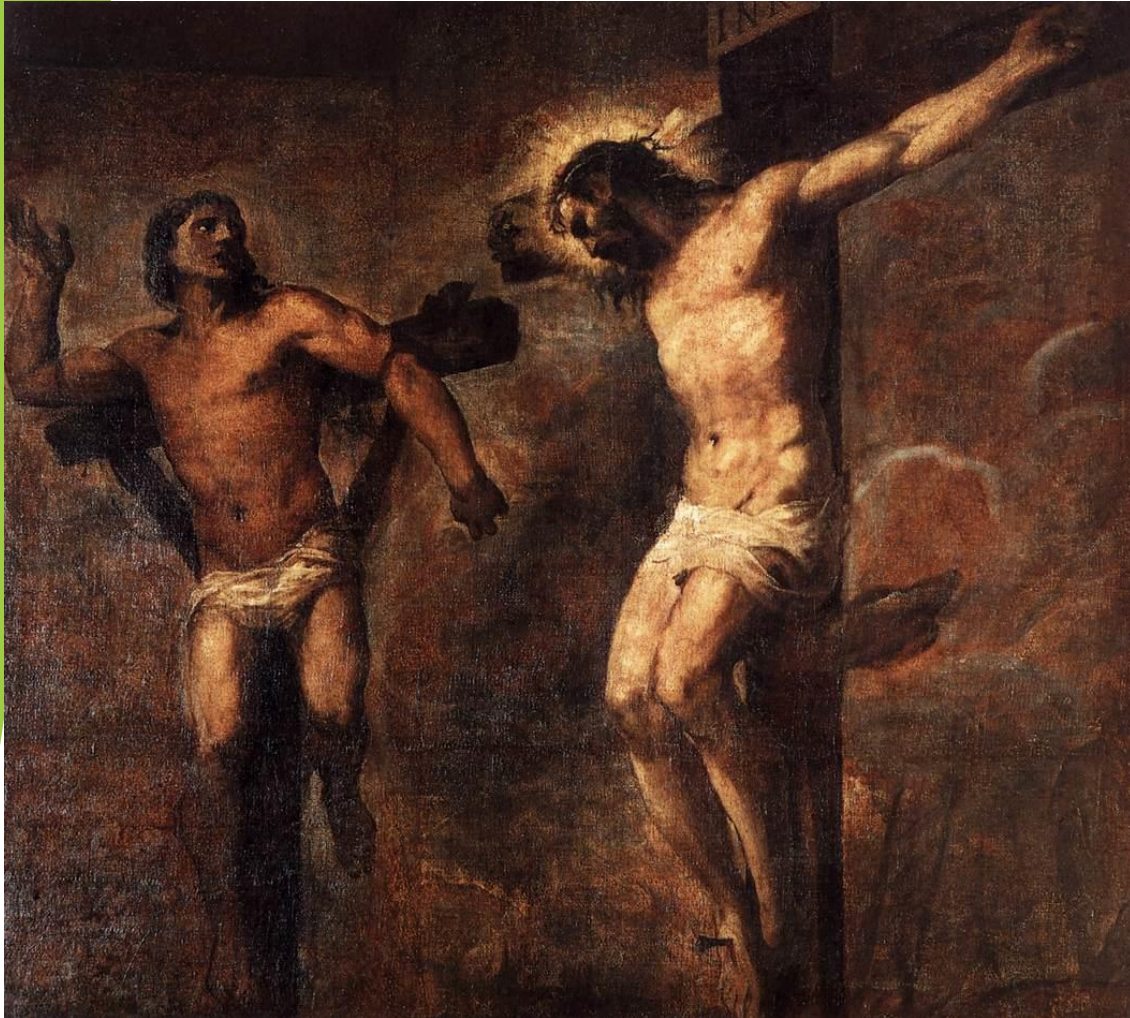
12 So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens *are* no more, They will not awake Nor be roused from their sleep.

13 “Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14 If a man dies, shall he live *again*? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes.

15 You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands.

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The Good Thief - Titian 1560s

It is important to be remembered by Christ.

Jesus answered the Thief on the cross with the promise that he would be with him. Paul tells us as Christians that when we die we go to be with Christ until the resurrection and that after the resurrection we will be in his presence forever. It is an astounding promise to a thief who did not deserve it and it is a promise to us who do not deserve it...it is the grace of the moment if you will accept it.