

The 6 Essentials of Salvation

By Charlie Lucas

(Based on the encounter of the thief on the cross next to Jesus. Luke 23:35-43)

1. An Encounter with Jesus:

The leaders of one of the world's greatest religions, Judaism, were at this crucifixion because they wanted to see Jesus put to death. They were supposedly the experts on how to get to heaven. They were experts on how to make yourself look good enough get into heaven. but all their religion did was to cause them to reject the Son of God with extreme prejudice. They were of absolutely no help to the second thief who asked Jesus to remember him. If all he had encountered that day was religion, he would have died in his sin, because it was too late for religion to do anything for him. Religion didn't keep these religious leaders from having Jesus, the sinless Son of God, put to an excruciating death on a cross. Religion didn't help these religious leaders, it wouldn't have helped this thief, and it won't help you. It is crucial that you have an encounter Jesus. If there is no encounter with Jesus, there can be no Salvation.

2. An Ownership of Sin:

This thief is fully aware that his sin has brought this sentence of death on him. He says to the other thief, "We are receiving what we deserve for what we did." He knows that his sin was causing him to be ejected from this life and he knew that his sin would cause him to be ejected from the next life as well. He is honest about himself and the sin he committed in this life. Jesus is truth and to encounter Him you have to encounter Him in the truth about your sin. If there is no ownership of your sin, there can be no Salvation.

3. A Plea to Jesus:

This thief asked Jesus to do something for him that he could not do for himself. He asks Jesus to include him in His kingdom. He knows he could never gain entrance into the kingdom of such a righteous man since he had

lived such a wicked life. But he still asked Jesus not to exclude him. This thief was asking for mercy from Jesus who he believes was the King God has promised to send. If you don't call out to Jesus asking Him to do what you could never do for yourself, there can be no Salvation.

4. A Faith in Jesus:

No one in this story, except the one thief being crucified next to Jesus, believed that Jesus could save Himself. They were all mocking Him because none of them believed He was who He had claimed to be. They knew He claimed that He would bring Salvation to the people of Israel. None of them believed Jesus could save Himself let alone anyone else. This thief was the only one in this story who had faith that Jesus could save not only Himself, but someone who asked Him to save them. Faith always pleased Jesus. If there is no faith that Jesus can and will save you, there can be no Salvation.

5. A Response from Jesus:

Because this thief came to Jesus confessing his sinfulness, because this thief called out to Jesus asking Jesus to do for him what he could not do for himself, because he asked believing that Jesus was the Savior whom God had sent, Jesus responded. Jesus will always respond to someone who comes to Him in their sin and calls out to Him in faith. The first thief wanted Jesus to save him also. But he was mocking Jesus trying to coerce Him into saving him from the consequences of his sin rather than save him from his sin. He didn't believe that Jesus could do anything for anyone else since Jesus couldn't do anything about His own situation. Jesus responded to the second thief, but not the first. If Jesus doesn't respond, then something isn't right yet, and you need to back up and reevaluate things. If there is no response from Jesus, there can be no Salvation.

6. A Relationship with Jesus:

The last thing Jesus said to the second thief was, "Today you will be with Me in paradise." Jesus didn't save this thief so he could become part of a religion. Jesus saved him so he could be with Jesus in paradise or heaven.

Jesus saves us to a relationship with Himself, not a religion. The religious in this story hated Jesus. They wanted to see Him put to death. Why would Jesus want to save someone so they could be part of a religion? He wants to have a loving relationship with you. He wants you to enjoy a relationship with Him. The end result of the Salvation Jesus brings is a relationship with Him. If there is no relationship, there can be no Salvation.