



Fresh Oil



April 2018 (reprise from 2012)

Dear Fellow Servants,

There is no doubt about it, the most important day of the year for Christians is Easter, the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus had stayed in the grave the whole plan and purpose of God would have been nullified. The resurrection gives us hope in this fallen world that there is a better life beyond this one. That better life, however, does not begin at death, but rather at the point of entering into a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Luke records the story of the 2 thieves who were crucified along with our Lord on that first Good Friday on Golgotha. Both of these notorious, hardened criminals were receiving the just sentence of their crimes, but one of them had a change of heart after hearing Jesus' incredible statement of forgiveness to those who had unjustly offered Him up. Look at Luke 23:34:

***But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they
Do not know what they are doing."***

Somewhere, somehow in those painful moments of public execution, one of these outlaws recognized an opportunity to get right with God. It would not, and could not, be based on his own merit. He had but a few hours, if even that, to live. No, he would need the mercy of God to set his heart free and that is what he appealed to in his agony. Look what he said to the Lord in Luke 23:42:

***And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when
You come into Your kingdom."***

That word, *remember*, is a significant word. It was a request from this man for Jesus to "be mindful" of him, or to take careful thought of him. Gravestones in ancient Palestine had a prayer petition found on them beseeching to be remembered at the resurrection. What this man was doing was getting his request in while he still had breath. He knew his time was short and that the window of opportunity was closing fast. There was no altar call, no discipleship courses, no eloquent prayer of acceptance here. No, it was the cry of a sinner's heart made in the direction of a merciful Saviour. Jesus acknowledged that this man's request was heartfelt and responded with a powerful promise, as recorded in Luke 23:43:

***And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today
You shall be with Me in Paradise."***

... I have been anointed with fresh oil

PSALM 92:10



Today is the celebration of Christ's resurrection. There is no better day than this one to give your heart to the Lord and ask Him to come in and be your Saviour. He won't barge in uninvited, though. He wants to know that you actually *want Him*. It is really quite simple. James, one of Jesus' earthly brothers, wrote these simple words in James 4:8:

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

The way we "draw near" to God is through prayer. We simply need to ask Him to come into our life and He will do just that. Have you ever done that? If not, why not do that today? It doesn't have to be fancy. The simple cry of your heart will get the Saviour's attention, just as it did for the penitent thief on the cross. Pray something like this:

"Lord Jesus, I want You to be my Saviour and save me from my sins. I confess my sins to you and ask you to come into my heart (life) and be my Saviour. I will live for You from now on. I pray in Your name. Amen."

Go and tell someone today that you have made this important decision. Start attending church every week and reading the Bible each day. Also, pray to the Lord each day and ask Him to help you live your life for Him. This is the best and most important decision you will ever make. I know because I made the same decision almost 30 years ago. Your life will never be the same.

Your fellow servant,

Pastor Brian