



- The words from the cross connect us to the **person** on the cross. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. Romans 5:8 (NLT)

- The words from the cross connect us to the **love** of the cross. This is what real love is: It is not our love for God; it is God's love for us. He sent his Son to die in our place to take away our sins. 1 John 4:10 (NCV)

- The words from the cross connect us to **God's plan** for the cross. Christ also suffered. He died once for the sins of all us guilty sinners although he himself was innocent of any sin at any time, that he might bring us safely home to God. 1 Peter 3:18 (TLB)

- **Death** is part of **life**.

The most current statistics tell us that **100%** of us will die. Everyone must die once, and after that be judged by God. Hebrews 9:27 (GNT) Everyone has to die once, then face the consequences. Hebrews 9:27 (MSG)

Confidence concerning eternity allows us to:

- Live with **peace**.
- Live with **hope**.
- Live without **fear**.
- Live with **joy**.

But he (Jesus) also died to rescue all of us who live each day in fear of dying. Hebrews 2:15 (CEV)
Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Matthew 27:38
Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him. Mark 15:32b
One of the criminals hanging beside Jesus hurled insults at him. "If you are the Messiah, prove it by saving yourself—and us!" Luke 23:39

- "If you're **real, prove it**."

4 things that changed the criminals destiny:

- He believed that he would **face God**. "Don't you even fear God when you are dying? Luke 23:40 (TLB)

Only a fool would go through life **unprepared** for something he knows is inevitable.

Many don't want to think about facing God is because:

- We don't understand **God's love**. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. John 3:17 (MSG)
- We don't understand **God's forgiveness**. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust. Psalm 103:12-14 (NLT)
O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help. Psalm 86:5 (NLT)

- He realized he was a **sinner**.

We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve... Luke 23:41a (NIV)
For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Romans 3:23 (NLT)

- He recognized that Jesus is **different**. But this man has done nothing wrong. Luke 23:41b (NIV)

- He believed that Jesus could **save** him. Then he said, "Jesus, remember me..." Luke 23:42a (NIV)

It's not about the **words** we say but the **heart** that forms our words. If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9 (CSB)
Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43 (NIV)

I promise that today you will be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43 (CEV)

Our confidence of God's salvation is based on:

- God **promises** eternal life for those that **love** Him.

"I promise..." Luke 23:43 (CEV)
...in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time... Titus 1:2 (NIV)

- God **provides** eternal life **quickly**.

"...today..." Luke 23:43 (NIV)
And we are not afraid but are quite content to die, for then we will be at home with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8 (TLB)

- God has a **place** to be together with **Him**.

"... be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43 (NIV)
...I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. John 14:3 (ESV)
So our bodies return to the earth, and the life-giving breath returns to God. Ecclesiastes 12:7 (CEV)

Bottom line:

Saving faith is **simple** faith.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesian 2:8-9 (NIV)

Anyone can be **saved**.

"Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (NLT)

Your confidence with God reflects your **heart** before God.



**TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE
IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.**

Questions for Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain why?
- Do you have absolute confidence that you will go to heaven? In your own words tell why you have this confidence? In your opinion, do most people have this confidence? Why?
- Do you find that having confidence about your eternity allows you to live with peace, hope and joy? Why?
- Talk through the 4 points (and sub-points) that changed the criminals destiny.
- How do we know we are saved? What is required to be saved? What did the criminal have to do?
- Do you absolutely believe that God can and will forgive your past? What do you base that on?
- In your own words, what is simple faith?

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