

Real Death, Real Hope

Description

[RG AUDIO 040317](#)

Luke 23:26-46

Luke's account of the crucifixion of Jesus is powerfully personal. We meet real people: Soldiers callously going about their grisly duty; Simon of Cyrene, suddenly thrust under Christ's cross and forced to carry it; and two criminals, who were crucified beside Him.

One of the criminals even joined in their taunts. The other criminal spoke in Jesus's defense: "We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong" (v. 41). He then asked to be remembered when Christ entered His kingdom. Jesus responded with the beautiful assurance: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (v. 43).

The blunt reality of Jesus's death has dimmed somewhat for us, becoming part of our religious imagery and ritual. Luke confronts us with its painful reality and invites us, along with Christ's crucified companion, to receive His word by faith. When our eyes close in death, we will open them in paradise.

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