

In Luke 23:35-43 we read the story of the only man who spoke up for Jesus as he was being crucified. The spectators just watched, the rulers sneered at Him, the soldiers mocked Him, and even one of the criminals who was hung beside Him hurled insults at Him.

But the other criminal somehow knew that Jesus was innocent and rebuked his fellow.

“Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”¹

He then made an absolutely outlandish and audacious request:

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”²

Think about the situation! What an inopportune time to desire membership into what would seem to be the most unlikely of kingdoms, as its leader hung dying on a cross!

This criminal was being totally sincere in spite of his tremendous agony. Through the fog of pain he saw the Truth that the Roman governor Pilate could not see³.

We must be able to see this Truth as well through the evil that is in the world – that from humble beginnings on earth to a shameful death this was indeed the Son of God⁴ and thus a King⁵! We also with confidence, or perhaps with audacity, approach the throne⁶.

Jesus answered the man’s request:

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”⁷

Christ seeks those with similar nerve, and invites us, as well, into His Kingdom. He has promised that we as His followers will be with Him as well.

In the elements of this communion, we see Christ’s death on the cross just as the criminal did. But we can see further to His resurrection and as such we can truly celebrate Him as our King!

1. Luke 23:40-41
2. Luke 23:42
3. John 18:38
4. Matthew 27:54 and Mark 15:39
5. Matthew 27:11, Luke 23:3 and John 18:33-37
6. Ephesians 3:12 and Hebrews 4:16
7. Luke 23:43