

## Twelve Feet of Separation

April 1, 2012

Vol. 2 Num. 14

LUKE 23:32-43

### Core Competency:

**Humanity-** I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

*“For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

### Using This Study

#### ❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

#### ❷ DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

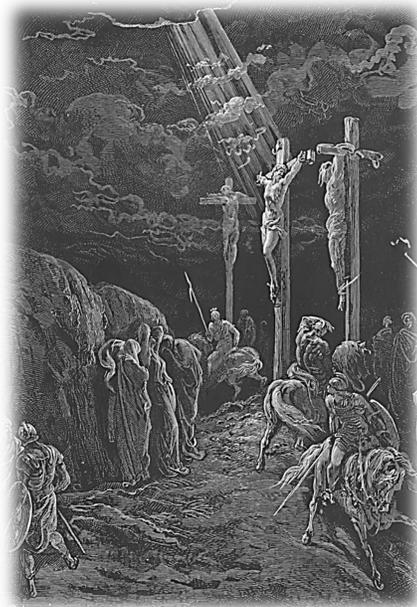
#### ❸ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God’s word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

### Introduction

For years, Elaine and Frank Beaupre served hundreds of free Christmas dinners to anyone in need. They would spend months preparing. They took donations, raised funds, and contributed much of their own money. Elaine did most of the cooking while Frank ran errands and helped organize volunteers. They opened their arms to needy families, to the homeless and people with no place else to go. From children to senior citizens, no one was ever turned away. The couple would serve any and all who came. No reservations needed. No holiday clothing required. No special grooming necessary. All you had to do was step through the door of the community hall in Keene, New Hampshire, and ask. As long as it was Christmas, it was never too late, and there was always plenty for everyone.

The Beaupres experienced their greatest joy in seeing others enjoy what they delighted in giving. This is a great illustration of Jesus’ heart. The One who came to seek and save the lost, demonstrates that it is never too late to accept His invitation. It is His delight. Come as you are. As Jesus hung dying on the cross, His last words were to forgive, to welcome a repentant sinner, and to issue a life giving promise, “Today you will be with me in paradise.” In so doing, God transformed this place of death into a place of life, not just to a thief, but to all who will, by faith, place their trust in Him.



### This Week

This week, consider the lengths to which God has gone to forgive your sins and reconcile you to Himself. Respond in kind. Open your arms. Love as generously as you are loved. Forgive as freely as God has forgiven you. To the extent that you allow God to work through you, your life will quietly and irresistibly issue God’s invitation to come as you are.

## ① EXAMINE His Word

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What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

### Read Luke 23: 32-43

32 Two others—criminals —were also led away to be executed with Him.

33 When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified Him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left.

34 [Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.” ] And they divided His clothes and cast lots.

35 The people stood watching, and even the leaders kept scoffing: “He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One!”

36 The soldiers also mocked Him. They came offering Him sour wine

37 and said, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!”

38 An inscription was above Him: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at Him: “Aren’t You the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!”

40 But the other answered, rebuking him: “Don’t you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment?”

41 We are punished justly, because we’re getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong.”

42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!”

43 And He said to him, “I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise.

## ② DISCOVER His Word

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What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

1.
  - a) What verbs are used to describe the actions of the crowd, the religious leaders, the soldiers and the criminals?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) What is extraordinary about the words of Jesus in Luke 23:34? Consider issues such as timing, Jesus’ focus, fairness or justice, the attitude of those present, Jesus’ physical condition, etc....
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2.
  - a) Do you think that forgiveness is a matter of the heart, a decision of the will, or both? Explain your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) (Colossians 3:12-13) How is forgiveness crucial in the life of a believer? Include, in your discussion, some thoughts on the negative effects of withholding forgiveness.

3. What practical steps might you take to forgive as Christ forgave? (Consider carefully, whether there is someone in your life that God is calling you to forgive).
  
4. Using each reference, write at least one principle or truths you can derive from Jesus interaction with the repentant thief and indicate how or why this is an encouragement to you.
  - a) Ephesians 2:8-9
  
  - b) 2 Corinthians 6:2
  
  - c) 2 Corinthians 7:10
  
  - d) John 3:36
  
5. How is the faith of the criminal in verses 40-42 remarkable? (Consider, by comparison, the belief of his followers in Luke 24:21)
  
6. What do you notice about Jesus' motivation for (Hebrews 12:1-3) and commitment to God's calling (Luke 19:10)?
  
7. Following Christ's example, how will you persevere and/or endure in the midst of difficult or painful circumstances?

## **③LIVE His Word**

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How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

Suggested Discussion:

**Sermon Notes:**

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# 30 CORE Competencies

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## 10 Core Beliefs

**Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Salvation by Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

**Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

**Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

**Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

**Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away God's Money** *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 Core Virtues

**Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

**Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

**Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

**Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

**Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ

## 10 Core Practices

**Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

**Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

**Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

**Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.