



CHECK-IN

- Check in. How is everyone doing? How did you experience God's love this week?

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 23:32-43

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by watching, but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

PRAYER REQUESTS

Spend some time sharing prayer requests with each other. As the small group leader, we ask that you do two things:

1. write them down
2. ask someone to pray

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think of the idea that there is more than one way to understand what happened on the cross?
- What is your understanding of sin? How have you experienced sin in your life? Do you agree that sin is an enemy?
- What would it look like for you to live as if Jesus' victory over sin and death is true today?

QUOTE: PHILIP YANCEY

"[The thief on the cross is] another shocking reminder that grace does not depend on what we have done for God but rather what God has done for us."

DID YOU KNOW?

The term *Christus Victor*, meaning "Christ the Victor," describes one of the earliest and most profound understandings of the atonement. This view emphasizes that Jesus' death on the cross was not just about paying a penalty for sin but a cosmic victory over the forces of sin, death, and evil that hold humanity captive. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus defeated these enemies and reclaimed creation for God. This understanding of the cross portrays Jesus as a divine champion who confronts the powers of darkness and triumphs over them. It highlights the liberation and restoration of humanity and all creation. *Christus Victor* reminds us that the cross is not merely a story of suffering but of triumph—God's love defeating evil and breaking the chains of death forever. This perspective shifts our focus from fear and defeat to hope and victory, reminding us that through Jesus, God's kingdom is breaking into the world, transforming it, and making all things new.