

Midweek Study Lesson Questions 03/11/2026

Sunday March 8, 2026

HE WAS COUNTED AMONG THIEVES, Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 27:24-26 Matthew 27:37

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I. Getting to Know "Yourself"

How do you serve others?

Explain the points that answer the following question from Sunday's sermon.

Why would God let His Son die with criminals?

1. Because He wasn't one.

2. Because we were sinners.

3. Because He wanted us to know that no matter how low we think we are, He went lower.

Pilate's wife sent word to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that _____ man, for today I've suffered terribly in a dream because of him."

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**HE WAS COUNTED AMONG THIEVES, Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 27:24-26
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Observation Question

What immediate promise did the penitent thief receive from Jesus, and what does this reveal about the nature of salvation?

Interpretation Question

How does the curse described in Deuteronomy 21:23 relate to Christ's death on the cross, and what does this mean for those who trust in Him?

Application Question

In what ways does the sermon encourage you when you feel like you have fallen low?

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[Matthew 27:15](#) At the festival the governor's custom was to release to the crowd a prisoner they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 17 So when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Who is it you want me to release for you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew it was because of envy that they had handed him over. Matthew was there. He was an eyewitness. So, he adds this interesting note that no other gospel mentions. He says...

Matthew 27:19 While he was sitting on the judge's bench, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I've suffered terribly in a dream because of him." 20 The chief priests and the elders, however, persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to execute Jesus. 21 The governor asked them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" "Barabbas!" they answered. 22 Pilate asked them, "What should I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?" They all answered, "Crucify him!" 23 Then he said, "Why? What has he done wrong?" But they kept shouting all the more, "Crucify him!"

[Matthew 27:35–38](#) "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left." In one of the greatest endings of all time, one of those criminals has the sense to ask Jesus to save him.

[Luke 23:39–43](#) "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.**"

[Philippians 2:5–8](#) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Key Takeaways:

- The Messiah willingly stooped to shame

Christ's humiliation was conscious and purposive: equal with God, he chose self-emptying and servanthood. That willingness to accept disgrace exposes the cost of redemption and reframes dignity as obedience rather than status. Contemplating this descent challenges habitual measures of worth and calls for imitation of sacrificial solidarity in daily life.

- Counted with criminals, not by guilt

Jesus' association with criminals was legal and vicarious—guilt and condemnation were transferred, not deserved. This legal identification reveals how divine justice and mercy intersect: condemnation falls where it belongs, and grace receives those condemned. Reflecting on imputation invites sober repentance alongside astonishment at substitution.

Key Takeaways:

- Going down precedes divine exaltation

The kenosis narrated in Philippians shows a divine pattern: humble obedience opens the way to exaltation, not as reward for ambition but as vindication of sacrificial love.

That pattern subverts worldly advancement and reorients ambition toward serving rather than being served. Practically, progress in holiness often follows a deliberate lowering of self-preferring claims.

- Salvation reaches the lowest places

The thief crucified beside Jesus received immediate pardon, demonstrating that grace meets people at their worst, not after improving. This reality dismantles despair and fuels hopeful outreach: no life is too profane for the scandalous reach of mercy.

Devotional attention to this truth cultivates courage to bring the most broken to the foot of the cross.