

Chris Murphy

October 15<sup>th</sup> 2023

Scripture: Luke 23: 32-43

Sermon Title: Compassion for the Future

Prayer...

Introduction:

Harriet Fowler Memorial on October 7<sup>th</sup>- Good to remember the gift of heaven.

What is your image of heaven?

Invite people to share:

Heaven Scriptures:

**John 14: 1-3**

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe[a] in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?[b] 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

**Rev. 7:9-12**

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb.”

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

“Amen!

Praise and glory

and wisdom and thanks and honor

and power and strength

be to our God for ever and ever.

Amen!”

### **Rev. 7:17**

for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,

and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,

and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

### **Revelation 19:6-9**

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God

the Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and exult

and give him the glory,  
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,  
and his Bride has made herself ready;  
8 it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure” —

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

9 And the angel said[a] to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

#### **Rev. 21: 1-4**

21 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’[b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

#### **Rev. 21:21**

21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

As we can tell from these texts about heaven, in the end as Christians we believe love wins. We believe that heaven is a wonderful place prepared for us.

Our story today of the two thieves and Jesus is also a wonderful reminder of the gift of heaven.

Summarize the story.

1. Notice Jesus has a heart of forgiveness from the cross even for those who are responsible for his crucifixion. They know not what they do.
2. One of the thieves throws insults at Jesus. If you are the Christ, save us.
3. The other thief is more humble. He rebukes the first thief and says, do you not fear God. We are getting punished for our crimes, but Jesus is innocent.
4. Then the second thief says to Jesus, Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus says, Today you will be with me in paradise.

I love this story because it shows the compassion Jesus has for the more humble thief who acknowledges his own sin and seeks grace for Jesus. I think this story also can give us hope about the future of who will go to heaven one day.

Story of memorial at Whitworth college...someone shared doubt about whether person will be in heaven. Made me sad and mad.

I believe when anyone dies they go before God and Jesus offers them salvation. I assume most people who meet Jesus will be like, okay this is God, I am dead. Now is probably a good time to humble myself before this loving God and be honest about my sins. I assume that Jesus will then say to those that humble themselves before him. I forgive you. Welcome into paradise.

Friends this is my picture of heaven, a place of grace and forgiveness.

Let us also remember the Lord's Prayer where Jesus teaches us to pray, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Here is an invitation for us to take the hope we have in heaven and live out our lives with the same compassion of Jesus for ourselves and for others. Let us be like the second thief not the first one. Let us not hurl insults at Jesus by the way we live. Instead let us

be humble and seek his grace and mercy. Then we will experience a taste of paradise right now. Remember eternal life begins right now as we follow Jesus together.

As we hope for salvation in heaven, let our compassionate few of the future help us to make a difference in our world right now. Let us not hurl insults through actions of violence in our world. Instead let us work for peace and be agents of healing rather than hate.

Let us pray...