

## FACES AROUND THE CROSS

Text: Luke 23:33-38

INTRO: An execution was a public spectacle. Today there were three men being crucified: two for robbery, one for high treason. He claimed to be King of the Jews. All kinds of people were gathered to see these men pay for their crimes--rich, poor, young, old, male, female. Let us take special notice of some who were in the crowd that day.

### I. FOES OF JESUS.

A. The Roman soldiers. They were brutal, hardened, cruel. These three were not the first men they had killed; they would not be the last. READ JOHN 19:23-24.

1. To these men, Jesus' clothes were just a trophy or a keepsake of another day's work.
2. There were some in the crowd to whom Jesus' clothing would have had great meaning. Mary. Perhaps the woman who had touched the hem of His garment. Or the apostle John.

B. The chief priests, elders & scribes of the Jews.  
READ MATTHEW 27:39-43.

C. The impenitent robber.  
Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him...(Matt. 27:44).

READ LUKE 23:39-41

### II. FRIENDS OF JESUS.

A. His mother. READ JOHN 19:25-27.  
The crowds, for the most part, had turned against Him. His apostles, tho perhaps hanging around in the background, had fled & were making themselves scarce. But there was one person in the crowd that day who would probably have traded places with Jesus if she could. She probably loved Him enough to have died to set Him free. Prob no one else on earth loved Him so.

B. The apostle John was there. Maybe Peter & the others

were somewhere a little farther back in the crowd.  
READ JOHN 19:26-27.

- C. One of the robbers crucified with him became a disciple or follower of Jesus before that long day was over.  
READ LUKE 23:39-43.

T. De Witt Talmage, a Presbyterian preacher shortly after the War Between the States, preached regularly to the largest congregation in the world of his day. Many of his sermons were published weekly in as many as 3,500 newspapers. In 1875, speaking of the penitent robber, He said, "There is but one instance mentioned in all the Bible of a man repenting in the last hour. All the other men who lived lives of iniquity, as far as we can understand from the Bible, died deaths of iniquity. If you live a drunkard's life, you will die a drunkard; the defrauder dies a defrauder; the idler dies an idler; the blasphemer dies a blasphemer; the slanderer dies a slanderer... As you live, you will die, in all probability. Do not, therefore, make your soul believe that you can go on in a course of sin, & then in the last moment repent. There is such a thing as a death-bed repentance, but I never saw one--I never saw one. God in all this Bible presents us only one case of that kind & it is not safe to risk it, lest our case should happen not to be the one amidst 10,000."

- D. The women of Galilee.  
Now there stood by the cross... His mother's sister,  
Mary the wife of Clopas & Mary Magdalene. (JN 19:25

READ MATTHEW 27:55-56

- E. There were other friendly faces in the crowd.  
And a great multitude of the people followed Him, &  
women who also mourned & lamented Him. (LK 23:27

Perhaps many He had healed were there. Joseph of  
Arimathea & Nicodemus were most likely present.  
READ JOHN 19:38-39.

CONCLUSION: Knowing what we know now, I am sure that we would all be among the friendly faces around the cross. But we need to realize that, like His friends at that time, we sometimes draw back. We sometimes make ourselves scarce when someone needs to stand up for His cause. And like His friends of long ago, we too need His sacrifice, that our sins might be washed away by His precious blood. Knowing what we know now, we would have to say with the crowd of long ago, "Crucify Him!", for by no other means can our sins be forgiven and our souls finally saved at last.

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