***Luke 23:39-43 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” 40But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” 42Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”***

This morning, we find that we complete the journey to Jerusalem. Christ Himself said, “It is finished.” This week has been a busy week. Jesus made His Triumphal entry, He cleansed the Temple, instituted the Last Supper, stood trial before the priests, Pilate, and Herod, with Pilate saying, “I find no faut in this man”, Herod saying, “He’s done nothing deserving death”; yet, they cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Pilate said again, “I have found no reason for death in Him.” Release was not God’s plan, relief was not His aim. Restoration was His plan, and relationship His aim. We praise God that Jesus came to the Cross, so we might find restoration and relationship through the Cross. It’s the only Way.

This morning, let’s look two thieves. *Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”* Very clearly, we find two views of Jesus – Blasphemy and Belief. There’s really only two choices. There is no Undecided. In Matthew 27:44 we read - *Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.* Notice both are reviling Jesus. This is no surprise to us – 900 years before Jesus, Psalm 22:7-8 says this - *All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, “He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”* If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us. Save us, without us admitting and turning from our sin, so we can simply continue to sin. Blasphemy! If You are the Christ… The mouth reveals the heart. True then, true now.

Verses 40-41 *But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.”* We heard it from Pilate – He’s done nothing wrong, Herod – He’s done nothing wrong, now the thief – He’s done nothing wrong. He says, “We’re dying, guilty, as we should. We’re receiving what we deserve.” At some point, the mind of one thief changed. Perhaps, it was when he heard Jesus pray, “Father forgive them” while He hung. Perhaps, this was the moment that convicted the conscience and penetrated the heart. If this Man prays for His persecutors, He must be the Christ. The thief now rebukes the blasphemer. Now, we see the divide – blasphemer on one side, believer on the other.

Verses 42-43 *Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”* Two thieves stand at a Crossroads, with a literal Cross before them. One way leads to Hell, the Other to Heaven. One leads to Eternal Death, the Other to Eternal Life. Two thieves souls stand at the Crossroads. One chooses Life. One chooses Death. Make no mistake. God offers… it is we that choose, each making his or her choice.

John 19:32-33 reveals something interesting - *Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.* Jesus had already given up His Spirit. The two thieves had their legs broken, so they’d die quicker. What does this reveal to us? One man had an appointment in Paradise. Jesus didn’t forget. My friends, this must bring great Joy to our hearts this morning. Jesus said – today you will be with Me in Paradise. Jesus kept that appointment. When we cry out to the Savior, He makes an appointment – Hebrews 9:27 *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*. My friends, we have an appointment, and who we see at that appointment is eternally important. One thief made it to Paradise. The other chose Hell. Satan kept the appointment with one, Jesus the appointment with the other. Fill in the box. Don’t leave the box empty.

This morning, have you made the decision of the Cross? On that morning you breathe your last, when the appointment is kept, who will receive you for eternity? Make that choice today. Will you rise to that Golden Light of Jesus or descend into the everlasting dark? This Resurrection morning, you will not find the living among the dead. Life only comes by Way of Jesus – He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life – come to the Father by way of the Cross.