

Mark 15:25-32

“He saved others; He cannot save Himself.” Truer words were never spoken, even though these words came from the lips of those who hated Jesus. No one would deny the fact that Jesus saved others. He saved lepers from their leprosy. He saved the blind from their blindness. He saved many from various diseases. He even saved some who had died, bringing them back to life. If every person whom Jesus saved from something had gathered around Him as He hung on the cross, there would be masses of people as far as the eye can see. But how many of them would say, “He saved me from my sin”?

You are not here this evening because Jesus saved you from an illness, or from blindness, or any such thing. You are gathered here because Jesus saved you from that which no doctor can save you. Jesus saved you from your sin. What else would compel you to come here on a beautiful evening such as this?

You pay the doctor for saving you from a sickness or a broken bone. But you are not here to pay Jesus for anything He has done for you. Indeed, you are not able to pay Him, for the payment has already been made. Jesus is the payment for your sin. What doctor on earth would do that? Making the payment himself for cleansing you and curing you of a dread disease? And not only that but healing you by taking your disease into himself!

This is why the enemies of Jesus had to add these words: *“He cannot save Himself.”* They had no clue as to the truth of their words. God put them on their lips, for the only way that Jesus can save others is by not saving Himself. If He saves Himself, He cannot save sinners.

He had this power. He could have, at any time, called to His Father and He would have sent legions of angels to deliver Him from the cross. Jesus still, in that case, would have saved many from all manner of disease and from physical ailments of the body, but He would save no one from their sin.

To save us from our sin, He had to become sin. Our sin. Yours and mine. He who committed no sin had to become the thief, the adulterer, the murderer, the liar. He had to become all those secret sins we hide from others. Jesus became sin to save you and me from sin. Someone had to die. Someone had to suffer the penalty for sin. Someone had to endure the agony of hell. If it wasn't Jesus, it would be you, it would be me. We would all be held accountable for our own sin.

Friend, that is why Jesus could not save Himself. He loved you too much to let that happen to you. And so He took your sin, all of it. He accepted your punishment. He was silent when they accused Him. He let Himself be the one who was condemned so that it will not be you. Not now, not ever. Jesus took your place. He did not save Himself and so He has saved you.

“Let Him come down now from the cross!” they taunted. No. He must stay up on the cross to the bitter end. Until He breathes His last. And even longer, until they pierce His side from which flows the blood and the water. These are the Holy Sacraments, and these are the means by which He saves sinners.

Look in Scripture. See for yourself. The assurance and comfort is there for you. In Titus chapter 3, “*He saved us...by the washing of (Holy Baptism).*” In 1 Peter chapter 3, “*Baptism now saves you.*” In Mark chapter 16, “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*” Past tense, present tense, future tense. Through baptism He **saved** us, baptism now **saves** you, whoever believes and is baptized **will be saved**. What other tense is there? None. And so be comforted. Your salvation is assured. It is not left to chance. It is not left up to you. Jesus saved, saves, and will save you by His sufferings, death, and resurrection, and by His holy wounds pouring out for you the cup of His blood for you, and the water into which you are baptized.

Your baptism places you in Christ. And God speaks this truth through His apostle, “*There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” How can there be no condemnation? Because God forgives you. He forgives all of you. He forgives all your sins. Not some, all. He daily and richly forgives you.

It is all because He refused to save Himself. And so live each day with assurance. Jesus saved you, is saving you, and will save you. Amen.