

"TODAY YOU ARE WITH ME IN PARADISE!"
THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT - MARCH 8, 2020
GENESIS 12:1-4a; ROMANS 4:1-5, 13-17; JOHN 3:1-17

Promises for your pocket or purse - Take notes and carry them with you.

Paradise. What comes to mind, when you hear this word? An exotic beach? Peace and quiet? Salvation? Somewhere you have to go to, something you achieve, something you must wait for? As Nicodemus questions Jesus, he appears to know what he is looking for, he just seems unaware The Answer is right in front of him. The criminal hanging next to Jesus had Paradise revealed to him, right next to him. As we hear grace and power in “The Seven Last Words of Jesus” on the cross, let us see, perhaps we need not question any longer, perhaps the work has already been done, indeed the wait is over. Let us be born anew, be born from above, be born in The Spirit, and live, right now in the grace of these seven simple, powerful, renewing words: “Today you are with me in paradise!”

1. Paradise is, living, trusting grace in the midst of questions. John 3:2-4
 - A. Look to Nicodemus, do not judge him. He knew who to ask!
 - B. Paradise is trusting who holds the answers; Who is The Answer!

2. Paradise is, living, being born anew. Genesis 12:4; Romans 4:5; John 3:8-12
 - A. Abram and Sarai were old. Their names, their faith, were renewed.
 - B. Paradise is trusting our old ways of faith are made new again!

3. Paradise is, living, being born from above. Genesis 12:2; Romans 4:16; John 3:16
 - A. Abram knew what we and Nicodemus still question.
 - B. Paradise is trusting life, real life, only comes from above!

4. Paradise is, living, being born of The Spirit. Romans 4:14; John 3:5-9
 - A. Water, Word, and Spirit, baptism, complete us!
 - B. Paradise is trusting The Spirit gives life in power, purpose, promise.

5. Paradise is, living for all eternity, trusting Who has saved us, Who is the One with us, living here and now in the grace of these seven simple, powerful, renewing words: `Today you are with me in paradise!' Luke 23:43

Today: We do not have to wait for tomorrow; for Good Friday; for when we die; for Jesus' return.

You: Jesus' invitation, proclamation, promise, truth, grace is personally for you; Jesus longs for you!

Are: This is truth; a state of being; a given; a presence; an assurance; an absolute; providing calm, comfort, power.

With: You are not alone; you are never alone!

Me: Jesus! The Best! Our Savior!

In: Not out; truly a part of; included.

Paradise: The best place; beyond our expectation; beyond our anticipation; The Perfect Place!