



## Be Assured

### WEEK 1 DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### OVERVIEW

In this new series entitled *How To Live Through A Bad Day*, we will look at five of Jesus' final statements made from the cross and see how He dealt with His darkest moments.

#### DISCUSSION

Bad days happen to everyone, and we need a framework for processing bad days. God's Word directs us to a biblical framework, found in **Hebrews 12:1-2: *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*** We look to Jesus to see beyond life's pains!

- If you could create a "bad day survival kit," what three items would you include to help you get through the toughest times with a smile on your face?
- Share a time when your day began negative but ended in a positive way. What changed?
- Reflecting on Hebrews 12:1-2, what do you think it means to "lay aside every weight" and "run with endurance the race set before us"? How can this mindset help us cope with difficult days?

At the cross, the sum of human pain and problems is focused. All suffering, rejection, pain, sin, and death was conquered at the cross. But never forget—at the cross there's also ALL grace, hope, faith, understanding, and love. It's how we know Jesus understands us, and He even has empathy for us on our tough days. Even while dying on the cross, Jesus cared for the needs – really the ultimate need – of others, and we see this in His conversation with the two thieves being crucified next to Him. **Luke 23:39-43: *One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!" But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."*** To get through your roughest seasons in life, keep a big-picture perspective. The second criminal lived a life of crime and didn't know much about being saved, but he knew to look to Jesus in his pain. These are the **Four Things The Dying Man Knew**:

#### 1. He knew he would face God after death.

In verse 40, the second criminal says: ***"Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die?..."*** In other words, in just a few moments, you're going to be face-to-face with God. Don't you have any seriousness about this? The reason why many people treat God casually, and live their own life instead of God's plan, is because most people have in the back of their mind when you're dead – you're

dead – and it's over. It is the biggest mistake you can make – because death is not the end... it's just the beginning. We were made to last forever, either with God or separated from God, depending on our decision for Christ.

- How can cultivating a sense of reverence or fear of God influence our attitudes and actions, especially during difficult times?

## 2. He knew he had sinned against God.

The second criminal says, “We deserve to die for our crimes...” This is called confession. We deserve to die for our evil deeds. He's not hiding it or making any excuses for it. **Romans 10:9-10: *That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*** When we confess to God, He does His part to forgive.

The Scripture doesn't tell us all the sins this guy committed, all he'd done wrong. But it really doesn't matter. Because **James 2:10** says: ***For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws.*** You only have to break one law to be a lawbreaker. Many compare their sins to others and think because they are “better,” so they will go to heaven. But the truth is, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). **Romans 6:23: *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

- How does confessing our sin to God affect our relationship with Him?
- How can we avoid comparing our sin with others and falling into the trap of self-righteousness or judgmental attitudes?

## 3. He knew Jesus was more than a man.

He says to the other criminal in **Luke 23:41: *“We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong.”*** He acknowledges that Jesus is not just a human being because He has never done anything wrong. He realizes that He was more than a man. The Apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:21: *God had Christ, who was sinless, take our sin so that we might receive God's approval through him.***

- How does this exchange of sin for righteousness demonstrate God's love and mercy toward us?

## 4. He knew only grace could save him.

After confessing his sin and turning to Jesus, he says, “...Jesus, remember me...” He knows only grace can save him. He knows that he can't do anything to save himself. He had no hope at all and asked Jesus to remember him. Jesus' response to this was, ***“Today, you will be with me in paradise.”***

- How does this understanding of grace contrast with the idea of earning or deserving salvation through good deeds or actions?
- Share a time when God's grace comforted you during a hard season.

## LIFE CHALLENGE

How do we make it through the bad days and the rough seasons? Assurance. We rest assured in the person of Jesus and the grace of God. Circumstances may not be going your way, but in light of everything, we can be at peace with God. Circumstances will pass and our future is sealed. Whenever you begin to focus on the negative surrounding you or affecting you, turn to Jesus and keep the bigger picture in mind.