

Seeds of Hope, Stories for Lent #24—*Bitter or Better?*

One of the most powerful scenes in Jesus' passion and death comes when He is hanging on the cross on Calvary. On either side of Him, are two men, also on their own crosses. One was on the right, the other was on His "wrong" side.

The one on Christ's *wrong* side is called this due to his entirely wrong attitude about his suffering. He blamed Christ, blasphemed Him and cursed Christ for this cross. He asked to be taken down immediately and immediately his spirit went down.

On the other hand, however, the thief on Jesus's right side had the right attitude and approach. He not only looked up to Jesus, but he also offered up his own suffering to Him. He prayed to Jesus that he would be lifted up to Him and remembered with Him in paradise.

Jesus promised him, "On this very day, you will be with me in paradise." We call that man the good thief, because he stole his way into heaven.

Every time we face our own suffering, difficulty, or pain, we, too, are at a crossroads to take either the right or wrong approach or attitude.

If we reject our cross, reject our problems, reject the challenge, we only become bitter. But if we accept our cross, accept the difficulty, and accept the challenge, we will only become better.

Bitter or better?

It's up to us to choose. Choose the right attitude and be on the right side of Jesus.

Look up to Christ and offer Him all your sufferings.

And Christ will be with you to lift you up and take you into paradise.

He will give you peace that is truly heavenly.

May you always be on the *right* side of the Lord.

Amen? Amen!

For Further Reflection...

1. Was there ever a time when you reacted to a situation with bitterness? How did that make you feel?

2. When was a time you opted to become better during a trying situation? How did that make you feel?

"He then said, 'Jesus remember me when you enter upon your reign.' And Jesus replied, 'I assure you, this day you will be with me in paradise.'" Luke 23: 42-43