

CONTEMPLATING THE CROSS

The thief on the cross and the Roman centurion

By Rod MacIlvaine

Introduction: The central event in human history is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Even in our increasingly secularized culture, we split time into two categories: before Christ (BC) and the Christian era (AD). Likewise, the central event in our lives, personally, is the moment we came to understand the astonishing love of Jesus who suffered for us on the cross. As believers, it's our privilege to continuously contemplate the mysteries of this historic and transforming act. This morning, as we prepare for Easter 2020, we want to see the power of contemplating the cross and how we can enter into this life-giving discipline.

1. **1st story** – The thief on the cross contemplates the cross from a place of pain.
Matt. 27:38, 44; Mark 15:27, 32b; Luke 23:33, 39-43

2. **2nd story** – The Roman Centurion contemplates the cross from a place of power.
Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47

3. **Summary Idea** – Contemplating the cross produces transformation for all people, no matter where you are in life.

4. **Takeaways** – Practical ways of meditating on the cross