

It is Never too Late!

By Shannon Ford on February 2, 2026

READING: Luke 23

Who were they? These two hoods, thugs, and cutthroat killers. We know little else about these two men. We would not know them at all except for the fact that they are supporting players in the greatest drama of all time, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It may appear that these two men are exactly alike. They were both criminals who were sentenced to die together at the same time at the same place on the same day. But no two men could be more different. These two men who were crucified on the outer crosses differed on one main point, how they viewed the One in the middle. They saw Him differently and therefore asked Him for different things. *One man wanted escape, not forgiveness. The other man wanted forgiveness, not escape.*

The man who wanted forgiveness is a guilty man who is being justly punished. He deserves to die, and he knows it. By sundown, he will be dead. This man is as close to death as you can be and still be alive. Now at the last moment he makes one final appeal, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” This is made more amazing when you consider that this man had none of the advantages the disciples had. He never heard Jesus’ teaching by the seashore, he never saw Jesus heal the sick or raise the dead. He knew nothing of Jesus’ great parables and never saw any of his miracles. Yet he believed. How do we know this thief was saved? We know he was saved by the answer Jesus gave in verse 43: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Those of us who are praying for our “Our One” should take great hope from this passage. Sometimes we look and say, “They are just too far gone. They will never come to Jesus.” Then we get discouraged and stop praying for them. But if this story teaches us anything, it is that no one is ever too far gone. It’s true, he waited until the very last second. But it’s also true that in that last second, he was saved. Don’t ever give up on those you love. Like this thief, they may have wasted a lifetime and then at the end turn to Jesus Christ. It’s never too late to turn to the Savior.

PRAYER: Father, in one transforming moment, a man who was not fit to live on earth was made fit to live in heaven. Today, we claim the same mercy and grace for “Our One.” We pray for the day when “Our One” will place their faith in Jesus Christ and receive Your gift of salvation.

TOMORROW’S READING: Luke 24

The Foundation for Our Faith

By Shannon Ford on February 3, 2026

READING: Luke 24

The Christian faith is different from all the world's major religions in that it is founded on the living person of Jesus Christ. Christianity is founded on the living Lord Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and returning soon in power and glory. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then His death on the cross did not secure the forgiveness of our sins. The resurrection was God's seal of approval on the sacrifice that Christ offered for His people, so that Paul could rightly say, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). The resurrection declared Jesus to be "the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:4). The resurrection guarantees us that Jesus conquered sin, death, and hell, and that He will make good on His promise to come again and take us to be with Him eternally in heaven. A dead man could not do that, but the risen Savior can! So, everything in Christianity rests on the historical fact that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead.

Always remember that our faith must be in the living Lord Jesus Christ, not just in doctrines or moral standards. Christianity certainly requires believing in sound doctrine and living according to God's moral standards, but it is also much more. It is a personal relationship with the living Savior. As Paul said, his goal was "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10).

If your faith is shaky, check and see if you are clinging to some sin that you don't want to give up. If so, repent! Next, study for yourself the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. Go back to that evidence as your foundation of faith. Finally, cultivate a close personal fellowship with the living Lord Jesus, who gave Himself for your sins. Again, to quote Paul, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). The risen Savior is the foundation of the Christian faith. Make sure that your faith is in Him!

PRAYER: Lord, we know that Jesus' death and resurrection provide salvation to all who believe. This is the foundation for our faith. Lord, help us to represent the risen Savior in a way that would honor You in how we act and speak. Amen.

TOMORROW'S READING: Acts 1

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

By Shannon Ford on February 4, 2026

READING: Acts 1

As we read Acts 1:4-5, I imagine that the disciples were probably dumbfounded and confused. Jesus had just told them that they were about to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Can you imagine what might have been going through their heads? What was Jesus talking about? All their lives, they had read in the scriptures about the “Spirit of God” coming upon someone, giving them special abilities to do things that they had been unable to do before. But then the Spirit would leave them. And they were all familiar with water baptism. Jesus had shown them the way, being baptized himself by John the Baptist. Knowing how that baptism was done, you can imagine the thoughts that spun through their minds as they tried to figure out how a baptism by the Holy Spirit would work. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was different from the baptism that they knew. But there was much more to it because at Pentecost, for the first time since God created the world, the Holy Spirit was made available to all believers, all the time. Think about that for a moment. All believers, all the time, for the first time in the history of the world, would have access to the Spirit of God.

Just think about the implications of that fact. It is the Holy Spirit that opens a person’s eyes to see who Jesus is. Without the Holy Spirit, no one would be able to recognize Him. It is through the Holy Spirit that we belong to Jesus. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are adopted as God’s children. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are given power in our new lives. He is the one who works in us to make us more like Jesus. He teaches us. He comforts us. He speaks through us.

Having a problem today? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Having trouble understanding a particular part of Scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you. Having difficulty with talking to someone about a touchy subject? Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through you. Feeling lonely or frightened or confused? Ask the Holy Spirit to comfort you. Is there something within you that you feel needs to change to be more like Jesus, but no matter how hard you try, you keep falling back into your old ways? Ask the Holy Spirit to change you. Call upon the power that God gives you through the Holy Spirit. Allow Him to fill you and work with you and help you every day.

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, thank you for indwelling us and empowering us to live for Christ. I pray that through the Holy Spirit that we will be faithful and obedient to Your mission mandate to be Your “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Amen.

TOMORROW’S READING: Acts 2

The Supernatural Church Birth

By Shannon Ford on February 5, 2026

READING: Acts 2

The account of Acts 2 of what occurred at Pentecost gives us convincing evidence that something supernatural happened. This passage confirms our own supernatural relationship with God, who gives His Spirit to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

On the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus reassured the disciples that “another Helper” would come (John 14:16-17). At that time, they had only seen the power of the Holy Spirit externally. But soon they would experience it internally – as Jesus told them, He “will be in you.” During the forty days after Jesus’ death and resurrection, He appeared to the disciples several times. At the end of that period, just before His ascension, Jesus restated His promise, giving a few more details (Acts 1:5, 8a). The disciples would be baptized with the Spirit, receive His internal power, and be Christ’s witnesses to the world. Jesus told them what would happen, but He didn’t tell them how, or did He tell them exactly when.

Jews from every nation had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the harvest of the first fruits. God chose that day to bring forth the church and initiate a worldwide spiritual harvest. This is the day that the Holy Spirit came and He did not come quietly. A noise came “suddenly,” as Luke describes it (Acts 2:2). Luke writes, it “came from heaven” (v. 2a). This was no earthly, manmade sound. Instead, it was a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. (v. 2b) Everyone in the house was filled with the Holy Spirit and His power. To their amazement, fire like manifestations resembling tongues settled on each person. Soon their own tongues would seem to be on fire as the Holy Spirit enabled them to proclaim the gospel in a supernatural way. The Holy Spirit gave the disciples the ability to speak various human languages on that day, languages previously unknown to each one of them so unbelievers could hear the truth. The Spirit’s rumblings in that Upper Room spilled out into the street below. Thousands crowded around, coming to find out what had made such a tremendous noise. Then, the followers of Christ emerged, speaking more languages than you’d hear at the Olympics.

As a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit and Peter’s sermon, three thousand were added to the church (v. 41). Importantly, the result of that first Pentecost is that now the Holy Spirit indwells every believer at the moment of salvation – the moment of our own spiritual birth (see 1 Cor. 6:19 and 12:13). So rather than another Pentecost experience, we simply need what Paul prayed for – “to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16b). In this way, the newborn church made its first infant cry, joyously proclaiming the gospel of Christ in words the whole world could understand.

PRAYER: Father, thank you for the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. May we allow You total control of our lives so that You can use us to minister in this sinful and broken world. Amen.

TOMORROW’S READING: Acts 3

Everyday Witnesses

By Shannon Ford on February 6, 2026

READING: Acts 3

We can list many reasons why Christians don't share Christ with others. However, I'm afraid that we no longer have a burden for those who are outside of Christ and on their way to hell. Instead, we act as if the two most important things we are to practice in our faith are security and secrecy.

Surveys indicate that most Christians never make any attempt to share the gospel with another person. Sharing the Good News of Jesus with others is the single most important gift we could ever give. We know this as Christians, but we don't do it. Chuck Swindoll writes, "Whatever we do, we must not treat the Great Commission like it's the Great Suggestion."

Today's passage in Acts 3 is a familiar story but also a powerful story of an "everyday witness." Peter and John are going to the temple for the 3 o'clock prayer meeting. Jews had three daily times for prayer. Here, we see the story of a great healing right in the very temple itself. This miraculous healing leads to a great opportunity for the preaching of the gospel. And it also leads to the arrest of Peter and John and to the beginnings of Jewish opposition that will accompany much of the gospel's spread to the gentile world.

The Lord used the crippled man's healing and his joyful dance around the temple to give Peter an opportunity to preach. Peter proclaimed a message for first-century Jews and for people of all races throughout all time. It's a message for mercy, inviting all who have sinned to repent, turn toward God, and receive forgiveness. The text should encourage each of us to know that we too can be a witness for Jesus; no matter where we are or what we are doing.

Every day things happen in our lives that give us a wide-open opportunity to minister and witness for Jesus. Open displays of God's mercy and grace are abundant. How many opportunities to witness do we pass up every day? Watch for God's miracles, His grace and mercy, every day in your life. And seize those miracles and displays of His goodness as opportunities to tell others about Jesus. You have the Good News. Share it.

Billy Graham said, "Christians ought to carry written in our hearts the solemn truth of how short our opportunity is to witness for Christ." People all around us, including our family, need to hear the good news of the Gospel. Look for opportunities every day to share Christ. Become an "Everyday Witness" for his glory.

PRAYER: Lord, please help us to be ready to witness and to serve You at anytime and anywhere, always dependent upon the Holy Spirit's power and not upon ourselves. Amen

TOMORROW'S READING: Weekend is for catch-up and review.

MONDAY'S READING: Acts 4