



TRUTH & RIGHT

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I'M NOT BOTHERING ANYONE

Often we hear folks justify their sinful behavior by saying, "I am not bothering anyone." This excuse may sound thoughtful, but it is not. In fact, when we study the nature of sin, we learn that when we commit sin, any sin, we "bother" others! Let us begin by noting that when we sin, we have "bothered" both the Father and the Son! Remember, it is sin that nailed Christ to the cross! Christ came to this world so that He could die (Jn. 18:37). From Genesis 3:15 to the end of the Bible, we see our Lord Christ as the sacrifice for our sins (Rev. 13:8)! At the same time, we read in the Bible about the degree of love possessed by God. He loves man so much that He gave His only begotten Son as the supreme sacrifice (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; I Jn. 4:9-10). Therefore, let us not say that we are not "bothering" anyone when we sin! God and Christ will both disagree with that statement! Furthermore, our sins often

"bother" men! When we are young, our sins affect the lives of our parents. Though we may not like to admit it, it is the truth! There are some sins we commit that not only affect our parents, placing undue worry and emotional and/or financial strain upon them, but our sins can result in society paying for our housing and food (through taxes) for a time (i.e., prison). There are times when even strangers are affected by our sins. If you deny this, talk to people like Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:6); David (II Sam. 11-12); Jonah; and others! We also recognize that for the Christian, when we sin and refuse to repent, it places a burden upon the church, wherein the church must withdraw from us (II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; I Cor. 5:5-7)! The church cannot continue to be in fellowship with a person who is "*walking disorderly*" or literally "out-of-step" with God! Therefore, one's sin has affected an entire congregation of God's

people! (One's sins have also placed a burden on a family of Christians who now have a family member from whom the church has withdrawn, II Thess. 3:6; I Cor. 5:11!) In light of these things, how can we say that the sins we commit do not "bother" anyone? In fact, just the opposite is true! *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"* (Rom. 14:7). Yet, if it could be proven that there is a sin that "bothers no one," remember that this sin affects the one who has committed it! Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2), and sin results in spiritual death (Jas. 1:15; Rom. 6:23)! Knowing that this is the case, who can believe that man can engage in sinful activities but "bother no one"? It's impossible! Let's stop offering excuses for sin. Instead, let us admit our sin, repent of it, and live as God wants us to live (Acts 17:30; Jn. 14:15)! In so doing, we can have a positive effect upon ourselves and upon others, influencing folks for good and not evil (Matt. 5:16; Col. 3:17). – Jarrod Jacobs.

What About the Thief On the Cross? "What about the thief on the cross?" is a question the religious world has asked for a long time. When asked, it is almost always used to justify the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. That question is often followed by something akin to "The thief on the cross wasn't baptized, and he was saved. Thus baptism isn't required for

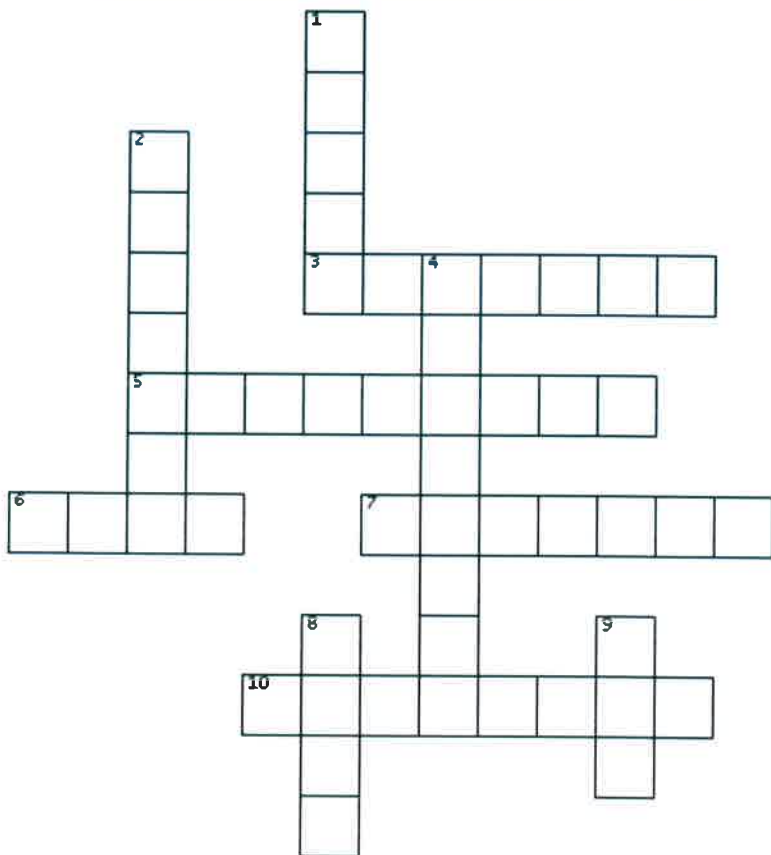
salvation." I've heard it too many times myself; I'm sad to say. What are the consequences of saying the thief on the cross was saved by faith alone? **It Misuses Scripture To Advocate An Unbiblical Doctrine.** The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is not found in the Bible. As a matter of fact, the only time the phrase "faith alone" is found in the Bible is in James 2:24, where it states, *"You see that a man is justified by works and **not** by faith alone"* (NASB, emphasis mine). **It Speaks Where The Scripture Is Silent.** Stating that the thief wasn't baptized is an assumption. The thief's past is almost completely unknown to us. He may have been one of those baptized by John the Immerser. After all, the Scripture states that *"John the baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins"* (Mark 1:4-5). Or perhaps he was baptized by Jesus' disciples during His time on earth. *"So then, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing; rather, His disciples were)"* (Jn. 4:1-2). There is no way someone can say with certainty that the

thief was not baptized! **It Misunderstands The Time And Place Of The Event.** The thief's discussion and request for forgiveness took place while the Old Covenant was in effect. Only after Christ's death would this law be nailed to the cross. Paul wrote, *"Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross"* (Col. 2:14, ASV). The New Covenant then replaced it! The Hebrew writer declares, *"For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives"* (Heb. 9:16-17). On top of that, how can one be baptized into someone's death when they haven't yet died? The apostle Paul said that we must be baptized into Christ's death to be saved. Please read this carefully. *"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4). The thief on the cross is a wonderful example of Christ's love, forgiveness, and mercy. But his salvation does not in any way, shape, or form provide proof that the doctrine of

salvation by faith alone is true. – Ethan Jennings. **Why Some Are Not Asked** Happy is the person whose conduct does not raise a question in the minds of others as to where he stands. Some people never have to answer the question, "Will you have a drink with me?" There is a reason. Some young people are never subjected to certain temptations to which others are frequently subjected, and there is a reason. When your conduct raises a question as to where you stand or as to what you might do, the devil will make you answer that question. Every person who raises a question mark in the mind of people has to defend himself or surrender. – R. L. Whiteside

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ACROSS

3. Mary called Jesus this Hebrew word meaning "Teacher" (Jn. 20:16)
5. Mary _____ came to the empty tomb seeking Jesus (Jn. 20:1)
6. Jesus helped the disciples catch 153 _____ (Jn. 21:11)
7. Jesus asked Mary, "Why are you _____?" (Jn. 20:15)
10. Mary thought Jesus was the _____ (Jn. 20:15)

DOWN

1. John beat _____ in a foot race to the empty tomb (Jn. 20:4)
2. Thomas was also called _____ (Jn. 20:24)
4. When John looked into the empty tomb he _____ (Jn. 20:8)
8. Nathanael was from the town of Jesus' first miracle (Jn. 21:2)
9. Thomas would not believe unless he could _____ (Jn. 20:25)