

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

Facilitator: Encourage your members to **BRING THEIR BIBLES** and use them during Connect Group.

CONNECT Group study questions for April 1, 2018

Title: The Pathway to Paradise—Luke 23:32-43 (NASB)

Read: Luke 23:32-43

Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. 33 When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. 34 But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. 35 And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." 36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" 38 Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." 39 One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" 43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Connect Group Members: These discussion questions follow each point of Pastor Peppy's lesson, *The Pathway to Paradise*. Use them to trace your personal pathway to paradise and draft a short testimony to guide others on that same path.

Facilitator: With this lesson and those coming up next week in Romans 8 and following, group members may have their own questions or have difficulty understanding the Scripture passages we are studying. Encourage them to jot down their queries and submit them to you. If you send them to me by return email, I'll see they receive a response from Pastor Peppy or an elder.

Read: Ephesians 2:1-2

Question: There was a time when you rejected God, preferring the course of this world. What was that like? Share with the group times you have even now as a believer **rejected** the grace of God, however momentarily or lengthy (seconds or years), by failing to **repent** of your sin.

Read: Ephesians 2:2-3

Question: Peer pressure can be powerful, but the power of the Holy Spirit to bring a sinner to repentance is greater. Describe that moment or time in your life when **dying in your sin** or **dying to your sin** weighed in the balance.

Read: Ephesians 2:4-5

Question: The thief on the cross **feared God** and **admitted he was wrong**. What did fear of facing the **punishment you deserved** have to do with your accepting God's mercy and grace through faith in Jesus Christ?

Read: Romans 1:17; Hebrews 4:16; Ephesians 1:4-6-7

Question: Why is the **righteousness of Jesus** on the cross important to your faith in Christ and belief that he has made you alive and seated you in his heavenly places—**his Kingdom**?

Read: Ephesians 1:7; Romans 6:23; 1 Peter 3:18

Question: Using these passages and the illustration from Pastor Peppy's sermon, put in your own words the decision facing every one of us on our pathway to paradise.