

## **The Seven Words Spoken by Jesus Christ on the Cross**

This season of the year is an invitation to GROW, REFLECT, PRAY, EXPERIENCE, SORROW, and BE GENEROUS. What an invitation! All the words of Christ's were powerful words of life although His seven last sayings as He died for us are worth our reflection. These powerful statements reveal His heart and love for us. As Easter weekend approaches, take some time to reflect on these seven powerful statements. They should change our lives.

I. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. (Luke 23:34).

The first word from the cross was the word, "Father." And the last word will begin with the simple word, "Father." It shows us the 'relationship' that the Father had with the Son. It is also the kind of relationship God the Father desires with us, the kind that Jesus provides for us by His sacrifice on the cross.

Love forgives – "Forgive them" – Those who crucified Jesus were guilty, but it was through His heart that they would find forgiveness. It was our sins—my sins and your sins also that put Jesus on that cross and He offers us His forgiveness. ...for they know not what they do. Even though his enemies did not recognize Him as the Messiah, Christ displays his limitless compassion. It is said that we are never more like Jesus than when we forgive those who have wronged us. The Bible admonishes us to ... Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 ).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for praying for the forgiveness of those who did not know what they were doing, may we also be included in that prayer. If we sin out of ignorance or intentional, be merciful to us and give us your forgiveness: in the name of Jesus Christ, our suffering Savior. Amen.

II. "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23: 39-43).

This passage recounts one of the most amazing prayers and promises in the entire Bible. Hanging on crosses at Jesus' right and left hand are two criminals, evildoers, also called robbers. While the criminal on the left was hanging there with just a few minutes left of life, hurled abuse and rejection at Jesus. He blasphemed Him all the way to his dying breath. He rejected the only hope he had in the world that was right next to him.

The other on the right was also a criminal. The last thing he did was throw himself on the mercy of God. He admitted Jesus was the only hope he had and asked Him to remember him. He encountered Jesus and he confessed his sin and cried out to Him for mercy. Jesus forgave him and offered him eternal life. Jesus not only forgave those who were crucifying Him, but He also forgave a criminal hanging next to Him.

Two of the seven last sayings Jesus made on the cross, deals particularly with the subject of forgiveness. God, through His great love and forgiveness, is able to forgive even the worst of sinners. This is a beautiful picture of God's grace. If there's any story in the Bible that teaches us our salvation is by grace alone, through faith, and is not by works that anybody should boast and a gift of God, it is this story. God knows how deeply we struggle with the idea and concept of forgiveness. I believe the reason God spent two of the seven sayings on the cross on forgiveness is because God knows how hard it is for us to forgive people, but also because He knows how hard it is for many of us to believe He would forgive us. St. Augustine, commenting on this scene, observed: " so little is asked... so much is given."

Prayer: Today, Lord all we need to do is lean into the Light, and with the thief on the cross say, "Jesus, remember me..." and we get so much more than we ask for! Jesus, enable us by the Holy Spirit to repent and to receive your grace in this world and in the world to come. Amen.

### III. Woman, behold your son. Behold your mother (John 19:26-27).

Standing beside her was his beloved disciple, John. In his last moments, Jesus called to her and said, "Woman, behold your son." Then he called to John and said, "Behold, your mother!" It was His final act of devotion, to entrust the care of his mother to his closest friend. He knew that John would provide for her and protect her in his absence.

Jesus' first two statements reveal His divine side — His power to forgive sin and to grant eternal salvation. His third statement reveals His human side --- fully God and fully man. Jesus' concern for Mary was not just as a Savior, but also as a son. Simeon's prophecy spoke volumes, (Luke 2:34-35). "34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

Jesus' words were words of care and compassion! Compassion for His earthly mother reminds us that Jesus also cares for our well-being and direction in life, even when we don't understand God's plans. And as Jesus asked John to care for Mary, He asks us to care for others on His behalf. Do you see the selflessness of Jesus, in His hour of greatest need, He thought of others. On this occasion, the need was His mother. Here's the great lesson of the third saying from the cross. Jesus cares. The apostle Peter reminds us: (1:Peter 5:7) ...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. The old song says it well: "Does Jesus Care" Oh, yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the great reminder of your affection and care for us. It was in your hour of greatest suffering you expressed compassion for your mother and Lord; grant that we follow your example. Help us show our concern for the needs of others, reaching out to provide for those who suffer. Amen.

### IV. I am thirsty (John 19:28).

This is the shortest of the seven last words. In English, it is two words. In the Greek language, it is only one word. Though there is no specific reference in the text of the Gospel, it's likely that John was thinking of (Psalm 69), we see Jesus fulfilling the messianic prophecy found in (Psalm 69:20-21).

Questions arise to whether this is a physical or spiritual statement. Is He simply dehydrated and in need of a drink, or is he making a spiritual statement of his soul? I believe that it is both. As a physical man, Jesus became thirsty. Jesus, the fountain of living water - the one who says that if you come to him, you will never thirst again - this one got thirsty. He needed water. This again demonstrates Jesus' physical suffering (Hebrews 2:17-18), and He therefore understands our suffering also.

As I think on Jesus' statement, "I am thirsty," I keep thinking of my own thirst. I am thirsty for him. My soul yearns for the living water that Jesus supplies (John 4:10; 7:38-39). I am thankful for the fact that he suffered physical thirst on the cross so that my spiritual thirst for the water of life might be quenched. The living water that satisfies eternally is offered freely to us by the grace of Him who thirsted in our place! And nothing outside of Him will ever satisfy that thirst. Come and drink deeply from Christ. He thirsted for you so that you will never thirst again!

Prayer: Lord, your words "I am thirsty" reminds us of the cry of the human heart. We also are thirsty, Lord, not for physical water. We need the living water of your Spirit to flood our soul. We need to be refreshed by your living water. We desire for your Spirit to fill us once again. We are thirsty, Lord, for you. Amen.

## V. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34).

These words of Jesus from the cross must be the most astounding sentence in the Bible. As Jesus was dying on the cross, He confirmed the beginning of the prophetic (Psalm 22), the psalmist expressed these words centuries before: Why had God abandoned him? Why did His Father turn his back on Him in his moment of greatest agony?

Jesus our savior has made it forever unnecessary for us to experience or understand the depths of these words from the cross. The reality of sin and holiness reveals the reason for the sacrifice. These words reveal the horrific cost of the putting away of our sin. In His life Jesus had felt pain and suffering physically and emotionally, but He had never known separation from His Father; now He does. There was a critical sense in which Jesus rightly felt forsaken by the Father at this moment. Because God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus was identifying with us as He hung on the cross. He had to pay the price and feel the wrath of God poured out against the sins of the world. Isaiah the prophet said, Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. (Isaiah 53:10) Today you may feel like God has forsaken you in a similar way Jesus felt, but you need to understand as one writer said, “sometimes God takes away from a Christian his comfort, but He never takes away His sustaining presence.

Prayer: Lord, it is so comforting to know that Christ can fully sympathize with a human being who feels abandoned by God. Jesus, not only did you take the death we deserved, but you experienced the separation from God we deserved as well. Thank you for this assurance, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you”.

## VI. It is finished (John 19:30)

When Jesus said, “It is finished,” surely, he was expressing relief that his suffering was over. “It is finished”, I believe meant, in part, and “This is finally done!” But the Greek word translated as “It is finished”, means more than just this. The Message: captures the full sense of this word, “It’s done . . . complete.” Jesus had accomplished his mission. He had announced and inaugurated the Kingdom of God. He had shown the love and grace of God. He exemplified that love and grace by dying for the sin of the world, thus opening the way for all to live under the reign of God. He had finished, accomplished His Father’s will. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. (John 17:4)

“What does God’s love look like?” The prophets of the Old Testament tried to answer it. Isaiah gave us the picture of the suffering Servant and Jeremiah drew a picture of the divine Potter remaking the marred vessel. Yet these did not adequately express to us His love. That question was never answered until Jesus hanging on a cross, in unimaginable suffering, beaten and bruised...Jesus providing our redemption. You cannot look at that scene without seeing God’s love ... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Prayer: God, as we reflect upon this saying may we be reminded of your great love for us. It is here we see what true love looks like, unselfish, sacrificial and Lord may we exemplify this kind of love in our day-to-day life.

## VII. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (Luke 23:46)

Jesus, as a child probably memorized those words. They are taken from (Psalm 31:5). “Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.” Jesus didn’t use the words “redeem me”; it was necessary for David to say, “redeem me, O Lord”. Jesus had no need for redemption because he was the redeemer. Only one word is added to this verse, "Father." It tells us how our Lord died: willingly, and victoriously. William Barclay says, "Even on a cross, Jesus died like a child falling asleep in his father's arms." I believe everyone who knows Jesus as their Savior may die with the same confidence and assurance.

Jesus here reveals that God was even in this moment; still His Father and He trusted the Father to receive His spirit. We see Jesus dying as He lived, in complete dependence upon the Father, and submitted to His will. This final word of Jesus reveals to us how to die well: What a wonderful way to think of death—committing oneself into the hands of the Father. “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

Jesus PLACES... HIMSELF ... INTO ... HIS... FATHER’S ... HANDS! Incredible dependence and trust! Faith! Jesus gave us these words of comfort: I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:28-29)

Prayer: Father, we often find our minds filled with fear and questions concerning death and the world has no answer. It is only when we turn to your Word and especially as we read these words; Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Here we find hope, thank you for teaching us how to live and for showing us how to face death.