

Last Seven Statements of Jesus

Week 2

The seven statements of Jesus on the cross, drawn from the four Gospels, represent his final hours of suffering and triumph. They include: *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34), *"Today you will be with me in Paradise"* (Luke 23:43), *"Woman, behold your son... Behold your mother"* (John 19:26-27), *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46/Mark 15:34), *"I thirst"* (John 19:28), *"It is finished"* (John 19:30), and *"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"* (Luke 23:46).

These last words provide profound theological insights into forgiveness, salvation, and his role as the Messiah.

- **1. Forgiveness:** "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34) - Jesus prays for his executioners.
- **2. Salvation:** "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43) - Spoken to the repentant thief.
- **3. Relationship:** "Woman, behold your son! ... Behold your mother!" (John 19:26-27) - Jesus entrusts his mother, Mary, to the disciple John.
- **4. Abandonment:** *"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"* which means, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34) - Expresses the weight of bearing sin.
- **5. Distress:** "I thirst" (John 19:28) - Highlights his humanity and fulfills Scripture.
- **6. Triumph:** "It is finished" (John 19:30) - Signals the completion of his redemptive work.
- **7. Reunion:** "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46) - A final act of trust in God

Tonight, we look at statements 3 and 4

Relationship: "Woman, behold your son!" and to the disciple, "Here is your mother" (John 19:26-27).

In John 19:26-27, while on the cross, Jesus entrusts his mother, Mary, to the care of the "disciple whom he loved" (traditionally John), saying, *"Woman, behold your son" and*

"Behold your mother". This action ensures Mary's care, fulfills filial duty, and establishes a new spiritual family bond, with the disciple taking her into his home.

- **Context:** This is the third of the seven last words of Jesus on the cross, occurring while he is in great pain, showing compassion and fulfilling the Law to care for his parent.
- **Significance:** The act creates a new, non-blood-related family based on faith, symbolizing the church and the union of believers.
- **"Woman":** The term is not disrespectful in its original cultural context but rather a term of respect or endearment.
- **Result:** The disciple immediately took Mary into his home.

This moment highlights Jesus's personal care for his mother and the strengthening of relationships among his followers.

Fulfilling the Old Testament law to care for one's parents centers on the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother," ensuring their physical, emotional, and financial well-being in old age. This duty, which includes providing food, shelter, and care, is considered a spiritual obligation, extending to loving them as oneself.

Biblical Foundations for Caring for Parents

- **The Commandment:** Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 establish "honoring" parents as a requirement for a long and blessed life.
- **Practical Application:** This involves active care, such as providing financial support, nursing care, or a place to stay, as highlighted in 1 Timothy 5:4.
- **Severe Consequences for Neglect:** The Old Testament viewed cursing or striking parents as a capital offense (Exodus 21:15, 17).
- **Example of Jesus:** Even while on the cross, Jesus ensured his mother, Mary, was cared for, demonstrating the importance of this obligation (John 19:26-27).

How to Fulfill the Law

- **Financial Assistance:** Ensuring parents have necessary resources.
- **Physical Care:** Providing for their health needs and daily living, such as housing.
- **Respect and Honor:** Treating them with deference, even when they are elderly.

- **Emotional Support:** Ensuring they do not feel like a burden.

New Testament Continuation

The New Testament reinforces this duty, stating that failing to care for one's family is "worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). It emphasizes that this care is a practical expression of faith and love, honoring God by honoring those who gave life.

Abandonment: *"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"* which means, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34) - Expresses the weight of bearing sin.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*) are the final, desperate words of Jesus on the cross, recorded in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. They represent a real cry of anguish as Jesus bore the world's sin and experienced separation from God. This phrase is also a direct quotation of the opening of Psalm 22:1, which prophesied his suffering.

- **Context:** Spoken around the ninth hour of the crucifixion.
- **Meaning:** Jesus, feeling the weight of the world's sins and the horror of abandonment, cried out in his deepest moment of suffering.
- **Prophecy Fulfillment:** By quoting Psalm 22, Jesus was pointing to the fulfillment of scripture, which also describes the piercing of hands and feet and the casting of lots for his clothing, as noted in Psalm 22.
- **Significance:** This cry highlights the extreme, voluntary suffering of Jesus on the cross, representing the moment he was made to be sin for humanity, as mentioned in this article.

It says, "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice," — Amazing. How did he have any strength to do it with a loud voice? — *"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"* — the Aramaic form — "that is, *'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'*" Matthew 27:46.

One very important fact to remember is that these words are the exact first words of Psalm 22. And that is important because Jesus seems to have known that the whole psalm, in some way or other, was about him.

At least three other parts of this psalm are quoted in the story of his death. This is what the psalm says: “Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

And in verse 7: “All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads” — and those are exact words. “They wag their heads,” quoted in [Matthew 27:39](#): “And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads” to show that this psalm is being played out in the death of Jesus.

In verse 16 of the psalm we read, “They have pierced my hands and feet.” And in verse 18, “They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the words, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” are part of this psalm that contains, as it were, a script for Jesus’s last hours. Now, why did he say it? She wants to know why. Why did he say it? And here is a three-part answer.

Truly Abandoned

First, this was a real forsakenness. That is why. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” means he really did. He really did. He is bearing our sin. He bore our judgment.

The judgment was to have God the Father pour out his wrath, and instead of pouring it out on us, he pours it out on him. That necessarily involves a kind of abandonment. That is what wrath means. He gave him up to suffer the weight of all the sins of all of his people and the judgment for those sins.

We cannot begin to fathom all that this would mean between the Father and the Son. To be forsaken by God is the cry of the damned, and he was damned for us. He used these words because there was a real forsakenness.

Crying Out

Second, the *why*, is not a question looking for an answer, but a way of expressing the horrors of abandonment. Here are a couple of reasons for thinking this.

*The judgement was to have God the Father pour out his wrath,
and instead of pouring it out on us, he pours it out on his Son.*

Jesus knew ahead of time what he was doing and what would happen to him and why he was doing it. His Father had sent him for this. This very moment. And he had agreed to come, knowing all that would happen.

Listen to these words: “Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’” (John 18:4). He gave himself up. So he knew. He knew it was coming. He knew everything.

Another reason is the moment was one of agony, not theological curiosity. The moment was one of agony.

Third, the fact that he is not asking a question so much as expressing a horror is that the words are a reflex of immersion in Psalm 22, it seems. It is a direct quotation.

Psalm 22

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises.

⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.

⁵ To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

⁸ “He trusts in the LORD,” they say, “let the LORD rescue him.

Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”

⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother’s breast.

¹⁰ From birth I was cast on you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.

¹¹ Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

¹² Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me.

¹⁴ *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.*

¹⁵ *My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.*

¹⁶ *Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my
feet.*

¹⁷ *All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.*

¹⁸ *They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.*

¹⁹ *But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help
me.*

²⁰ *Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.*

²¹ *Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.*

²² *I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you.*

²³ *You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!*

²⁴ *For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.*

²⁵ *From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.*

²⁶ *The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him—
may your hearts live forever!*

²⁷ *All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,*

²⁸ *for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.*

²⁹ *All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel
before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive.*

³⁰ *Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord.*

³¹ *They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn:
He has done it!*