

Good Friday 2018 – Final Words

Good Friday is one of those times of the year that carries so much meaning and conveys so much emotion, that it's hard to express and even harder to endure.

But try we must, b/c it's so important.

And one of the ways to do that, is focus on the final words of Jesus. Words he spoke on the cross.

And we're going to do so through video, songs, Scripture, reflection, and eventually Communion. So you can remain seated and just soak it up. That's our desire.

That you will let the meaning of it all, wash over you and overwhelm you. And deepen your love for the One who did it.

- I'm pretty sure you're well aware that deathbed situations are difficult. Some lasting minutes, and others weeks.
And if the person is able, the final words they speak vary just as much.
Some are poignant and meaningful, and others are useless and trivial. Ridiculous even.

Like the stereo-typical wise guy, who cracks a joke to avoid the reality of what's happening.

Or the wealthy patroness who mumbles commands to her family, right up until the bitter end. Wanting to maintain control even in her death.

Some final words are useless and trivial. Revealing the heart like an open book.

But the final words of *Jesus*? They're about as poignant and meaningful as can be. Revealing *his* heart, and piercing ours. His soul, and ours.

- Take for instance the cry of his heart in Luke 23. Hanging on the cross, he said – *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* (34)
Them, referring to the soldiers who carried *out* the crucifixion, and the chief priests who incited it. **“Father, forgive them.”**

But I can't imagine they were only intended for *them*. B/c it was our sins who held him there as well. It was our hatred and our rebellion. The *them* includes us.

And it was his heart to *forgive*. Forgive them. Pardon them. Excuse them. Absolve them. Exonerate them. Let them off the hook. Cancel their offense.
What mercy. What grace.
Revealing a heart of *love* in Jesus, that beats all. Covers all.

Think about it. To speak such merciful words to those who were such instruments of pain, is *love*. Giving of his soul in addition to his life in that moment, for the sake of others. It's a heart of love.

And it ought to elicit a heart of *confession* in us. A desire.

To confess *all* the sins he forgives. Not just those at the cross. Not just those of the soldiers and chief priests. But ours. Yours. Mine.

Especially as his words echo down through the centuries. “Father, forgive *them*.”

So **Good Friday is a time of confession**. B/c Jesus forgives out of a heart of love.

- And then, there are his last words of *My, God, My God, why have you forsaken me?* Mk 15:34. **“Why have you forsaken me?”**

Why? It's a cry to the Father, out of an obvious heart of *pain*.

Pain, b/c he was abandoned. Pain, b/c he was forsaken.

And make no mistake, he didn't just *feel* abandoned, he *was* abandoned. Infinitely so. As far as the East is from the West.

Just like our *sins* are removed from the holy presence of God.

But why Jesus? B/c he was *made* to be sin the Bible says. Our sin. (2 Cor 5:21)

God could not and would not tolerate the sins of the world in his presence. His holiness *couldn't* allow it, and his justice *wouldn't*.

So as Jesus *bore* our sins, God forsook him. Causing his *Son* to bear the punishment of death and separation, that *we* deserve. He was God-forsaken, for us.

No wonder it was a cry from a heart of pain.

And it ought to evoke a heart of *ache* in us. As *we* look on him. As *we* hear his cry. As *we* feel his pain. **Good Friday is a time of heartache.**

A time to reflect on the loneliness and forsakenness of our Savior on the cross. So we wouldn't *have* to. We wouldn't *have* to be separated. Ever.

This is a time of heartache. And the least we can do, is *give* ourselves to it. Endure it momentarily, b/c he endured it infinitely. It's a time of heartache.

- And then last, are his *final*, final words. **“It is finished.”** Done. Complete. Over. Words that were expressed from a heart of *commitment*.

Jesus could have called down any number of angels, and stopped the whole thing. In a heartbeat. I sometimes wonder if he fought that temptation. I sure would have. He could have snapped his fingers and ended it all. No problem. He could have said the word, created a whole new universe, and been finished with *us*.

But he didn't. He persevered. He *finished*.

He finished the *sacrifice*, for our sin. (1 Pet 2:24)

He finished the *payment*, for our debt. (Col 2:13-14)

He finished the *sentence*, for our guilt. (Lev 6:6-7; Jn 1:29)

He finished the *ransom*, for our redemption. (1 Pet 1:18-19)

He finished the *suffering*, for God's wrath. (1 Jn 4:10; Rom 5:9)

And he finished his *death*, for our life. (Rom 5:18; 6:4)

If that doesn't call for a *heart of gratitude*, I don't know what does.

Good Friday is a time of gratitude. B/c Jesus finished. All of it.

- Final words, with as much meaning and importance as any ever spoken. Final words, from a heart of love, a heart of pain, and a heart of commitment. All at the same time. **(Summary)**

So make sure you respond with a heart of confession, as you watch and listen.

Make sure you allow the ache to fully settle in.

And make sure you let the gratitude overflow. (Pray)

Pray – We’re forgiven, b/c *you* were forsaken. We’re accepted, b/c *you* were condemned.
And though we ache, we’re grateful beyond words. Grateful, b/c you finished what you
started, and still are, in us. (Video)

Communion (On floor. After *Lamb of God*)

Final words, expressing *his* heart, to get at *ours*.

And communion on Good Friday is a perfect time to express it. To respond.

From confessing your sin, to feeling your ache, to voicing your gratitude.

So as we distribute the bread and cup in just a minute, do that.

Get right with God. And commit to do so with others if need be.

Reflect on his pain. From the physical to the emotional. The mental to the spiritual.

And whatever you do, voice your gratitude. Thank him. For everything.

And when the time comes, I’ll lead us in eating and drinking. (Servers)

➤ (Floor) The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor 11:23 . . .

*I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night
when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it,
and said, “This is my body which is for you.*

Representing the pain he endured, the tearing of his soul from his Father in heaven – *Do
this* [he said] *in remembrance of me.*

*[25] In the same way also he took the cup [the cup of redemption], after supper, saying,
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.*

This cup and what it contains, is symbolic of the salvation, that Christ’s blood bought
and guarantees. B/c he finished.

Do this [he said], *in remembrance of me.*

And then he ends with this: *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you
proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.* (26)

Eat and drink like this Paul said, b/c in doing so we proclaim . . .

The sin-forgiving work of Jesus, the love-compelling work of Jesus, the soul-saving
work of Jesus – until he returns.

In his remembrance.

Pray – Father, we ache at the thought of what you endured, but we’re grateful for work
you finished. (**Good Friday**) So we rest in your love, and bless your name.

Close – Let’s stand for the benediction. (Mt 27:57-60)

*[57] When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who
also was a disciple of Jesus. [58] He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.*

*Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. [59] And Joseph took the body and wrapped
it in a clean linen shroud [60] and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the
rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.*

May God bless you as you keep your mind stayed on him.