

THE SEVEN “LAST WORDS” OF JESUS

Lessons from the Cross:

Last words of leaders and loved ones alike have always been significant to their followers and loved ones alike. Often the last words are the last ray of hope and encouragement. So often it is these last words that keep us going. This is no less the case with Jesus. There are many lessons here for us. Here we see glimpses of His personality, His pain, His priority and His purpose. These final statements of Jesus give us important theological principles and practical spiritual lessons. They have to do with:

1. Fulfillment of God’s Word – Note how many times John says “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled”
2. Fulfillment of the Will of God – His death was not that of an unfortunate, innocent man
3. The fulfillment of the Works of God – Jesus completed His mission

Jesus taught us how to live, how to pray and how to serve. Now He shows us how to die. These are Lessons from the “Valley of the Shadow of Death.”

The seven statements can be broken down into two divisions: One division having to do with others (1-3) and the other division (3-7) having to do with Jesus Himself.

Here are some other contrasts:

First Division:

- Was spoken in daylight
- Had a horizontal focus

Second Division:

- Was spoken in darkness
- Had a vertical focus

As we study these Statements from the Cross, we need to consider their interpretation (exposition) and their implications (applications).

1. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Luke 23:34
(Luke 23:26-35)

The Forgiveness of Jesus

- Jesus practiced what He preached cf. Lu 6:27-31; Matt 5:44
- His followers adopted the spirit of forgiveness cf. Stephen Acts 7:60
- Reflect on the people Jesus was forgiving and what they did to Him.
- If He can forgive and He commands us to forgive, we can do it. Whatever God commands us to do, He enables us to do.
- Forgiveness is never easy, but it is always possible.

Types of Sins:

1. Ignorance
2. Weakness
3. Arrogance – presumptuousness – There was no forgiveness for this in the Old Testament.

Response:

Lord, may I always be willing to forgive and not die in bitterness!

2. "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

Luke 23:43
(Luke 23: 35-43)

The Unselfishness of Jesus

- **Paradise** = LXX = Garden = Gen 2:8-10
- In the NT it is used only 3 times here, 2cor 12:4 and Rev 2:7.
- Refers to a place of bliss and rest between death and the resurrection cf. Lu 16:22

A Message of Hope – A demonstration of grace

Three Crosses:

1. The middle = the Saviour
2. One side a saved sinner
3. The other side – a condemned sinner
 - The thing that makes the difference is what we do with the cross in the centre (the Saviour)

Response:

Lord, may I never forget that it is never too late to turn to you and be forgiven!

3. "Woman, behold thy son . . . Son behold thy mother."

John 19:26-27
(John 19:25-27)

The Tenderness of Jesus

- Taking care of His mother even at his death
- The duty of the first-born
- John was thought to be his cousin. His mother, Salome, the sister of Mary, was also standing there cf. Jn 19:25; Matt 27:55-56; Mk 15:40¹
- John is the only disciple with the women at the cross. John had lodging in Jerusalem.
- Necessary action because at this time His brothers did not believe cf. Jn 7:5

Response:

Lord, may I never stop caring for others.

4. "My God , My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:46
Mark 15:34
(Matthew 27:45-56)

The Loneliness of Jesus

- Both Matthew and Mark quoted in Aramaic and translated it. A mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic.
- Note the depth of His feeling in this "abandonment". Spoke His native language. Quotation of Ps 22:1
- Where is God when His servants are suffering? Cf. The poem "Footprints"
- He was bearing the sin of the world cf. 2Cor 5:21 so that God might be just and the justifier cf. Rom 3:25-26
- Jesus had to identify with us. Our sins were laid on Him cf. 1Jn 2:1-2
- Cf. Jesus in Gethsemane and the Wilderness. God does not totally abandon us when we are in the deep and dark places. He is with us even in "the valley of the shadow of death". Certain things we have to go through on our own. But He never far away to catch us when we fall or to carry us through. This is the only way to build character and accomplish the purposes of God.
- In both instances (Wilderness and Gethsemane) after Jesus was victorious we see angels ministering to Him. Think about what we might be missing out on when we choose the prim rose path of life.
- Nothing from Jesus' life illustrates better the depth of his suffering as He bore the sin of the world on the cross. He was regarded as sin, though sinless (the only worthy and

¹ It is not clear whether the sister of the mother of Jesus is Salome the mother of the sons of Zebedee or the wife of Cleopas. If so, two sisters have the name Mary and James and John are cousins of Jesus.

acceptable sacrifice) cf. 2Cor 5:21

- This cry of desolation comes at the close of the three hours of darkness.
- He was misunderstood- Thought he was calling Elijah, who was thought to come at a critical time to rescue the righteous and protect the innocent cf. v 36

FORSAKE = εγκαταλειπω egkataleipo *eng-kat-al-i'-po*

To be totally abandon or utterly forsake = “let him down” or left Him behind.

1) abandon, desert

1a) leave in straits, leave helpless

1b) totally abandoned, utterly forsaken

2) to leave behind among, to leave surviving

Response:

Lord, may I never die a lonely person!!

5. "I thirst."

John 19:28

(John 19:28-29)

The Humanness of Jesus

- He shared in our human frailties and needs
- Parched in the Palestine sun. Bleeding, perspiring, tired and thirsty.
- He was thirsty so that we might have access to the spring of living water.
- Wine vinegar – cheap and having a narcotic effect. An act of compassion from someone.
- Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled cf. Matt 5:6
- We need to long after and intensely desire Him cf. Ps 63:1 and Ps 42:1-2

Response:

Lord, may my heart long after you as dry and parched land longs for water, until you call me home!

6. "It is finished."

John 19:30

(John 19:30) cf. v. 28 “completed” the same Greek word.

The Faithfulness of Jesus cf. Jn 17:4

- Jesus did not say, “I am finished”. His work was.
- The cry of victory, not despair and defeat. He completed His mission
- The debt was paid in full. He served our sentence. This is why we can go free if we believe that He took our place on the cross.
- The Greek expression has the meaning of being “paid in full”

Response:

Lord, may I work diligently to complete my word on earth for you!

7. "Father, into Thy hands I commend (commit) My spirit."

Luke 23:46

(Luke 23:44-50 & John 19:30-42)

The Submissiveness of Jesus to His Father

- “Father” was Jesus favourite way of addressing God. Cf. Twice on the cross and seven times in His prayer John 17. Note how He taught us to pray in Matt 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4
- His entire life was one of obedience and submission.
- He learnt obedience by what He suffered cf. Heb 5:7-8
- It does not matter **where** and **when** we die but **how** we die.

Response:

Lord, May I live in faithful submission to you, until I breathe my last breath!

Conclusion:

- It is interesting to compare the last statements of Jesus with the last words of Mohammed, the prophet of Islam. He is said to have been dying from the residual effects of poison and his final cry was: ***“Lord, I beseech thee, assist me in the agonies of death! . . . Lord, grant me pardon – Eternity in Paradise!”***
- Jesus did not ask for forgiveness for Himself. He asked for the forgiveness for others, because He was the sin sacrifice for the world. The Intimate and Ultimate Mediator between God and man.
- Jesus is our example in everything He did. The way He lived, spoke, prayed, served and died.
- His last words need to be etched into our hearts and shape our attitudes and actions.
- These Final Statements of Jesus have changed the world.
- May these words change your heart and life and your outlook of pain and suffering and death!
- May you be able to face death victoriously, even as our Saviour did!