

Text: Selected Scriptures

Title: “*Last Words ... Life Words*”

INTRODUCTION

In the six hours that Jesus hung upon the Cross He uttered words that were recorded for us by the Gospel writers. There are seven short phrases that Jesus utters on Calvary. To find all of the seven last statements of Jesus Christ, you have to read all the gospels; none of the Gospel writers records all seven last statements. The last words of Jesus from the Cross revealed not just how Jesus died, but how he lived ... and we should live. Jesus’ *Last Words ... Jesus’ Life Words*

1. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

Of the seven last statements of Jesus, at least three, perhaps four of them were voiced prayer to the Father. This is the first prayer from the Cross. This is one of those precious moments when we get to hear the Son praying to the Father. When Jesus prayed aloud in the presence of others, He often did so in order that others might know how to pray as well.

Jesus spoke these words in response to what had just been done to Him:

Luke 23:33 - When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

Jesus is not just asking God to forgive those who executed him (Jewish leaders and Roman authorities), He is praying for all who participated in His death ... which includes us.

The prayer is answered by the death of Jesus, which secured the forgiveness for sins.

2. “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

Jesus spoke these words in response to a request made to him by one of the criminals hanging next to him.

Luke 23:42 - Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

He had the hope that death would not be the end of everything for him and that beyond death was the kingdom of Jesus.

Jesus gave the man the assurance he longed for in those last hours ... and more than he asked for. Think of those words:

“Today...” – no soul sleep, no purgatory. For the child of God, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

“You will be with me...” – in the real, personal presence of the Lord

“In paradise...” – the place where the righteous of all ages go, in the presence of the Lord, and awaiting the New Heaven and the New Earth after the last resurrection.

From the Cross Jesus swept this penitent sinner, along with all others who put their faith in Him, right into Paradise with Him.

3. **“Dear woman, here is your son ... (to John) Here is your mother.” (John 19:26-27)**

Jesus spoke these words from the Cross to two of the people for whom He was most concerned ... one of His closest disciples and His precious mother, Mary.

John 19:25-26 - Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,”

Jesus understood His responsibility as a son to Mary. Never think that Jesus doesn’t understand your family demands. He lived under the same responsibility, and demonstrated His commitment in that regard.

4. **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)**

ILLUSTRATION - Author Max Lucado writes vividly of the abandonment of the Son on the cross as he bore our sin:

"Here is the cup, my Son. Drink it alone." God must have wept as he performed his task. Every lie, every lure, every act done in shadows was in that cup. Slowly, hideously they were absorbed in the body of the Son. The final act of incarnation. The spotless Lamb was blemished. The King turns away from his Prince. The undiluted wrath of a sin-hating Father falls upon his sin-filled Son. The fire envelops him. The shadows hide him. The Son looks for his Father, but the Father cannot be seen. "My God, my God...why?" It was the most gut-wrenching cry of loneliness in history, and it came not from a prisoner or a widow or a patient. It came from a hill, from a cross, from a Messiah. "My God, my God," he screamed, "why did you abandon me!" Never have words carried such hurt. Never has one being been so lonely. The despair is darker than the sky. The two who have been one are now two.

5. **“I am thirsty.” (John 19:28)**

This cry of Jesus is preceded by John’s explanation:

John 19:28 - Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

This is the only time Jesus speaks of his own physical needs in that hour of darkness. To this point, He set aside His own desires, even the most basic need of thirst, until He could complete what the Father had given Him to do. Then, and only then could He acknowledge His own needs.

In those three words, we catch just a glimpse of the enormous physical suffering Jesus endured on the Cross.

6. **“It is finished.” (John 19:30)**

Jesus was always focused on the mission the Father gave Him from the beginning. He is the “Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.” Every step Jesus took in this 33 years on this earth was a step toward the Cross.

ILLUSTRATION - If you travel up I-395 through Washington, D.C., and cross over the Potomac, you will likely cross the Arland D. Williams, Jr., Memorial Bridge. Who was Arland D. Williams, Jr.? On January 13, 1982, he gave hope to five individuals at the cost of his own life. On that cold January day, Air Florida Flight 90 crashed into the icy Potomac. Ice on the wings prevented the plane from a successful take-off. Almost all of the passengers perished. Five different times, a helicopter dropped a rope to save Williams. Five times, Williams passed the rope to other passengers in worse shape than he was. When the rope was extended to Williams the sixth time, he could not take hold, and succumbed to the frigid waters.

His heroism was not rash. Aware that his own strength was fading, he deliberately handed hope to someone else over the space of several minutes.

Jesus did not make a rash decision to give his life for ours. That Jesus would be an atoning sacrifice for us was his destiny from eternity past. We need only take the lifeline handed to us by his sacrificial death on the cross.

7. **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)**

The hour was dark, and Jesus felt it in His soul.

Luke 23:44-45 - It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

Throughout His earthly life, Jesus had been sustained by His faith in the Father. It is natural that in the last, with the spiritual and physical darkness all around Him, that He could cry,

“Father...” – His favorite way of referring to God.

“Into Your hands...” – The sovereign hands that hold the destiny of all Creation

“I commit my spirit.” – Faith, trust, complete abandon

Luke simply says, “When he said this, he breathed his last.” Note: I’ve been with many people through the years when they breathed their last. What better way to end life ... What better way to live life!