

Jesus' Seven Last Words from the Cross: Forgiveness

Psalms 22:11-18 ❖ Luke 23:32-38

"On the cross, Jesus actually modeled forgiveness in the most difficult of circumstances. He spoke a prayer out loud to show us how to forgive. Jesus was saying, 'This is what forgiveness looks like.'"

("Final Words From the Cross," Adam Hamilton, 30)

Dying Words

Have you ever been with someone when they died?

Confederate General Stonewall Jackson died, as he had wished, on the Sabbath. The date was May 10, 1863. His last words were, "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."

Jesus spoke seven times during the six hours He hung dying on the cross. What are traditionally called the "seven last words" of Jesus are actually seven last statements.

For men being crucified, breathing, much less speaking, was extremely painful and required much effort.

What was on Jesus' heart and mind as He died?

- 1) Forgiveness (Luke 23:34)
- 2) Heaven (Luke 23:43)
- 3) Honor (John 19:26-27)
- 4) Abandonment (Mark 15:34)
- 5) Suffering (John 19:28)
- 6) Completion (John 19:30)
- 7) Peace (Luke 23:46)

Forgiveness

The first words Jesus spoke while He hung dying on the cross were: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

The first thing Jesus said was a prayer. He chose to say it out loud and it was not for Himself.

Death by crucifixion came as a result of: loss of blood, exposure to the elements, shock, buildup of fluid around the heart and in the lungs, and asphyxiation.

If you or I had been in Jesus' place, what would we have probably asked God to do?

Who did Jesus ask God to forgive?

- 1) The Jewish religious leaders, who ...
- 2) The Roman soldiers, who ...
- 3) The crowd, who ...
- 4) Us, who ...

What did Jesus mean when He said, "They do not know what they are doing"?

- 1) "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Romans 7:15).
- 2) "In Jesus Christ we have redemption through His blood, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding" (Ephesians 1:7-8).

Takeaway

It cost Jesus His life to forgive His enemies. Do we forgive our enemies? It will be costly for us, too.

"What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!"

On July 16, 1918, right before Czar Nicholas II and his family were brutally murdered, he prayed Jesus' first words from the cross.

Let's think about those who have hurt us ... and then let's ask our Heavenly Father to help us pray Jesus' first words from the cross.

