

2020-8-02 Last Words

Luke 23:34-49

This morning we are going to look at Jesus' last seven statements and some practical life application.

The last words of a dying person are normally never forgotten. A person's closing comments often reveal their pain and agony. Some enter eternity without saying anything, while others utter sentiments that disclose their values, priorities, and innermost thoughts.

Right before P.T. Barnum died, he asked, "How were the receipts today at Madison Square Garden?"

Humphrey Bogart's last words were, "I should never have switched from Scotch to Martinis."

Joan Crawford was filled with anger when her maid began to pray out loud and said, "Don't you dare ask God to help me!"

This morning we're beginning a series to help us focus on the final cries from the Cross. These seven shouts of the Savior are filled with meaning and purpose.

The first three shouts take place between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and noon:

1. **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)**
2. **"Today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)**
3. **"Woman, behold (here is) your son! (said to his disciple) Behold your mother!" (John 19:26)**

From noon to 3:00 p.m., there was darkness over the land. Then beginning about 3:00, Jesus uttered his final words:

4. **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)**
5. **"I thirst." (John 19:28)**
6. **"It is finished." (John 19:30)**
7. **"Father, into your Hands I commit My spirit." (Luke 23:46)**

According to Roman historians, it was quite common for those who were crucified to utter blasphemies and words of wrath toward those who were involved in the execution.

1 Peter 2:23, "who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;"

The first statement recorded begins with a prayer of intervention for his oppressors.

I. Fulfillment of Prophecy

- **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)**

Please turn in your Bibles to **Isaiah 53** and follow along with me as I read. **(Read 53:1-12)** Over 700 years before Jesus was even born, Isaiah prophesied at least 10 things about the suffering of the Savior:

- He would be despised and rejected by men (3)
- He would be a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering (3)
- He would be afflicted by God because of our sins (4, 8)
- He would be pierced for our transgressions (5)
- He would be wounded and bruised by men (7)
- He would be led like a lamb to slaughter and be silent before His accusers (7)
- He would be buried in a rich man's tomb (9)
- He would a guilt offering (10)
- He would be numbered with the transgressors (12)
- He would pray for those transgressors (12)
- When Jesus prayed, **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do,"** He was fulfilling a precise prophecy from **Isaiah 53:12.**
- The practical application for us is **We MUST chose to forgive!**

We need to note a couple of things about forgiveness.

- First, Forgiveness is not reconciliation. Reconciliation takes two people, but the injured party can forgive the offender even without being reconciled.
- Secondly, Forgiveness is not condoning or dismissing the offense. Forgiveness recognizes the offense as wrong and forgive despite the wrongness.
- Third, Forgiveness is not pardon. Pardon is a legal transaction that releases the offender from the legal consequences of their act. But you can forgive a person and still insist on the just punishment for the offense.
- Forgiveness is the key to not being permanently victimized by those who have hurt us. Forgiveness is born out of my realization of because of how great a burden of guilt I have been forgiven by Christ; there is no justification for me not to forgive others.

II. Stay Focused, Others are Hurting.

- **"Today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)**
- We are taught a second lesson, application, how will/do we respond to others in our own times of pain? Encourage others who are struggling or uncertain.
- While we cannot promise paradise to those around us, we can show them who can, but we must keep our eyes and ears open for individuals who are experiencing the same struggles as we are.
- Notice that Jesus was not so inwardly focused that he could not see others around him who were experiencing the same thing he was. He could have justifiably been focused on his own pain at that moment, but he demonstrated that was sensitive to those around him who were also hurting.
- Jesus at death was reaching for that one more soul that needed saving.
- God can use the most painful experiences of our past to help us minister to others. God uses his children who have endured difficulty to become a source of strength to others who are experiencing the same trial. The greatest reason that others will listen to us at that point is not our superior spirituality but the commonality of our mutual struggles.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any [a]trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

III. We are Responsible to Others.

- **“Woman, behold (here is) your son! (said to his disciple) Behold your mother!” (John 19:26)**
- If there was ever a time for a person to think only of themselves then surely, it is the hour of their death. Yet even in the agony of His final hours on the cross Jesus thought of others.
- Even amid the suffering of the cross Jesus never lost sight of those who were closest to him. Sometimes in the pain of our given situation we find that it causes to lose sight of anyone or anything other than ourselves.
- Jesus speaks to us through this situation to refuse to allow a present painful situation to dull our sensitivity to the needs of those who are depend on us.

IV. Take Hard Questions to God.

- **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46)**
- According to Matthew it is the ninth hour, or 3 o’clock in the afternoon.

Matthew 27:46, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

- Matthew is so stricken by what he hears that he records the very Aramaic words which Jesus spoke. You can also feel the anguish as Jesus speaks.
- It is the question of a confused heart. For the first and only time in eternity Jesus was separated, abandoned by the Father, because of the penalty of sin, our sins.
- Do you know how it feels to face a problem that you can see no answers to? Do you know what it is like to feel completely depleted? Do you know what it feels like to feel that you cannot go on?
- For some it to wake up one morning and find out that marriage was not everything they thought it would be. The doctor has given you news that you or a loved one’s earthly life is coming to an end.
- You want to give up, but instead you call out, to God and God gives you the strength to continue. He gives you strength to survive the storm.
- All of us have experience times when we have moments when we have wondered, “Why God.” Perhaps what some of us need to understand today is that it is okay for us to pray, “My God why???” It is not wrong to take our questions to God, to confess our confusion and anger.
- **Read Psalms 142:1-2**
- From Jesus we discover that He allowed his agony to turn him to prayer. Jesus even in this hour He prayed “My God,” He prayed firm in the resolve that was still His very own. He also prayed in the faith that as bleak as thing looked God knew the answer to his perplexing problem.

V. It is Alright to Acknowledge Your Need.

- **“I thirst.” (John 19:28)**
- Some of us really don’t like to ask favors of anyone. But if we do ask anyone for a favor, we really would rather it be from one of our friends.
- There are some that have no problem asking for help, and maybe they should struggle a little more with it. Or God has allowed the issue for correction.
- Jesus’ request for a something to drink is a reminder to us that no one is so in control, so spiritual, so self-sufficient, that they do not need the help of others. In the tough times of life, we need the help of others to clarify our thinking, to enable us to keep on walking on the right path.

VI. God is Still in Control.

- **“It is finished.” (John 19:30)**
- In the Greek language from which the New Testament is translated it is but one word, Tetelesthai!
- From the Cross Jesus declared, “It is finished, it completed, or it is paid in full.”
- Under the Roman system of justice when a man was convicted of a crime, his crime and the sentence was recorded on a placard and nailed to the door of his cell. Upon the completion of his sentence it was taken down and across the face it was written “tetelesthai” – it has been paid in full. Because Jesus died on the cross, when you accepted that payment for your sins, across the face of the record of your sin was written, “paid in full.”

Colossians 2:14, “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

VII. Surrender to God and Let It Go.

- **“Father, into your Hands I commit My spirit.” (Luke 23:46)**
- At the end of each day, especially the hard one’s we are tempted to use the night to relive the struggles of that day. What really are our options when we find ourselves in situation beyond our control, when we find that we do not have the capacity to manage the outcome? In whom can we trust?
- **Read Luke 23:44-46**
- Jesus said, “I am now ready to release my hold on life, and I am unafraid to do so because I am placing everything about myself into Your hands.”
- What about you?

Closing

The Victory Has Been Won and the Way is Now Open. That leads to the final point from this passage: The Offer Still Stands.

Mark 16:39, "So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

A centurion normally had one hundred men under his command. But they were also given special jobs to do. On this day, he oversaw a smaller detachment that had crucifixion duty. He witnessed the scourging, the mocking, the spitting, the nailing, and he heard the last shout of Jesus. When he watched how Jesus died, willingly and powerless, and yet filled with power, he confessed that Jesus was the Son of God. He was deeply moved and drawn to the Savior.

Luke 23:48, "And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned."

When someone beat their breast in the first century, it was a sign of guilt and remorse. Their indifference had been replaced with feelings of guilt. As they watched what Jesus went through, maybe they began to realize their role in putting Him on the cross. They came to witness a show, but they left with feelings of woe. The centurion believed when he saw what Jesus went through. The others said, "Let's leave."

What about you? Are you going to believe or are you going to leave? The offer still stands today. The victory has been won and the way is now open. But nothing is automatic. You must respond to the offer if you want the results of His death applied to your account.

The Bible says that when you decide to put your faith in Christ, just like the centurion did, the wall of separation will come tumbling down. Listen to **2 Corinthians 3:16: "But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."**

What are you going to do? Will you turn to the Lord right now? Will you move closer to the cross, or will you walk away? Are you going to believe, or are you going to leave?