

Seven Words From The Cross

Various Texts



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FOCAL Read Together **John 12:48** **He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**

I don't mean to bring anyone down, but everyone in this audience - myself included - will one day experience what we call "physical death". We will close our eyes in this life for the last time. We will draw our last breath. We will all make some last statement before we pass from this life and into glory (if you're a Christian) or corruption (if you are not a Christian). As Adrian Rogers once said, you can try all you like, but **"death runs in my family, and it runs in yours"**.

When some of you consider that last day, that last hour, that last minute what are the *last words* you want to leave with your family? I heard of a successful businessman who opened a chain of restaurants. As he lay on his deathbed the family waited expectantly to hear what he's say. Finally he whispered, "Slice the ham thin". The famous eighteenth century atheist **Voltaire** was a great blasphemer of God. He once said **"In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand will destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear"**. Voltaire died a horrible death, often crying out in desperation. The nurse who attended him in his last moments said **"For all the wealth in Europe, I would not watch another atheist die"**. We don't know exactly what his last words were, but they were obviously not inspirational or encouraging.

In contrast to these men consider the last words of the

evangelist **Dwight L. Moody**. As he lay on his deathbed he said, "**I see earth receding and heaven is opening. God is calling me.**" The Deacon-Evangelist **Stephen** was the first martyr of the Church. As he was being stoned to death by the Pharisees he cried out, "**Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! (Acts 7:56).**"

On a more personal note, the night before my dear grandmother passed into glory she told my daddy, "**Jay, I'm ready to go home**". When daddy told her she was already home she repeated, "**No, I ready to go to my HOME**". Daddy realized that she was talking about her Heavenly Home, and told her "**Then go on, momma, go home.**" The next day she was with Jesus.

Each of these people - famous and infamous - spoke last words before they passed from this life. Our Lord Jesus Christ also spoke some *last words* before He suffered physical death. Jesus, as you know, died a humiliating and terrifying death on a cross at a place called Calvary.

Jesus spoke *seven last words*, or *seven phrases* while hanging on that Cross. Seven is the number of God. The mighty Syrian **Naaman**, asked the Prophet **Elisha** how he could be healed of leprosy. Elisha said:

2 Kings 5:10 ... Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

Seven times. God told **Joshua** to conquer **Jericho** by marching around it for six days, then

Joshua 6:4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

Seven. The number of God. Peter asked Jesus one time "How many times should I forgive my brother if he offends me?" Jesus replied:

Matthew 18:22 ... I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Seven is the number of God. Our Lord Jesus made seven very important statements while He hung on that Cross, and each statement is profound.

1. Father, Forgive Them

FOCAL Luke 23:34 Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. ...

The first word of Christ from the Cross was a prayer, not for His family, nor His Church, nor even for Himself. It was a prayer for His *enemies*.

As our Lord Jesus hung on the Cross of Calvary we can only imagine the agony He was going through. The pictures you see of the crucifixion often show Jesus hanging on a clean Cross, properly clothed, a little blood at His hands and feet. Real crucifixion was nothing like this - it was an unimaginable torture. Before a man was

crucified he was beaten with whips interwoven with bits of broken clay and thorns. Each strike of the whip tore flesh from the victim, and blood poured freely from these ragged wounds. The executioner took particular pains to whip the back of the victim, so that when he was laid on the rough wood of the Cross the agony would be exquisite. Some men died during the beating. In that case, their bodies were nailed to the Cross as a warning to others.

Men scheduled for execution were stripped naked, and any personal items of value were divided among the guards. The Bible actually says that as Jesus hung on the Cross:

John 19:23-24 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. [24] They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Jesus was crucified naked, nailed to that terrible tree. In crucifixion the victim did not stand on a platform as some artists depict it. He stood on nails, and was held upright by nails. The only way the victim could breathe was by pushing upward with His feet and pulling with His hands.

You would expect the first words of Jesus to be "Father, Save Me", or "Father, punish them". But He didn't.

After all, as the blinded Samson died, lashed to two poles for the Philistines pleasure, his last words were ...

Judges 16:30 .. **Let me die with the Philistines.** ...

WORD STUDY As our Lord hung on that Cross He cried out **Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.** The word translated "**forgive**" is the Greek APHEIMI (αφημι pronounced *af-ee'-ay-mee*), which means not only to **forgive** but also to **release**. Jesus used this same word in the model prayer He taught His disciples:

Matthew 6:12 **And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

Our Lord Jesus came to **seek and to save the lost**. As He looked out over the heads of that crowd just below Him He saw some jeering, some mocking, some yelling "**You saved others, why don't you save Yourself?**". He saw the Pharisees as they stood there with a smug look on their faces, telling one another "See, He was a charlatan". Jesus knew that He had to go to the Cross to pay for our sins, but He also knew that these people - many of them enemies that plagued Him as He went through His earthly ministry - were **lost and undone**. Though He was suffering terribly Jesus prayed for their forgiveness.

As Jesus forgave His enemies, we are to forgive ours.

After all, none of us have been crucified as our Lord was. The genuine, born again Christian will forgive his enemies.

Jesus forgave others for He saw the greater need of seeing their souls saved. He *mediated* for others, and mediates - prays - even now for the lost. We who are His should do the same.

Jesus taught us:

Matthew 5:43-45 **You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. [44] But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; [45] That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven ...**

The is the keystone of Christianity is FORGIVENESS, love in action to the undeserving. Our faith only has validity and veracity in the eyes of a lost and dying world when we express unconditional love toward all.

ILLUSTRATE While on mission in Central America (Belize) I noticed a young girl carrying a live turkey in a sack. She sat the sacked turkey down on the ground and went off to do something else. I noted the turkey struggled, and called, for several minutes, but couldn't get out of the sack. Several very thin dogs passed near

the turkey to inspect it. If I were a betting man, I'd have bet these skinny dogs - you could count every ribs - would make quick work of the turkey. No, they passed on by. But I noticed as the turkey called a flocks of tom turkeys, hearing it, came closer. When they reached the bound turkey they began to furiously peck at it. They were literally killing one of their own! The owner of the turkey heard the commotion, returned, and carried the poor beast home.

So often we act like turkeys. When someone is bound by a sin or enslaved by a vice we attack them rather than interceding for them. The dogs of this world do not attack the turkeys - the turkeys often attack the turkeys. We are our own worst enemies! We need to look beyond ourselves and look at the eternal nature of the soul. This is what Jesus did. As He hung dying on that Cross everyone - even the thieves on either side of Him - mocked Him, saying:

Matthew 27:42-44 **He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. [43] He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. [44] The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.**

Jesus ignored the mocking and, loving them, prayed "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do**". God soon answered Christ's prayer for He would not go to Heaven alone. One of the thieves - convicted by Christ's intercession - opened his heart and called

upon Jesus for salvation..

2. Today You Will Be With Me In Paradise

FOCAL Luke 23:42-43 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. [43] And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.**

The second word of Christ from the Cross was not a prayer, but *an answer to prayer*. The One Who holds the keys of the Kingdom opened the door to Paradise, saving the undeserving but repentant thief who hung next to Him at Calvary.

Both thieves heard Jesus pray "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do**". One thief rejected what he saw, but the second thief *experienced conversion*. Remember, the thief had to *force himself upward on nailed hands and feet to speak*. He said in the midst of this agony, "**Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom**". The thief didn't say "if" but "when". He said "**remember me when You come into Your Kingdom**". He experienced a conversion from unbeliever to believer, from lost to saved, from son of Adam to adopted Child of God.

The thief called Jesus "**Lord**". Salvation can only come when a person calls on the Name of the LORD Jesus. The early Church **preached the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:20)**. **Men hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:26)**. They preached

Acts 16:31 ... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Salvation comes on a person when he or she **repents**, turning from their old way of life, and turns to the **LORD Jesus Christ**. As Paul wrote:

Romans 10:9-13 That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.** [10] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [11] For **the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.** [12] For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. [13] For **whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

The thief did not work to be save, but he *did repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ*. If you will be saved you must turn to Him as both Savior and Lord!

ILLUSTRATE When a man stands at the altar and says "I do" to the woman he is going to marry, he is also saying "I won't" to every other woman. He cannot say "I do - but I'd also like to do with every other woman also". That wouldn't be a marriage - it would be a travesty! In the same way when you say "I do" to Jesus you are saying "I don't" to the rest of the world. **HE IS LORD!**

WORD STUDY The thief said "Lord, REMEMBER me". The word "remember" is the Greek (μνησμομαι pronounced mnah'-om-ahee), which means "to bear in mind, to recollect, to remember". The thief *changed his mind* and came to Jesus as Savior and Lord. He wanted Jesus now to **keep him in mind** as he went into eternity.

No one has ever called on Jesus with a repentant heart and found Him unresponsive. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. He came to save the vilest of sinners. Who knows what sin that thief next to Christ had done to be crucified? These thieves were called **malefactors - KAKOURGOS** (κακουργος pronounced kak-oor'-gos) - "evil doers". Unlike Jesus their hands were nailed to the cross to *keep them from doing harm*. Their feet were nailed to the tree to *keep them from running to mischief*. They were evil, and deserved what they were getting. We know that from the context:

CONTEXT **Luke 23:39-41** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. [40] But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? [41] And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

This thief knew what he had done in life was now coming to fruit. So he, repenting, cried out "Lord Jesus, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom". Jesus responded to this thief's prayer by saying, "Today

you shall be with Me in paradise". Jesus didn't say that the thief was going to *go sleep in the grave, waiting for a general resurrection*, but said **today**.

The Bible gives salvation in the *present tense*. It says that when you believe on Jesus, you should do so *today*. Once you believe on Him you **have eternal life - today - right now!**

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but **have eternal life**.

WORD STUDY You "have eternal life". This is the **Present Active of ECHO**, "you have and hold" eternal life. You do not soul sleep waiting for your salvation. Salvation is your possession, guaranteed by the Son of David, from the moment you believe. What did Jesus say?

John 10:27-28 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: [28] And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Jesus gives us eternal life. It is yours now, believers, if you are indeed believers. You should have the same confidence that Paul had if you are born again by faith in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

If you have called on the name of Jesus as your Lord and Savior you will *never* experience death. The believer, **absent from the body, is present with the Lord**. The believer should not fear death for **today he shall be with Jesus in Paradise**, if today is the last day of your earthly life. The thief believed on Jesus. He was never baptized, never did good works, but was nonetheless saved. Salvation is of grace, by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Woman, Behold Your Son

FOCAL **John 19:26-27** When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, **Woman, behold thy son!** [27] Then saith he to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

The first word of Christ from the Cross was a **word of forgiveness for His enemies**, and the second word was a **word of forgiveness for a repentant sinner**. The third word of Christ from the Cross was directed toward His earthly mother and the disciple John, and His action was intended to be more than a Mother's Day message!

As Christ looked down from the Cross He addressed His mother with "**Woman, behold your son**". Let's look at this phrase first.

WORD STUDY The word for "**mother**" is MATER (

μητηρ pronounced *may'-tare*), but Jesus didn't use this word. Jesus called Mary "**woman**", the Greek GUNE (γυνή pronounced *goo-nay'*), a word often used to denote "**a woman, and specifically a wife**". Why did Jesus use this word and not MATER?

When our Lord Jesus came to this earth He was born of a virgin called Mary. But Jesus never gave Mary special treatment. One day she and her other sons (for she had other children after she had Jesus) came to see Jesus. We read:

Luke 8:20-21 And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. [21] And he answered and said unto them, **My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.**

Jesus made it clear that **He came preaching the Gospel, seeking and saving those who are lost**. Those who are Christ's children are

Galatians 3:26 For **ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

No one gets an automatic pass to Heaven, not even Mary Christ's earthly mother. **You must be born again by faith in Christ.**

Jesus never - to my knowledge - used a term of endearment for His earthly mother. When Mary asked that Jesus turn water into wine He said, "**Woman, what**

have I to do with thee?". He used the word GUNE not MATER, the same word He spoke from the Cross. Why would Jesus use the word **GUNE, woman or wife**, with Mary? Most of the commentaries I have read note that Joseph was not standing with Mary at the foot of the Cross. They suppose that Joseph had died some time before the crucifixion. That would make sense. Jesus as Mary's son would be responsible to make sure that His mother was taken care of in His absence. But from the standpoint of the Christian faith we are *required to take care of widows and orphans*. We read:

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, **To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.**

Christians are obligated to take care of widows, and Mary - the GUNE of Joseph - was a widow. Jesus was doing what our faith requires. But look at the second statement:

FOCAL **John 19:26-27** {Jesus} ... saith unto his mother, **Woman, behold thy son!** [27] Then saith he to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

A Christian is saved to serve the Lord. Jesus gave John the responsibility of looking after Joseph's widow and His earth mother.

If you are a born again Christian you *must work for*

the Lord. You don't work to be saved, but you work because you *are* saved.

I have heard a number of Christians use the thief who died next to Jesus - the same one Jesus addressed in His second word - as a reason why they do not need to serve the Lord or do not need to be baptized. May I remind you that the thief who hung next to Jesus had no opportunity to be baptized, and no opportunity to serve the Lord. His hands were nailed to a Cross! However, this thief did speak up and rebuke his unrepentant companion:

Luke 23:40-41 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, **Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? [41] And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.**

The dying thief *did what he could* to serve his Lord before he died, and so should you - if you are truly born again!

4. Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?

FOCAL **Matthew 27:46** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The fourth word of Christ from the Cross was, like His first word, a prayer. But unlike His first word this prayer emphasized the agony our Lord went through as He made payment for our sins. We read in our context that

just before Jesus uttered these words:

CONTEXT **Matthew 27:45** ... **from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.**

WORD STUDY There had been three hours of "darkness" over the "all the land". The word "darkness" is the Greek SKOTOS (σκotos pronounced *skot'-os*), which means "obscurity, shadiness, blindness, inability to see". Jesus often used this word in His parables when He spoke of someone "being cast into outer darkness" (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30) where there was weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth". Jesus also used SKOTOS to describe the darkness of the human soul that rejected Him in order to chase after sin and death:

John 3:19 **And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

What happened from the sixth to the ninth hour that led Jesus to cry out in desperation, **Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?** or "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? The darkness that was on the land was a pitch black darkness that emphasized what Jesus was doing on that Cross. As He hung there suspended between Heaven and Earth the sins of the world were poured out on Him and judged. The Bible says that God the Father:

2 Corinthians 5:21 ... **hath made {Jesus} to be sin for**

us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Every sin you and I would ever commit was committed to Jesus. Every ounce of the wrath of God that was due us was poured out on the Lord Jesus Christ. He was made sin in our place.

Jesus hung on that Cross not because He was guilty, but because *we are guilty*.

No one truly understands the holiness of God. We say we understand it but we don't. You see, sin is an offense against God. It is an eternal offense. When we sin and smile we forget that - to God - sin is an abomination that must be judged. Jesus Christ took our place in judgment. The Scripture says:

Isaiah 53:4-5 **Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**

Wounded for us! Bruised for us! He died for all, that **whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)**. The Apostle Peter put it this way:

1 Peter 2:24 **Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins,**

should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

By His Blood Jesus released God's wrath against us. Like a tsunami spent on the shoreline, God's wrath was spent on Jesus. By His Blood Jesus purchased us from Satan's dominion. By His Blood Jesus bought us a place in the family of God. By His Blood Jesus earned every person who calls on His Name the privilege **to be called sons of God.**

Galatians 4:6-7 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. [7] Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Those who are Christ's are no longer as they were, because of what Jesus did for them. Oh Christians, do you not hear His cry "**My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?**" Do you not realize what it cost Jesus to purchase you your salvation.

Your salvation may have cost you little, but it cost Christ everything.

It cost Him His dignity, His intimacy with God the Father, and ultimately His earthly life. As **Dr Alfred Eidersheim** said, "{Jesus} **disarmed death by burying its shaft in His own heart**".

G. Campbell Morgan wrote a poem that he put in his

sermon *Forgiveness*. It is so appropriate I thought I'd quote it here:

**Into the woods my Master went,
Clean, forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.**

**Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When death and shame would woo Him last
From under the trees they drew Him last;
Twas on a tree they slew Him - last
When out of the woods He came.**

We live because He suffered. We live because He died. We live forever because He lives forever. We live because we have believed on Him.

5. I Thirst!

FOCAL John 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.**

Up until this point Jesus had taken absolutely no comfort from anyone. When He was first hung on the Cross we

read:

Mark 15:23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

Jesus rejected this drink because it was given to the condemned to extend their lives. The wine mingled with myrrh was a mild sedative. Jesus refused any help, and, as the Lamb of God, took the full weight of our sin on Himself. The Scripture says:

Philippians 2:6-8 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: [7] But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: [8] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The Lord would take no comfort until our sins were fully paid for.

WORD STUDY "I thirst" is but one word in the Greek - DIPSAO (διψᾶω pronounced dip-sah'-o) - so this is the shortest of Christ's cries from the Cross. Yet this cry emphasizes His humanity.

Jesus Christ is very God of very God. It is He Who said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58), taking the eternal and most Holy Name of God to Himself. Jesus said to His disciples "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9). We are told at the

entrance to the Book of John that:

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Jesus Christ is not only God, but He is **Creator God**. All things were made by Him. And yet He says from the Cross, "I thirst". That is a human thing. God does not thirst. God said:

Psalms 50:12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.

Jesus Christ is very God of very God, and yet, He says I thirst. Angels cannot suffer thirst. God cannot suffer thirst. A ghost could not suffer thirst. But Jesus suffered thirst. Jesus **took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men**. The God-Man, perfect God and perfect Man - hung on that Cross, for He hung there in your place and in mine.

The thirst that Jesus experienced was no normal thirst. His thirst was from blood loss, from pouring Himself out for you and I.

The Psalmist prophesied of the Lord Jesus and His crucifixion in Psalm 22. There we read:

Psalms 22:14-18 I am poured out like water, and all

my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. [15] My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. [16] For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. [17] I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me. [18] They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

As Jesus hung on that Cross though no bone was broken, the weight of His body on the nails caused **the bones to be out of joint**. The constant tugging and tearing of flesh in order to breath caused an extraordinary amount of blood loss. **His heart was like wax, melted into the midst of His bowels**. Jesus had no strength left. **His strength was dried up like a broken piece of pottery**. Thirst had so overwhelmed Him that **His tongue cleaved to His jaws**. On top of this the **dogs, the assembly of the wicked, stood round about Him** in order to mock Him. As He hung naked and dying they **cast lots for His coat, and parted His clothes among themselves**.

If you have ever been abandoned or misused by the children of men, you know the terrors of the dark night of the soul. Jesus was in the final course of His dark night. Yet Jesus willingly suffered for us in order that He could **make reconciliation for the sins of the people**.

Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore **in all things it behooved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things**

pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

His thirst - that physical suffering - coupled with His spiritual suffering shows that Jesus is, indeed, **the Author and FINISHER of our faith**. He did the work of salvation, and we add not one but to it by our efforts. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.

6. It Is Finished!

FOCAL **John 19:30** When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.**

WORD STUDY When Jesus said "It is finished", He didn't say "**I am finished**". He said "**IT is finished**". The word "**finished**" is the Perfect Active Indicative of TETELESTAI (**Τετέλεσται**). The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been *completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated*.

Jesus' cry from the Cross, TETELESTAI, means "**It [the atonement] has been accomplished, completely, once and for all time.**"

This one word uttered by Jesus from the Cross was not a word of defeat, nor was it uttered in sadness. It was a victory cry! IT IS FINISHED!

No man can add to or take away from the work of Christ. Salvation is *all of Christ and none of me*. Because

Christ's work is **finished once and for all** the sinner need only **repent - turn away from other gods and goddesses - and turn to Jesus for salvation**. Salvation is a resting upon Christ. When you rest upon Christ by faith God sees this resting, and sends the Holy Spirit into your life to change you. We who are God's children are **saved to the uttermost**:

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore {Jesus} is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The atonement in our salvation - the covering of the Blood - is entirely the work of God.

Romans 5:8-11 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. [10] For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. [11] And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Jesus Christ did the work of salvation, and we who believe are saved - not by our works - but by faith in Him. This word of Christ from the Cross is not only His victory cry, but it is the banner of the Church. Finished! Finished! Our salvation is secured and finished! **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

"... none of the words of our Lord on the cross are addressed to his Church but this one. I cannot believe that, when he was dying, he left his people, for whom he died, without a word. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," is for sinners, not for saints. "I thirst," is for himself; and so is that bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "Woman, behold thy son!" is for Mary. "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise," is for the penitent thief. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," is for the Father. Jesus must have had something to say, in the hour of death, for his Church; and, surely, this is his dying word for her. He tells her, shouting it in her ear that has become dull and heavy with despair, "It is finished." "It is finished, O my redeemed one, my bride, my well-beloved, for whom I came to lay down my life; it is finished, the work is done!"

That which we are to offer to the lost is a *finished product*. We are not to go into the world and say "you must do this, and this, and this, and this and *then believe* on Jesus".

The Church has, at times, mangled the message of the Gospel by adding our own two cents worth in. The salvation offered by the Gospel is a finished product. We need to return to preaching it as such.

Peter rightly preached:

Acts 2:38 ... Repent, and be baptized every one of you

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Gospel message is very simple. **Repent.** Turn from what you were believing in and turn to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. **Be baptized every one of you.** If you are saved do as Jesus commanded in **Matthew 28:19-20.** The first act of obedience of every born again believer is to **be baptized.** Jesus commanded it, Paul did it, you do it. And note he ends with **you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** The Christian way of life is a supernatural way of life. If you are born again, you are **Spirit indwelt.** The Scripture says:

Romans 8:9-11 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. [10] And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. [11] But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

The Holy Spirit lives inside of every believer, guiding them to righteousness. The Holy Spirit is the birthright of every believer. **If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.** The Spirit resides in the believer, leading to life and light.

We who are saved are saved - not because we keep ourselves - but because God keeps us!

Knowing that the work is finished, I do not need to fret and worry over whether I am His and He is mine. I have believed in Him, and He has received me, a sinner. He knew my flaws when He received me and received me anyway. He gave me the gift of His Holy Spirit knowing that I was not perfect. But I don't have to be perfect - for He will perfect His work in me. **It is finished!** I know that some of you will object to that last statement that "I don't have to be perfect" by quoting:

Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

But if you'll read your context that this verse is found in you will see that Christ is referring to **loving your enemies, that you might be the children of your Father which is in Heaven.** Let your love be perfect! God saved you, if you have believed in Jesus, just as He has saved me. We are imperfect as are our enemies. **It is finished!** reminds me that God can save my enemies, and the foulest of sinners, for He has saved me and He has saved you.

Rest in your salvation, dear Christian. It is finished. Now God works in you to will and to do of His good will. Live as obedient children, and love.

We broke God's Law, Christ paid for what we broke. We dishonored Almighty God, Christ poured out His Blood to cover our evil. We sinned against Infinity, but Christ paid our sins unto Infinity. It is finished! Blessed be the

Name of God.

One last thing: Does **"It is finished"** mean that we who are believers do not have to work for the Lord?

Absolutely not!

Just as our Master's work was not finished till He died, our work for the Master is not finished until the day we die.

We have a finished Gospel to get out to the world. Let us be about our Father's business, glorifying Jesus for our Finished Salvation.

7. Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

FOCAL Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:** and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

The last word of Christ was a prayer of surrender. His work was done, Satan was defeated, and our salvation was paid for in full.

I have heard commentators says that Christ in His deity would have never died on that Cross. I cannot dispute that. But I do want to look at the final; word of Christ - His prayer for Himself - uttered just before He left His earthly body. Jesus actually quoted a text from the Psalms:

Psalms 31:5 **Into thine hand I commit my spirit: ...**

Our Lord Jesus Christ lived by the Book of Books, the Holy Bible. When tempted in the wilderness by Satan Jesus did not chase Satan away by His opinion. Jesus spoke **"it is written"** and then quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Incarnate Word of God lived by the Written Word of God. This is all the more reason why God's children by faith in Christ should live by the Written Word of God.

Christ drank the Word and ate the Word of God. He lived by that Word. A Christian should absorb the Word of God to the degree that - as Spurgeon once said - **his blood becomes Bible**. If a person has a low view of God's Word then he has a low view of Christ. Christ lived by the Word, trusted the Word, and preached the Word. We need to do the same.

Do you fear death? Why? Jesus had no fear of death. He said **"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit"**.

WORD STUDY That word translated **"commend"** is the Greek PARATITHEMI (παραιτιθημι pronounced *par-at-ith'-ay-mee*), a compound word which means **"to place alongside, to deposit in trust, to place into for safekeeping"**. What Jesus was saying to the Father was **"Father, I'm depositing My Soul into Your safekeeping"**.

ILLUSTRATE Now, when you deposit a check into your banking account do you worry about whether its there or not? Do you wonder if the money will be there when you come back? If you do, you need to find another bank! Jesus wasn't worried about where He was depositing His soul. He knew that God would keep it, and because of that physical death did not bring terror to the Master's face. He was confident that His Father would care for Him.

The salvation of the Christian is so secure that death is no more than a pin prick, a small passing. Jesus said:

John 11:25-26 ... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: [26] And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Believest thou this? dear Christian? If you believe this then death has no fear for you. I am told that the early Church Pastor **Polycarp** said "**Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit**" just before he was martyred. That Great Reformer **Martin Luther's** last words were also "**Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit**". Other great saints like **Jerome of Prague**, and **John Huss** spoke these sweet words before they went into glory. I do not know if these men really said these words or not, but I do know that the **Martyr Stephen** used these precious words:

Acts 7:59-60 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. [60] And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice,

Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Stephen committed his soul to Jesus for safekeeping, just as Jesus committed His soul to the Father. We who believe in Jesus need not fear physical death. One of the greatest of the Apostles, the Apostle Paul, as he approached death told his disciple Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. [7] I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Paul did not see physical death as a cessation of life. As he approached death he **offered himself up to God**. Paul saw death as a **departure** from this life and an entrance into the next life. Death is not the end of all things, but the beginning of a much greater life.

From the moment Jesus yielded His spirit to the Father it was but three days before He was seen in resurrected and glorified splendor. As He is, so shall we be!

God is Father to His people. Jesus told Mary Magdalene:

John 20:17 Touch me not; for I am not yet

ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Jesus committed His soul to the Father. In the same way, we commit our souls to the Father at physical death. God would not be a full Father to Jesus and a half Father to us who are **His by faith in Christ Jesus**. God is not glorified if He lose even one soul. Though there will be a day when our souls will have to depart this earthly tabernacle:

2 Corinthians 5:1-4 For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: [3] If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. [4] For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Oh, glorious day when we shall see Jesus! Dear Christian,

Father! Your strength in life comes from your being truly a Child of God. Your strength in death comes from your being truly a Child of God.

What a terrible time to wait until death and then try and call upon the strength of the Father. It can be done. The

thief who died next to Jesus cried out, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom". Jesus answered that prayer. But remember, dear one, that the thief went on to suffer a terrifying death. Jesus cried out "**Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit**", and left the thief alive and hanging still on that Cross. The executioner came and broke his legs to hasten his death. I have no doubt that his soul went to be with Jesus - for Jesus promised and He always keeps His promises - but do not use the dying thief as an example for your life.

Live surrendered to the Lord each and every day so that when physical death comes you can confidently say, "**Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit**".

I would like to close with one other word. When Jesus died on the Cross there was a Centurion standing nearby. We read:

CONTEXT Luke 23:47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, **Certainly this was a righteous man.**

I do not know if this Centurion was saved or not. I do know that **he glorified God** because of the way that Jesus approached death. We are to live our lives surrendered to the Lord Jesus. When we as believers come to the end of our lives, we should approach death in a way that will glorify God.

Your last words - what will they be? Will you cry out in

fear and agony for a few more moments on this earth?
Will you **"curse God and die"** as Job's wife suggested he do? Or will you go into eternity peaceably and purposely, **"looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith"**? Your relationship to Christ will make all the difference in the world when that final moment comes.

May God touch your hearts with His word!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FOCAL Read Together John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Acts 7:56; 2 Kings 5:10; Joshua 6:4; Matthew 18:22

1. Father, Forgive Them

FOCAL Luke 23:34 Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. ...

John 19:23-24; Judges 16:30; Matthew 6:12; Matthew 5:43-45; Matthew 27:42-44

WORD STUDY The word translated "forgive" is the Greek APHEIMI (αφιημι pronounced af-ee'-ay-mee), _____

2. Today You Will Be With Me In Paradise

Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-13; Luke 23:39-41; John 3:15; John 10:27-28; 2 Corinthians 5:8

FOCAL Luke 23:42-43 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. [43] And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say

unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

WORD STUDY The word "remember" is the Greek (μνησκει pronounced mnah'-om-ahee), _____

WORD STUDY You "have eternal life". This is the Present Active of ECHO, _____

3. Woman, Behold Your Son

Luke 8:20-21; Galatians 3:26; James 1:27; John 19:26-27; Luke 23:40-41

FOCAL John 19:26-27 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! [27] Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

WORD STUDY The word for "mother" is MATER (μητηρ pronounced may'-tare), but Jesus didn't use this word. Jesus called Mary "woman", the Greek GUNE (γυνη pronounced goo-nay') _____

4. Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?

FOCAL **Matthew 27:46** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Matthew 27:45; Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; John 3:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:4-5; 1 Peter 2:24; Galatians 4:6-7

WORD STUDY The word "darkness" is the Greek SKOTOS (σκοτος pronounced *skot'-os*), _____

5. I Thirst!

FOCAL **John 19:28** After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.**

Mark 15:23; Philippians 2:6-8; John 8:58; John 14:9; John 1:1-3; Psalms 50:12; Psalms 22:14-18; Hebrews 2:17

6. It Is Finished!

FOCAL **John 19:30** When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Hebrews 7:25; Romans 5:8-11; Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 8:9-11; Matthew 5:48

WORD STUDY The word "finished" is the Perfect Active Indicative of TETELESTAI (Τετέλεσται). _____

7. Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

FOCAL **Luke 23:46** And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:** and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Psalms 31:5; John 11:25-26; Acts 7:59-60; 2 Timothy 4:6-8; John 20:17; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; Luke 23:47

WORD STUDY That word translated "commend" is the Greek PARATITHEMI (παρατιθημι pronounced *par-at-ith'-ay-mee*), _____
