

Good Friday: The 7 Last Words of Jesus

As Jesus hung on the cross, struggling painfully for each breath, He uttered seven short, powerful statements showing who He was and what was happening, and encouraging those who would follow Him. It was His last sermon.

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1. **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34b, NIV).** Jesus is not only practicing the forgiveness He preached (Matt. 5:44), but He is also asserting His divinity as God who forgives sin (). Beyond that, however, He is announcing the beginning of the New Covenant under which our sins will be forgiven (Jer. 31:33-34).
2. **“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43, NET).** Jesus’ promise of life to the criminal on the cross tells us that He has authority over heaven (Ps. 115:16), He will conquer death (Ps. 16:10) and through Him we also will live (John 14:19). He is the priest of the New Covenant because of His indestructible life (Heb. 7:16-17).
3. **“Dear woman, here is your Son ... here is your mother” (John 19:26b-27b, NLT).** Jesus took time to entrust His mother into the care of the beloved disciple John, fulfilling the Scripture in Psalm 69:8 that He was estranged from His brothers and showing us that God expects us to honor our family (Mark 7:10-13). We are also reminded that Jesus was the “seed of woman,” the Savior born to a virgin as promised in Genesis 3:15, who was being “bruised in the heel” on the cross and who will triumph by “crushing the head” of the serpent

Satan.

4. **"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46b, NIV).** Many of those who heard Jesus, and many commentators since, have failed to understand that Jesus is quoting the Hebrew title of Psalm 22. Jesus sends us to Psalm 22 to show us that 1,000 years earlier it was prophesied that Jesus would be mocked (Ps. 22:6-8), even prophesying the very words of His mockers (Matt. 27:41-43). In one sense, He was mocking His mockers. The crucifixion is also described, as His hands and feet were pierced (Ps. 22:16), His clothes were divided by casting lots (Ps. 22:18), and it was difficult to speak (Ps. 22:15). Yet Psalm 22 is not a picture of forsakenness or despair, but is instead a declaration of victory. God did not hide his face or despise the suffering of Jesus (Ps. 22:24). Rather, God used it to purchase eternal life (Psalm 22:26) and promised that all nations will come to Jesus (Psalm 22: 27,28). Jesus is telling us that He knew the price and gladly paid it.
5. **"I am thirsty" (John 19:28c).** This is another fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 69:28), when the suffering Savior is given vinegar for His thirst. Yet in the midst of His pain and distress, Jesus used Psalm 69 to tell us that those who seek God will live (Ps. 69:32), and the God does not despise the suffering of His people (Ps. 69:33). There is also the promise that His people will rebuild Judah (Ps. 69:35-36), an apparent reference to His promise to return
6. **"It is finished" (John 19:30).** To fully understand this statement, we believe that we need to look to the prophet Daniel. He foretold the coming of the anointed one who would come 483 years (69 times seven) after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (458 B.C.), or A.D. 26, and then be "cut off" in the midst of the next seven years (Dan. 9:25- 26). Jesus is telling us that He has fulfilled Daniel's prophecy to finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness, bring eternal

righteousness, seal up prophecy and anoint the holy one (Dan. 9:24). This is the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

7. **“Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46).** The last words of Jesus on the cross are taken from Psalm 31. He is telling us that we can take refuge in God (Psalm 31:1-4) and that we can trust Him with our lives (Ps. 31:5). Our times are in His hands (Ps. 31:19-22), and He preserves the faithful (Ps. 31:23, 24).

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With His last sermon, Jesus told us what He was doing even as He was doing it.

With his last words, He is telling us that God's hands are the only safe place for our lives.

Can you join Him in saying “Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit?”

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