

The Last Words of Christ

I. Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.

Vocabulary:

stripped of ...dignity: to remove honor

crucified: killed on a cross

illustrated: showed

Jesus, the perfect Son of God was arrested, beaten, and stripped of his dignity. The crowd demanded that Jesus be crucified. The soldiers hung Jesus on a cross between two criminals. As Jesus hung on the cross, He said, " Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." He said this about the Jewish crowd and Roman soldiers but also about his disciples who deserted him.

Jesus' death on the cross was all about forgiveness. His sacrifice makes it possible for our sins to be forgiven. But his words of forgiveness demonstrate how we should forgive. In the Lord's prayer, Jesus tells us to forgive those who sin against us. This is the first thing Jesus did on the cross.

Read Luke 23:34 (page 1122), Mark 15:10 (page 1085), Matt. 26: 27-28(page 1060), Matt. 6:12 (page 1034)

When should we forgive? Always. Jesus and Peter talked about forgiveness. Peter asked how many times he should forgive someone. He thought seven times was a lot but Jesus said 77 times. By saying this, Jesus meant that he should always forgive. He illustrated this with a parable about forgiveness. Jesus even reminded his disciples (and us) about forgiving when He appeared after His resurrection.

Read Matt. 18: 21-35 (page 1049), John 20: 22-23 (page 1151)

Questions

1. What did the crowd demand?
2. What did Jesus say as He hung on the cross?
3. What does Jesus' sacrifice on the cross make possible for us?
4. What does the Lord's prayer tell us about forgiveness?
5. When should we forgive?

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II. Today you will be with me in paradise.

Vocabulary:

mock: to make fun of

made right: to be accepted

the law: the Ten Commandments

fulfilled: completed

long: to wish for

resurrection: to come back to life after dying

As Jesus hung on the cross, one of the criminals began to mock Jesus. The second criminal reminded the first that they were both guilty of their crimes but Jesus was not guilty. The criminal asked Jesus to remember him when He entered God's kingdom. Jesus said, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Jesus is talking about heaven. Before Jesus was arrested, he comforted his disciples. In John 14, Jesus told his disciples and us that God has prepared a place for us in Heaven. We enter paradise through Jesus' death on the cross.

Read Luke 23: 39-43(page 1122), John 14: 1-4(page 1143)

These words to the criminal on the cross show us that salvation is through faith alone! This man did not work for his salvation. He spoke words of faith as he hung on his cross. No one can be made right with God through works or by obeying the law. Christ died for ungodly people. This shows God's great love for us. Only Jesus can make us right with God through His death and resurrection. God forgives the sins of those who have faith because He is a God of mercy.

In Hebrews, we read about the importance of faith. Important men of the Old Testament like Noah and Abraham all had strong faith in God. They did not live to see all of God's promises fulfilled. In their life, they longed for the heavenly home that God had prepared for them.

Read Galatians 3:11(page 1231),Romans 3: 22-28(page 1191),Romans 5:6-11(page 1192), Hebrews 11: 1-16(page 1275)

Questions

1. What did the second criminal say to the first?
2. What did Jesus say to the criminal?
3. How can we enter paradise?
4. What do Jesus' words to the criminal show us?
5. How are we made right with God?
6. Whose sins does God forgive?

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III. Jesus said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." He said to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

Vocabulary:

privilege: the right

Feast of Booths: a festival to remember the journey from Egypt to Canaan;
also to give thanks for the harvest

openly: visibly; to be seen by everyone

genetic relationship: relationship based on your family

As Jesus hung on the cross, he looked down and saw his mother and his disciple John. Although Jesus is the Son of God, he gave up the privilege of being God and came to earth in human form. He was born into a human family. One of the ten commandments tells us to honor our father and mother. Even in death, Jesus showed honor to his mother. He wanted to make sure that she would be taken care of after he died. Why did Jesus ask John to take care of her? Of all the disciples, John was the only one who remained faithful to Jesus. John's loving behavior showed that he could be trusted to care for Jesus' mother.

Read John 19:26-27(page 1150), Phil. 2: 6-8(page 1242), Exodus 20: 12(page 75)

But Mary had other children besides Jesus. Why didn't Jesus let them take care of their mother? Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him. During the Feast of Booths, Jesus didn't want to go to Judea openly. The Jewish leaders were waiting to kill him. His brothers didn't care about Jesus. They told him to go to Judea anyway.

Read John 7: 1-13(page 1133)

When Jesus connected his mother with John, his disciple, he was also changing our view of family. Our normal view of family is based on genetic relationships. But when we accept Jesus, we have a new father - God, our heavenly Father. Jesus talks about this in Mark chapter 3. When Jesus was at a home preaching about God, his mother and brothers came looking for him. Jesus said, " Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Jesus looked around at the crowd listening to him. He said, " Here is my mother. Here are my brothers.

Anyone who trusts and obeys God are my brother, sister, or mother." What Jesus is saying is that we have a new family now - the family of fellow believers.

We should treat our fellow Christians as family. Paul talks to Timothy about this in 1 Timothy. He reminds Timothy to treat older men and women with respect as if they were his father or mother. In fact, Paul refers to believers as brothers and sisters throughout the book of Romans. As brothers and sisters, we should serve one another in love.

Read Mark 3:31-35(page 1068), I Timothy 5:1-2(page 1257), Romans 7:4(page 1193), Galatians 5:13(page 1233)

Questions

1. What is the commandment about our fathers and mothers? How did Jesus honor this?
2. Why did Jesus ask John to take care of His mother?
3. Why didn't Jesus have His brothers take care of Mary?
4. What do Jesus' words teach us about family?
5. How should we treat our fellow Christians?

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IV. My God, my God why have you deserted me?

Vocabulary:

quoted: to say or write someone else's words

struggling: to try hard to solve a situation

hurting: to feel upset

watches over: protects

high priest: a Jewish priest who performs sacrifices

forsaken: deserted, abandoned

rejection: to not accept something

In Jesus' fourth words on the cross, Jesus cried out to God in pain and sorrow. As He cried out, Jesus quoted Psalm 22. In this Psalm, David called out to God. Sometimes when we are struggling with problems, we feel that God is far from us. But as we read Psalm 22, we can see that although he is hurting, David still trusts God.

Read Matt. 27:46 (page 1063), Psalm 22: 1-5 (page 587)

But why did Jesus say this? To understand, we must remember why Jesus died on the cross. He died for our sins. Even more importantly, our sins were given to Jesus.

God watches over the righteous but he hates sin. God forgives sin but He also requires punishment for sin. We are all sinners. No one can be right with God and nothing we do can make us right with God. We tell lies, and cause pain to others. We disobey God. Because of sin, we are separated from God. In fact, we are His enemies. We are without hope and without God in the world.

Read Psalm 11:5(page 581), Leviticus 26:24(page 130), Numbers 14:18(page 154), Romans 3:10-18(page 1190), Ephesians 2:12(page 1236), Ephesians 4:18 (page 1238), Colossians 1:21(page 1245)

Jesus is the Son of God who is our high priest. He is holy, pure, and without sin. But when Jesus died on the cross, He carried our sins. When Jesus cried out, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" our sins separated Him from God. For a

while, Jesus was like us - without hope. Jesus suffered pain and rejection for us. His wounds heal us.

Read Hebrews 7:26 (page 1272), Isaiah 53: 4-6 (page 790)

Questions

1. What Psalm did Jesus quote on the cross?
2. Why did Jesus die on the cross?
3. What does God think of sin?
4. Because of sin and our disobedience, what is our relationship to God?
5. When Jesus died on the cross, _____.

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V. I thirst.

Vocabulary:

wandering: to move around with no direction

manna: bread that God sent

abundant: more than enough

longs: desires

agony: great pain

succumbed: to yield to

source: the origin - where something came from

A. God provides for our needs of hunger and thirst

When the people of Israel were wandering in the desert, God took care of their needs. He provided manna from heaven and water from a rock. In Psalms, we read that God gives abundant water to all who are thirsty. Not only does God provide for our physical need of thirst, but also our spiritual need of thirst. We long for God. Just like a deer longs for a stream of water, we thirst for God.

Read Nehemiah 9:15(page 520), Psalm 107:9 (page 647), Psalm 42:1-2 (page 601)

B. Jesus gives us water for eternal life.

Jesus traveled in Samaria. He met a Samaritan woman at a well. Jesus told her that if she drank from the well water, she would still be thirsty. But Jesus offered her living water. This living water is eternal life which comes from Jesus. When we are thirsty for God, Jesus gives us a spring of water which satisfies our every need.

Read John 4: 7-14(page 1128), John 7: 37(page 1134), Revelations 21:6 (page 1315), Rev. 22:17(page 1316)

C. The source of living water becomes thirsty

As Jesus hung on the cross, He said, " I thirst." When Jesus said this, He was fulfilling the scripture in Psalm 69. Even in agony, Jesus was obeying His Father God's will. As a human, Jesus succumbed to the needs of His body. Spiritually,

Jesus was separated from His Father , the source of spiritual water. During this time, Jesus experienced a deep longing for God's presence. We have a Savior who understands our needs and longings as well as our pain and suffering.

Read John 19:28 (page 1150), Psalm 69: 21(page 618)

Questions

1. What did God provide for the people of Israel when they were in the desert?
2. What other kind of thirst does God provide for?
3. What water did Jesus offer the Samaritan woman?
4. Why did Jesus say , "I thirst"?
5. What did Jesus experience on the cross?

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VI. It is finished.

Vocabulary:

mission: job or goal

guilt offering: giving an offering to God for sin

established: started

blameless: without blame/has done nothing wrong

imprisons: to keep from being free

crush: to destroy

A. It is finished - Jesus finished His mission

"It is finished" - Jesus finished His mission. God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to die for us. This was Jesus' mission. All that happened to Jesus was part of God's plan. Jesus was made to be the guilt offering for our sins. Jesus willingly gave up his life to be this offering.

Jesus himself said that his mission was to do God's will and finish his work. Jesus preached the good news of God's Kingdom. He established God's Kingdom on earth. Jesus healed the sick and told people to turn from their sins. By accomplishing His mission, Jesus brought God's glory on earth.

Read John 19:29-30 (page 1150), Isaiah 53: 10-12(page 791), Matthew 4:17 & 23(page 1032), Luke 17: 20- 21(page 1113), John 3:16(page 1127), John 4:34(page 1129), John 17:4(page 1146)

Jesus finished His mission as the final prophet and priest. Prophets proclaim God's message to people. God used many prophets in the past so that people would know who God is. God sent Jesus as the final prophet not only to tell us about God but to show us God in human form.

The high priest's job was to make blood sacrifices to God for the sins of the people. They did this by sacrificing a lamb. But the high priest also had to sacrifice an animal for his own sins. As final high priest, Jesus is holy and blameless. He sacrificed himself as the holy lamb for all our sins.

Read Hebrews 1:1(page 1267), Hebrews 7:24-27(page 1271)

B. It is finished - a cry of victory

"It is finished" - this was a cry of victory! Victory over sin and victory over death. Sin entered the world through Adam and Eve. Because of this sin, death also came to all people because sin leads to death. But God's grace came through Jesus. Jesus' death brought victory over sin and death. Jesus' death sets the prisoners free. Free from what? Jesus sets us free from our sinful nature. Our sin imprisons us, it controls us and Jesus brings freedom.

Read Luke 4:18(page 1093), Romans 5:12-15(page 1192), Romans 7:23(page 1194),Romans 8:1(page 1194), I Corinthians 15:55(page 1217), Hebrews 9:14(page 1273)

Jesus also has victory over Satan. Satan or the devil hates God and wants to destroy us. In the garden of Eden, Satan tempted Eve and lead to sin in the world. But God confronted Satan. He announced that a Son would be born who would crush Satan. This Son was God's own son, Jesus. Jesus' death destroyed Satan.

Read Revelation 12:9(page 1307), Genesis 3:1-6,14-15(page 3), Hebrews 2:14-15(page 1268)

C. It is finished - Once and for all

"It is finished" - once and for all time. Jesus paid the price for our sin by dying on the cross. An earthly Jewish high priest must sacrifice over and over for people's sin. But Jesus died once for past, present, and future sins. It is finished - Jesus completed the sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus' sacrifice is a free gift to us. "It is finished" - we don't need to work for our salvation. We can't do anything to earn it. It is by God's grace that we have this gift of salvation.

Read Romans 6:10(page 1193), Hebrews 9:25-28(page 1273), Ephesians 2:8-9(page 1236)

Questions

1. What was Jesus' mission?
2. Why did God send Jesus to be the final prophet?
3. Why is Jesus the final High Priest?
4. What did Jesus' death bring victory over?
5. What happened to Satan because of Jesus' death?
6. It is finished - once and for all time. What does this mean?

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VII. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Vocabulary:

commend: commit/give

surrender: to give control to another

endure: suffer

submitted: yielded to authority

resurrection: to become alive after death

A. Obedience

Jesus' final words showed His obedience to God, His Father. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit". Jesus lived as life of humility and obedience. His obedience lead Jesus to die on a cross. The Pharisees complained that Jesus claimed to be greater than Abraham. Jesus said that God was His Father and that Jesus obeyed Him. We can look at Jesus' example of obedience as we obey Jesus' and God's commandments. In John 15, Jesus tells us that He loves us with God's love. As Jesus obeyed God's commands, we also should obey Jesus' commands. What are Jesus' commands? To love God and to love each other with Christ's love.

Read Luke 23:46(page 1123), Philippians 2:8(page 1242), John 8:54-55(page 1136), John 15: 9-14(page 1145)

B. Surrender

Jesus' final words showed that He surrendered Himself to the Father. He trusted God completely with His life. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus knew that His death would happen soon. Jesus knew the pain that He must endure. As He prayed, Jesus asked His Father to take this pain from Him. But Jesus surrendered to God's will.

Just as Jesus surrendered to His Father, we should follow His example. Jesus said that if we want to be His disciples, we must take up our cross and follow Him. Just as Jesus took up His cross to die, we must die to ourselves. We must surrender our will to God's will.

As we surrender ourselves to God, we put our trust in Him. In Proverbs, we read that we should trust in God with all our hearts. God knows everything from the past, present, and future. We don't know the future or even the present. So we shouldn't trust in ourselves or our own understanding. Instead, we should trust and obey God.

Read Matthew 26: 36-39(page 1060), Mark 8:34-37(page 1075), Proverbs 3:5-6(page 675)

C. We are not alone

Jesus' final words meant that Jesus submitted to His death. After His death and resurrection, God would send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches us and reminds us about all that Jesus taught. Because Jesus died on the cross and rose again, we are free from sin. Now we are controlled by the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to overcome sin. This same power from the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead. This same Holy Spirit lives in those who believe in Jesus.

Read John 7:38-39(page 1134), John 14: 16-17,26(page 1144), Romans 8:2-11(page 1194)

Questions

1. How did Jesus shows His obedience to God?
2. What are Jesus' commands?
3. How did Jesus surrender Himself to God?

4. What does it mean to take up your cross and follow Jesus?

5. What does the Holy Spirit do in our lives?