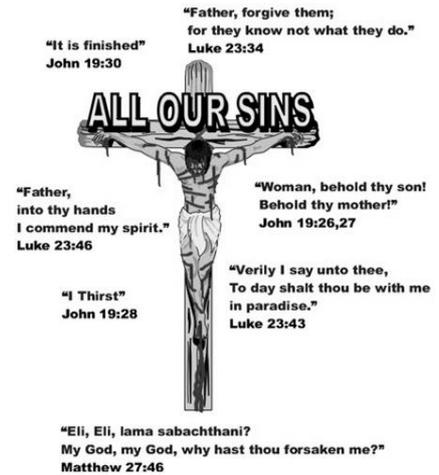


7

SAYINGS FROM THE HEART OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

Seven Sayings From The Heart Of Jesus On The Cross *by* David Cambridge

Seven Sayings From The Heart Of Jesus On The Cross



Introduction

1. The gospel (the death, burial, and resurrection) is the heart and foundation of Christianity (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). It is through the shedding of the blood of Jesus that forgiveness of sins has been made possible (Hebrews 9:22-26) for every man and woman of every nation (Luke 24:46-47; 1 John 2:2). His sacrifice on the cross is all sufficient to pay the price for the sins of every human being from the first man, Adam, to last man yet to be born.

"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator" (Hebrews 9:15-16).

"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

2. If Jesus did not lay down His life and had not taken it up again (cp. John 10:17-18), then every man's faith is vain and no one would have any hope beyond this life:

"Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up - if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).

3. Jesus came and dwelt among us – He was fully God and fully man (Philippians 2:5-7; Hebrews 1:1-4). Jesus experienced the same temptations, sufferings, and emotions as are common to all men, yet without sin (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15). In the garden of Gethsemane, shortly before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus' emotions ran high as He anticipated the suffering He was about to endure. Luke describes the agony through which He was going at this time: "Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Thus, He prayed to His Father, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). Yet Jesus chose to endure the cross because of His great love for the world:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5:7-11).

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:14-19).

4. If there is anything that exposes what is really in the heart of a man, it is when he is suffering unjustly at the hands of wicked men. What was in the heart of Jesus as He suffered unjustly at the hands of wicked men on the cross? The heart of Jesus is revealed in the seven sayings on the cross.

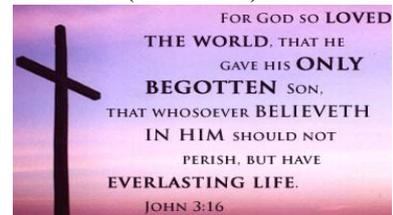
7 SAYINGS FROM THE HEART OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

1. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).
2. “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).
3. “Woman, behold your son!... Behold your mother!” (John 19:26-27).
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).

7 SAYINGS FROM THE HEART OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

A. “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY DO” (LUKE 23:34)

1. We, of course, could never pay the price for our own sins; it is impossible for any man to redeem himself (Matthew 18:23-27). But by the grace of God, Jesus bore the punishment for our sins (1 Peter 2:24) and tasted death for everyone (Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 4:1). As we contemplate the suffering Jesus endured, our emotions are stirred and we wonder at the depth of His love for us.



- a. (i) After Jesus was arrested He was taken by night and tried unlawfully before a Sanhedrin court. They charged Him with blasphemy and they spat in His face and beat Him (Matthew 26:47-67). (ii) He was then taken to Pilate, who sent Him to Herod, and then He was brought back to Pilate (Luke 23:1-11). Pilate could not find anything in Jesus that was worthy of death, and so He washed His hands of the matter and allowed the Jews to make the decision: “Crucify Him” (Luke 23:13-25). (iii) So they took Him away and He was scourged (which was such a brutal practice that the victim sometimes died) (Mark 15:15). After this, the soldiers spat on Him, beat Him, mocked Him and thrust a crown of thorns down on His head (Matthew 27:27-31). He was in such a weakened state that He was unable to carry His cross all the way to the place of execution (John 18:28-19:16). (iv) Reaching Calvary, the Roman soldiers, mercilessly and without feeling, nailed His weak, frail, and bleeding body to a cross. There the Son of God hung for six hours (from 9am until 3pm Mark 15:25, 34-37). Jesus Himself had said, “Just as Moses lifted up the [bronze] serpent in the desert [on a pole], so must the Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross]!” (John 3:14).
- b. It is while hanging between two criminals that we come across the first saying: despite the brutal treatment He endured at the hands of sinners, and despite His present suffering, He prayed for them, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:33).
2. Those that beat Him, spat upon Him, mocked Him, and crucified Him were sinners; they were His enemies. He did not call upon His Father to send fire from heaven and consume them, He prays for their forgiveness. So even at the worst moment of His existence **we see love and forgiveness flowing from the heart of Jesus.**

¹ Numbers 21:9.

- a. Jesus is here practicing exactly what He preached: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor [Leviticus 19:18] and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:43-45). In this, God has taught us how to love (1 Thessalonians 4:9) and we must develop this same spirit of love and forgiveness (Luke 6:27-30): "For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:19-21).
- b. This is also a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy that Jesus would make intercession for these transgressors: "Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12).
- c. You sometimes hear Christians say, "Well, I hope my sins are forgiven." But surely the prayer that flowed from the heart of Jesus for those that crucified Him shows just how much He loves us and desires to forgive us of our sins. After all, this was Jesus' mission: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).
- 1) Such a demonstration of God's love (Romans 5:8) ought to convince us that God really did forgive us of our sins when we obeyed the gospel (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) and continues to forgive us when we confess our sins (1 John 1:9).
 - 2) Yes, we can know for certain that we have eternal life: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13).
3. When Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:33), are we to suppose that their sins were forgiven at that moment without repentance? Consider:

- a. To the Jews on Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel and concluded saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, **whom you crucified**, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:36-37).



"Or do you not know that as many of us as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through immersion into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" - Romans 6:3-5.



Crucified with Him



Buried with Him



Raised with Him

- 1) These Jews had crucified Jesus, and while it is true that Jesus prayed for their forgiveness, it was conditional. This is made clear in Peter's answer to their question: "Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).
 - 2) While it is God's desire that we be saved and have our sins forgiven (1 Timothy 2:4), our sins are not forgiven until we obey the gospel (cp. Acts 22:16). God has provided us with a way of salvation through Jesus (John 3:16), but we must believe and obey the gospel (Mark 16:16) and continue living faithful lives according to God's word (Revelation 2:10).
- b. Jesus' forgiving spirit is an example to us – if Jesus was willing to forgive those that mistreated and crucified Him, then we ought to be willing to extend forgiveness toward those that repent of their evil toward us. In fact, if we fail to forgive those that sin against us, then God will not forgive us of our sins (Matthew 6:12-15).

B. “ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE” (Luke 23:43)

1. Jesus was crucified between two criminals and even one of them blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us” (Luke 23:39). However, the other criminal had some knowledge of Jesus and His teachings concerning the kingdom of God. Thus he rebukes him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong. Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:40-42).
 - a. There is something about this criminal that Luke has not revealed! Matthew and Mark tell us that even he had reviled Jesus (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:31-32). Yet now he has a change of heart and pleads, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42).
 - b. How does Jesus respond to this criminal that had just reviled Him? Perhaps a mere man would have a problem believing that this criminal was sincere, but Jesus was able to see into his heart (Luke 9:47) and knew the sincerity of his change of mind. We see here that the love of Jesus is higher, wider, and deeper than we could have imagined (Ephesians 3:18) as we hear Him say, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). So even though many were mocking and blaspheming Him on the cross we see **mercy and forgiveness flowing from the heart of Jesus**. Who can imagine what it must have been like to hear these words from the Son of God Himself! What peace and joy he must have experienced in believing Jesus’ words (Romans 15:13).
2. These words of Jesus are extremely important because they teach us that when a good man dies (i) he does not cease to exist, (ii) his spirit does not sleep, but, rather, (iii) he continues to exist in “paradise”. Also note: Jesus does not say, “You will be with Me in paradise sometime in the future”; it would be “today”.
 - a. As Paul faced imminent death, we see that the hope he expresses agrees with Jesus’ words: “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Philippians 1:21-23).
 - b. We said that when a good man dies he goes to paradise, but what of the wicked man? Jesus once told a story to make a point to the Jews and some consider it a parable rather than a true account of something that actually happened. Nevertheless, we believe it was based in fact rather than fiction. We refer to the story of “The rich man and Lazarus” (Luke 16:19-31). In this story we see that both the rich man and Lazarus die and they both continue to exist after death, but their destinations are very different!
 - 1) Lazarus was a good man and he was “carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom” and was “comforted” (Luke 16:22, 25).
 - 2) The rich man had lived a wicked and selfish life and he found himself “in torments” (Luke 16:23). It was made very clear to this wicked man that (i) he would not get any relief from his torment (Luke 16:24-25), (ii) there was no chance of ever leaving that place of torment (Luke 23:26).
 - c. Paul warns us that we will all appear before God to be judged and that He will render to each one according to his deeds: “Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 2:7-10). Indeed, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).
 - d. Paradise is now on the mind of Jesus and there is no doubt in His mind that He will be in that place “today”. This is a part of the joy that was set before Him that enabled Him to endure the cross. The Hebrew writer says, “...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

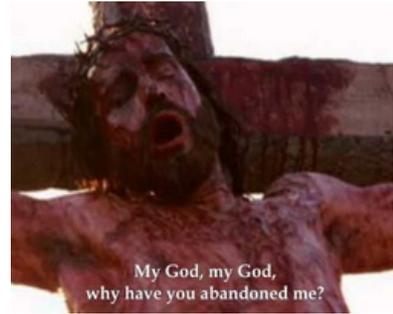
C. “WOMAN, BEHOLD YOUR SON!... BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER!” (John 19:26-27)

1. When they came to arrest Jesus in Gethsemane we read, “Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matthew 26:56). Now standing by the cross were His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene, and John (John 19:25-26).
 - a. Being in agony and looking down from the cross, Jesus saw His mother and John standing there, and He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!”, and to John He said, “Behold your mother!” John perfectly understood what Jesus was saying and he took care of Jesus’ mother from that time onward (John 19:26-27).
 - b. Mary had loved and cared for her son, Jesus, and now, seeing her son suffering, a sword pierced through her own soul. This is what the prophet Simeon had said of her son, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:34-35). How hard it must have been for Jesus to see the agony on His mother’s face. Despite the agony He was enduring as He hung on the cross and despite the ridicule from evil men, **we see love and concern flowing from the heart of Jesus**. He is not concerned for His own welfare but for the welfare of His mother.
2. It is one thing to show concern for others when your own welfare is secure, but it is another thing to show concern for others when you are going through the worst time in your life! Jesus is our example, and we too must put the welfare of others before ourselves. Consider the following verses:
 - a. Paul says, “Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4) and “Let no one seek [only] his own good, but [also] that of the other person” (1 Corinthians 10:24).
 - b. Paul is not saying that we should not look out for our own interests and that we are not to seek our own good. He is saying that alongside the pursuit of our personal welfare, we ought to be looking out for the welfare of others. David Collins says, “This is not speaking of order: ‘Feather your **own nest first** and then **throw out a few feathers to others afterward**’. For how many will say, ‘Alas! I am unable to seek your welfare at this time because I have not yet completed feathering my own nest. I will get in contact with you when my nest is feathered’? The spirit of Christ is one of seeking the welfare of others at all times – in the good times and the bad times. This is the example Jesus has set before us (John 19:26-27) and we ignore it at our own peril.”

D. “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?” (Matthew 27:46)

1. The time is fast approaching when Jesus will give up His spirit. It is now almost 3pm and there has been darkness over all the land from 12pm (Matthew 27:45). And then from out of the darkness we hear a loud cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). What did Jesus mean? What was happening?
 - a. Jesus is here quoting the first few words from a Psalm: “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?**” (Psalms 22:1). If we read through the whole Psalm, we see it is one of those Messianic Psalms. The Pulpit Commentary says, “It is generally supposed that our blessed Lord, continually praying upon his cross, and offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, recited the whole of the psalm (Ps 22) of which these are the first words, that he might show himself to be the very Being to whom the words refer; so that the Jewish scribes and people might examine and see the cause why he would not descend from the cross; namely, because this very psalm showed that it was appointed that he should suffer these things.”
 - b. Did God really forsake Jesus? It is difficult to comment on this because there is an array of differing opinions among commentators as to the meaning of Jesus’ words, and we simply don’t have the time to explore all their different views. Here, though, are three thoughts which, as Kyle Pope says, “Most likely all these ideas have some bearing on the force of Jesus’ words”. Note: the following are direct quotes and paraphrases of the comments taken from Kyle Pope’s commentary on Matthew.

1) The choice of non-intervention. “It could be that Jesus was addressing the wilful and deliberate choice on the part of all persons of the Godhead not to intervene in the events that were unfolding. Zerr notes, “He was left unattended in His painful solitude, no soothing hand to calm the nervous agitation with a caressing touch, but deserted by all His friends and mocked by His enemies, compelled to die for the unjust.” Would not He who had always enjoyed the comfort and omnipotence of the other persons of the Godhead, feel a sense of loss as He experienced abuse from mankind, without the cooperative action of the Father and Holy Spirit?



2) An expression of anguish. Jesus may have felt a sense of abandonment, but that does not mean, in fact, that He was abandoned. After all, who would not feel some sense of abandonment at being allowed to suffer such torturous treatment from others?

3) The significance of His death. It could be that in that awful, lonely hour Jesus’ thoughts turned to the Psalms and found in Psalms 22 words that expressed His profound sense of alienation from having taken upon Himself the sin of the world? Jesus’ words could relate to the significance of His death, and what it represented.

c. Personally, what I see here is Jesus the man expressing His anguish and sense of abandonment as He suffered for our sins; just as any man would. I believe He cried out aloud that those present would recognise the words of that well-known Psalm, and that by examining it they would understand why He didn’t “come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:42-43). **What we see then is the true feelings of a man that feels anguish and a sense of abandonment flowing from the heart of Jesus.**

2. This ought to open our eyes to the sinfulness of sin; the ugliness of sin (cp. Romans 7:13). (i) Sin must be punished because God is just (Psalms 7:11) but because God loved us, He offered up His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8-9). (ii) By looking to the cross we see the consequences of sin (Romans 6:23). (iii) By looking to the cross we see the love of God demonstrated (Romans 5:8). If you ever have cause to doubt whether God loves you, then look to the cross and quote from memory Romans 5:8.

a. The Lord hates evil (Psalms 5:5; 45:7) and we, too, must hate evil (Psalms 97:10). Paul instructs us to “cast of the works of darkness” (Romans 13:12) and “abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

b. The consequences of sin are physical death and spiritual death – eternal separation from the presence of God. Those now in Hell feel anguish and a sense of abandonment that is very real. Jesus has paid the price for our sin, the price for our redemption, but we have to choose to accept God’s free gift of eternal life. “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).

E. “I THIRST” (John 19:28)

1. John says, “Jesus knew that His mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture He said, ‘I am thirsty’” (John 19:28).

a. John had said of Jesus, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). This was Jesus’ mission, to take away the sin of the world and now it was all but accomplished. There was, though, a certain Psalm that said, “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psalms 69:21). The soldiers had earlier offered Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink, but He had refused it (Matthew 27:33-34). The effect of this concoction was to stupefy the senses and render one insensible to pain, somewhat. Thus, Christ did not receive it because it was necessary that He suffer to the full extent for our sin. However, the drink they offered Him now was purely to assuage His terrible thirst.

- b. Suffering great agonies, what was on Jesus' mind? Despite His sufferings, Jesus had His mind on the scriptures and especially those that foretold of His sufferings and death. But Psalms 69:21 in particular came to mind because it had not yet been fulfilled. Jesus, despite His suffering, was eager to see the scripture fulfilled and accomplish the will of God. Thus, when He cried out "I thirst" **we see Jesus' love for the scriptures and His great desire to fulfill the will of God flowing from His heart.**
2. Paul says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (**Colossians 3:16**) and "do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (**Ephesians 5:17**); not merely to be hearers but to be doers (**James 1:22; Romans 2:13**).
 - a. The word of God fills our hearts and governs every aspect of our lives – we walk in the Spirit (**Galatians 5:25**) and our desire at all times is to please God (**2 Corinthians 5:9**).
 - b. This we may do in times of peace, but will obeying the scriptures and doing God's will be the desire of our hearts when we are sorely tempted, persecuted, and called to lay down our lives for Christ?

F. "IT IS FINISHED" (**John 19:30**)

1. These words come after Jesus has quenched His thirst (**John 19:30**). These are surely the most powerful, meaningful, spine-chilling, awesome words that Jesus ever spoke: "It is finished". Three English words but one Greek word, *teleō*, which means "To make an end or to accomplish, to complete something, not merely to end it, but to bring it to perfection or its destined goal, to carry it through" (CWSD).
 - a. "Teleo was Jesus cry of triumph He had finished the work the Father gave Him to do. He had glorified God to the full in the place where He had been so terribly dishonored, and now because of that finished work God can 'be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus' (**Romans 3:26**)". **We see then a joyous cry of triumph flowing from the heart of Jesus in having finished the work the Father gave Him to do.**
 - b. The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus is the "author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (**Hebrews 12:2**).
2. Zechariah had said, "For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' Says Jehovah of hosts, 'and **I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day**'" (**Zechariah 3:9**). Yes, sin has been removed, the price of our redemption has been paid, and this is the good news we must preach: "And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**).

G. "FATHER, 'INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT'" (**Luke 23:46**)

1. Jesus was always in control (even when people sometimes disobeyed His instructions). For example, when they came to arrest Jesus, Peter sought to prevent them from arresting Him, but Jesus said, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (**Matthew 26:52-53**). In regards to His death, Jesus had said, "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father" (**John 10:17-18**).
 - a. Jesus' final words came before He gave up His spirit: "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (**Luke 23:46**). These words are from another Psalm: "Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Jehovah God of truth" (**Psalms 31:5**). Jesus entrusted His spirit to God. This was not the cry of one that felt his last breath approaching, but of one that would give up or lay down his life. Jesus' life was not taken from Him, He laid it down. Jesus Himself *chose* the moment of His death, for John says, "And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (**John 19:30**). **These are words of intimacy, trust and surrender flowing from the heart of Jesus.**

b. Consider these three aspects of Jesus' last words:

- 1) They are words of intimacy. Jesus' time of abandonment and desolation are over, and now He prays to His Father as one that has a unique relationship with Him; as He has always done. For Jesus, death is no out-of-control enemy. No matter how bleak the moment, He knows His Father is present with Him.
- 2) They are words of Trust. Jesus entrusts Himself to His Father. The word "commit" is from the Greek word *paratithēmi*, meaning, "to entrust to someone for safekeeping, give over, entrust, commend," particularly, to entrust someone to the care and protection of someone" (BDAG²). Jesus trusts His eternal destiny to the Father's everlasting arms.
- 3) They are words of Surrender. Jesus speaks a word of surrender. He gives up His human life to His Father who gave it to Him. The word "spirit" is the common word *pneuma*, "breathing, breath of life" It can refer to the Holy Spirit, but here it refers to the personal spirit of Jesus, part of the human personality (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). (See BDAG).

2. As Christians we ought to have a degree of intimacy with God through prayer, a complete trust in every circumstance, and a heart of surrender to His will.

Conclusion

1. In this lesson we have briefly considered the seven sayings of Jesus from the cross. Each of these sayings reveals what was in His heart during those torturous hours: (i) love and a willingness to forgive even those that crucified Him (Luke 23:34), (ii) mercy and forgiveness for a criminal that had just reviled Him (Luke 23:43), (iii) love and concern for the welfare of His mother (John 19:26-27), (iv) His humanity as He poured forth anguish and a sense of abandonment (Matthew 27:46), (v) love of the scriptures and commitment in fulfilling the will of God (John 19:28), (vi) joy in having completed the work the Father gave Him (John 19:30), and, (vii) His intimacy with His Father and His trust and surrender to His Father (Luke 23:46). All this love flowed from the heart of Jesus as He hung upon the cross bearing our sins. It is written, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:7-11).
2. There are perhaps many lessons we can learn and apply, but here are just a few of the thoughts we mentioned along the way: (i) Jesus' forgiving spirit is an example to us – if Jesus was willing to forgive those that mistreated and crucified Him, then we ought to be willing to extend forgiveness toward those that repent of their evil toward us (Matthew 6:12-15), (ii) the thief on the cross that reviled Jesus found forgiveness and mercy when he repented. Regardless of how wicked we have been, if we truly repent, then we too will find forgiveness and mercy in Jesus (cp. 1 Timothy 1:15-16), (iii) Despite the agony He was enduring, Jesus sought the welfare of His mother. If Jesus sought the welfare of others under such adverse circumstances, then how will we excuse ourselves in seasons of peace? (iv) Just how bad is sin? If we look to the cross and behold the suffering of the Savior, then we can see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, (v) "I thirst". A simple statement and yet it reveals a heart that was set on fulfilling the word of God. Let us too be of the same mind, (vi) A point was reached at which Jesus could say, "It is finished". It was a triumphant, joyful cry at having completed the work the Father gave Him to do. The work of redemption is finished and it is our responsibility to proclaim the good news to the entire world, (vii) Jesus' final words were those of intimacy, trust, and surrender, and we too ought seek intimacy with our Father, put in Him our complete trust, and surrender our will to His will.

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² Bauer, Danker, Arndt, & Gingrich. A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT.