

Series – At the Cross

#4 The Cries from the Cross, Part 1

Luke 23, John 19

Introduction: The last words of a famous and admired person have always attracted people's interest. We assume that they are the final thoughts of an entire life; a legacy to the living about the most important issues from their life.

Even the Bible recognizes the importance of last words. The writer of 2 Samuel says, "***These are the last words of (King) David***" (23:1-7).

Voltaire, the French philosopher/infidel, once boasted, "I will destroy Christianity in 20 years. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to build."

He spent his life trying to stamp out God's Word, yet the irony was that after he died the Geneva Bible Society bought his house and used it as the head office to spread the bible worldwide.

Lehman Strauss said, "**The last words of some of the world's greatest men and women have been recorded, engraved upon marble slabs and monuments, woven into expensive tapestry, and painted in the most imperishable colors of art.**"

It has been said, "GROWN MEN DON'T CRY!" But the GREATEST MAN who ever lived, not only cried while He lived, He CRIED OUT from the cross as He died.

Today I'm continuing our series, "**At the Cross.**"

I've been impressed this year to really dig into all aspects of the Cross of Christ.

1 Cor. 1:18 says, "***For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.***" (NIV)

The cross divides the entire human race into two categories: Those who are perishing. Those who are being saved.

And just so you know, that's why the overwhelming emphasis of the New Testament is not on the BIRTH of Jesus, the LIFE of Jesus, the TEACHINGS or MIRACLES of Jesus, but on the DEATH and RESURRECTION of Jesus.

I'm hoping that after this series you will be like the Apostle Paul who being inspired by the Holy Spirit, focused primarily on the death and resurrection of Jesus. He said, *"This one thing I do...I preach Christ crucified."*

So far, we've looked at the **Crowd around the Cross**, the **Criminals on the Cross**, last week **Christ on the Cross**. Today's message is, **"The CRIES from the CROSS."** Or you could call it **"The Seven Last Sayings of the Savior."**

These seven cries from the cross are so powerful that in 2020 I did a series on, "The Passion of the Christ," and it took a whole sermon to cover each saying, but for this series, today will be part 1 and next week part 2.

When we talk about the seven last words of Jesus, we are referring to the seven last sayings recorded from the four Gospel accounts that Jesus said while on the cross. The phrases are traditionally ordered in the following way:

- 1. Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."**
- 2. Luke 23:43, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."**
- 3. John 19:26-27, "Woman, here is your son... Here is your mother."**
- 4. Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"**
- 5. John 19:28, "I am thirsty."**
- 6. John 19:30, "It is finished."**
- 7. Luke 23:46, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."**

Jesus spoke three times towards **humanity**, three times toward **heaven**, and one time to all heaven and earth.

Jesus spoke three times before the darkness:

Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them."

Luke 23:43, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise."

John 19:26,27, "Woman! Behold thy son."

He spoke once while in the darkness.

Matt. 27:46, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Jesus spoke three more times after the darkness:

John 19:28, "I Thirst."

John 19:30, "It is finished."

Luke 23:46, "Father, into thy hands."

The bible says that the words of Jesus were like no other words. When people heard the words of Jesus, they reported to their superiors, **"no man has ever spoken like this man. For his words had authority, and not like those of the scribes."**

The words of Jesus could still a storm, His words could raise the dead, and cleanse the lepers. In Matthew 24 Jesus tells us ***"that heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away."***

Jesus himself said in John 6:63, ***"the words I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life."***

The first of His famous last seven sayings is in Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (NIV)

I. Forgiveness: The Most Beautiful Word

Someone said the word forgiveness was the most beautiful word in the human language, because all of us are aware that we stand in need of forgiveness, The bible says, ***"all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God."***

I want us to look at this word forgiveness.

A. FORGIVENESS is AN EXPRESSION OF PRAYER

Jesus addresses it to Father, 'Father forgive them.'

This is very surprising because rather than praying for His deliverance, rather than asking God to send ten thousand angels to destroy the world and set Him free, He prays not for himself, He prays not for his deliverance, He prays not that His pain and suffering might be eased, He prays not like you and I would have prayed, but He prays for those who are crucifying Him.

Jesus' thoughts are not for Himself; His thoughts are for others. Imagine the pain that Jesus has suffered. He has been flogged, He has been beaten, His beard has been plucked out, and He has been forced to carry His cross up Golgotha's hill, where He was nailed to it. After all of this, He prays for them.

Not only is it a surprising prayer, but notice it is a sensitive prayer. Jesus was sensitive to the greatest and most important human need - **forgiveness**.

The Son of Man had come to seek and save that which was lost. This prayer was consistent with His mission. So constant and so powerful was the prayer life of Jesus that the disciples came to Him and asked, "**Lord, teach us to pray.**"

Jesus was so sensitive to the Father that even though He was experiencing the suffering, the rejection, and the pain of Calvary, He prayed for His torturers.

Not only was this a surprising prayer and a sensitive prayer, but also it was a sufficient prayer.

If you are taking notes, this, to me, is very significant. "**For they don't even know what they are doing**" could imply ... that ignorance does not equal innocence. They didn't know they needed forgiveness.

They captured Jesus in the place of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, they dragged Him away to be falsely accused. One disciple betrayed Him, another denied Him, and yet despite it all, Jesus prayed a surprising, sensitive, and an all-sufficient prayer.

B. FORGIVENESS is AN EXPRESSION OF PARDON

Jesus might have prayed for vengeance, He might have prayed for God to deliver Him, He might have prayed for judgment on His enemy, but He prayed for the pardon for His enemy by saying, "**Father forgive them for they know not what they do.**"

In the Greek context, it tells us that Jesus didn't pray just one-time, but He continuously prayed over and over again.

You could translate this verse, "**Jesus kept on praying, Father forgive them for they know not what they do.**" Jesus kept on saying Father forgive them.

When Jesus was put on the cross, He said Father forgive them; when Jesus had the nails driven into His hands He said, Father forgive them; when Jesus was lifted up and the cross dropped into the hole and His flesh ripped, He said, Father forgive them; when the scribes and Pharisees passed by and hurled blasphemies against Him, He said, Father forgive them: when the soldiers laughed and gambled for His clothing He said, Father forgive them.

Jesus practiced on Calvary what He preached for three years.

Simon Peter came to Jesus one day and said, '**Lord how often should I forgive my brother?**' Jewish tradition said forgive your brother three times. Peter thought I will do better than the going rate, and said should I forgive him seven times?

Jesus said, no, forgive your brother seventy times seven times. Seven being the perfect number but saying seventy times seven times meant there is no end to forgiveness.

Someone said to render evil for good is devilish, to render evil for evil is human, but to render good for evil is Christ like. That is what Jesus did.

He loved His enemies, He did good to those who hated you, and here He is praying for those who are crucifying Him.

When Stephen, the first Christian martyr was stoned to death, he looked to heaven and said, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge." Where did Stephen learn to pray like that? He learned it from Jesus.

As Paul spoke about those who betrayed him and turned their backs on him, he said, "Lord do not charge them with this sin." Where did Paul learn that; he learned it from Jesus?

Forgiving others who have wronged you, who have spitefully used you, who have lied and gossiped about you, is what Jesus teaches us from the cross. Jesus was saying, ***'Father give them a chance to receive grace and forgiveness. Let their judgment fall upon Me.'***

Notice the power of this pardon. This was a pardon that worked for those ***beneath*** the cross, for the Roman soldiers who drove the nails, for the chief priests and scribes who cried out for His death, for Judas who betrayed Him, and for Peter who denied Him, those who were present that day at Calvary.

The Jews no more killed Christ than the Romans. Isaiah took it a step further when he said, 'It pleased the Father to bruise Him.'

Secondly the pardon was for those ***beyond*** the cross. All of us had a part in His death. That old song says, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" The answer is yes, we were all there. We're all guilty.

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, there is no other way for men to be saved except for a perfect, sinless sacrifice to be made. Jesus, two thousand years ago, prayed for you and me on that cross.

Forgiveness is an expression of ***prayer*** and ***pardon***, and thirdly...

C. FORGIVENESS is AN EXPRESSION OF PEACE

We cannot have peace with God or the peace of God apart from receiving Jesus, the Prince of Peace as Lord and Savior.

The only way we can get rid of guilt, shame, and the only way we can have our sins blotted out by His blood is to receive and accept what Jesus did for us.

Jesus held up His cup at the Last Supper and said in Matthew 26:28, ***"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" ...for what? "For the forgiveness of sins."*** Jesus revealed our greatest need. ***"Father, forgive them."***

The greatest need of the human heart is forgiveness! Those who turn to Christ find peace. Politicians like Pilate and Herod never found peace; they were too concerned only with **power**. The religious rulers failed to find peace; they were too concerned with their **position**. The crowds missed it too; they were too concerned for their own comfort and **pleasure**.

When we think of Calvary, we mostly think of the cross of Christ. But there were three crosses at Calvary. [Let's read about it in Luke 23:39-43.](#)

“One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”
(NIV)

Forgiveness may be the most beautiful word, but secondly...

II. Salvation: The Most Essential Word

Two weeks ago, we talked about the criminals next to Jesus, but let me say:

Here is one of the most wonderful examples of God's grace in all the bible. Here is a man who died alongside Jesus, a man who was a criminal and a thief, a man who probably had not given much thought to spiritual things, a man who had lived his entire life outside the law, and the word of God, and yet a man who, about to die, was given an opportunity, to be saved.

God's love is so great and His mercy so deep that He would forgive his sins and offer him salvation and eternal life, at the very end of a sinful life.

Jesus said, ***“Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it.”*** This thief found the narrow road at the end of his road.

Salvation is a choice, and it depends on what you do with Jesus Christ. God has

done everything necessary. Jesus has suffered and bleed and died on the cross and now the decision is yours. Which side of the cross will you be on?

This man recognized that he was a sinner, and his appeal was remember ME. You can't be saved through your parents, through your pastor, through your church, you must personally ask for it.

Romans 10:13 says, "***whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.***"

The Savior's answer was, "Today, you will be with me in paradise."

His salvation was instantaneous. You give your life to Christ, and instantly, your name is written in the Book of Life; instantly, you cross from death into life; instantly, that thief became a child of God.

He never had time to be baptized in water, join a church, give in an offering, or do any good deeds to prove that his salvation was real.

You are not saved by anything that you do, but by believing in what Christ has done for you

It was also an insured salvation. Jesus gave the salvation Himself, guaranteed by His word. Jesus said you shall be with me. "Shall" is the strongest possible statement that something is true.

Forgiveness is the most BEAUTIFUL word, salvation is the most ESSENTIAL word, thirdly Jesus utters the most AFFECTIONATE word, in John 19:25-27.

"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," 27 and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." (NIV)

III. Mother: The Most Affectionate Word Ever Spoken

His third word from the Cross shows His concern for His mother. Mother is a word that we are all acquainted with. We all had one, that's why we're here.

A teen says: "Mom, you're invading my personal space".

Mom says: 'Well you came out of my personal space. That makes us even.

I heard about one mother who had these 7 sayings in her Kitchen.

1. So this isn't Home Sweet Home ... Adjust!
2. Ring bell for maid service. If no answer, do it yourself!
3. I clean house every other day. Today is the other day.
4. If you don't like my standards of cooking ...lower your standards.
5. It doesn't always look like this: Some days it's even worse.
6. Countless number of people have eaten in this kitchen and gone on to lead normal lives.
7. My next house will have no kitchen ... just vending machines.

The bible says there are three Mary's at the cross. There was Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, we do not know too much about her, then there was Mary Magdalene of whom Jesus cast out seven demons,

Matthew tells the story of one day Mary and Jesus' brothers come to see Jesus, and when Jesus is told that his family wants to see him, he says:

"Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'" (Matt. 12:46-50).

That would not have been easy for a mother to hear -- that her claim as family to Jesus was no greater than the claim of anyone who does the will of God.

And here we see Mary, this amazing mother, with all she has gone through, from the birth of Christ until now, at the cross where Jesus is being crucified. This was without question her most difficult moment as the mother of Jesus.

Mary had done everything God asked her to do. God had asked her to bring this Chose One into the world, God had asked her to be a mother to the Son of God,

God had asked her to bring Him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and the Bible says He grew in wisdom and favor with God and man. He did the will of the Father, and Mary must have stood there with grief mixed with satisfaction that she did her part.

Summoning up what strength remained in His body, Jesus had a word for His mother. He gives her into the care of the beloved disciple – John.

With those words Jesus fulfilled an important obligation identified in the Bible - to care for one's family.

That responsibility was spelled out in the 5th Commandment: ***"Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."*** (Exodus 20:12 NRSV)

The New Testament reaffirmed that duty. The Apostle Paul said, ***"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother"--this is the first commandment with a promise: 3 "so that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.""*** (Ephesians 6:1-3 NRSV)

Love is something you do, not just something you say. It's a choice you willingly make. **Jesus did three things for Mary.**

First, he paid attention. Have you ever watched two people who are in love? They can be in the midst of a crowd or surrounded by 75,000 fans at a ball game and be totally oblivious to the world! Why? They're paying attention to each other!

Jerusalem was filled with thousands of people. The crowd voted for Barrabbas to be released and for Jesus to be crucified.

But with nails holding his nearly dead body to the cross, Jesus ignored the crowd, and he focuses his undivided attention on his mother.

Attention is one of the greatest gifts you can ever give. When you give your attention, you are announcing how valuable someone is to you. And Jesus honored his mother by giving her the attention she needed, even while hanging from the cross.

Second, he provided for her needs. What we have in John 19 is Jesus' last will and testament. His last concern was His Mother; even though he knew he would resurrect from the grave.

Probably, Mary and John knew each other. John probably met Mary at Cana of Galilee (the first miracle of Jesus), or when Jesus returned to Nazareth.

Jesus owned no home, he had no money, and his only means of transportation was sandals. The only thing he owned was clothing and the soldiers had just gambled for his cloak!

Instead of bequeathing her a summer cottage, he gave her something better: His care! The person He trusts the most is given responsibility over the person He loved the most.

1 Timothy 5:3-4 says, ***“Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.”***

Third, Jesus gave His emotional support.

At her lowest moment Jesus reached down emotionally. If you're going to love like Jesus, you must show up, stand up, and speak up for the people you love!

When Jesus linked his mother, Mary, to John, the Beloved Disciple, he was doing more than caring for his own family. The deeper reality is that what Jesus did for Mary and John is what He wants all of us to do.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS INTENDED TO MAKE FAMILY OF ALL OF US.

(Ephesians 2:19 NRSV) ***“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”***

From the cross Jesus said to Mary, "Woman, look at John and see him from now on as your son." He said to John, "John, look at Mary, and see her now as your mother."

In the same way Jesus says to us, **“look around, these are your brothers**

and sisters, your mothers, and fathers. Care for one another. YOU ARE FAMILY -- by my blood poured out on this cross."

To love like Jesus, I must first care for my family.

This is what Jesus did from the cross. He loved his mother by making sure that her needs were provided for by someone that he trusted.

Second, to love like Jesus, I must treat believers as my family. If I claim to be a follower of Christ, then I'm related by blood to every other follower of Jesus Christ. Ever heard of the phrase, "Blood is thicker than water?" That is a Biblical concept - Galatians 6:10 ***Whenever we can, we should always be kind to everyone, and especially to our Christian brothers.***

Your spiritual family will outlive your physical family. Grace is greater than genetics! Jesus said (Matthew 12:50), "Whoever does the will of my Father is my brother and sister and mother."

Notice the transition that is taking place between Jesus and His mother. Jesus is breaking this mother-son relationship. In the omniscience of God, He knew that in time there would be an exaltation of Mary. In the scriptures, Jesus never calls Mary, "Mother?" It is always "woman." Even now He does not address her as mother, but as woman. And that is by design.

(A. W. Pink) - "He refrained from using an idolatrous word resulting in the worship of Mary. She was simply the vessel through whom Christ was incarnated. She was the 'woman' chosen of God. We don't worship Mary as His mother; we worship Jesus as God's Son!"

Her job as a mother is done, Jesus is leaving this world. The humanity of Jesus is coming to an end. The work of Jesus on earth is finished, and her work as His mother is over.

And now, Mary will take on a different role. He doesn't assign to Mary a place above other disciples; He doesn't assign to Mary a role above other believers. She assumes her role as a believer and disciple, like the rest of us. Jesus is Master and we're His servants; she now knows Jesus not as a son, but as a Savior.

He is dying for her sins just as He died for your sin and my sin. He is taking her place upon the cross. The bible says, ***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have everlasting life."***

In Luke 1, Mary cried out that she rejoiced in God, her Savior, as she exalted the one that was in her womb. She called Him God, and said He was her Savior. Now He is dying for her and that mother-son relationship is being broken. She is a believer, just like each of us. Some may have higher positions in this life, but we are all on level ground at the cross. We are sinners saved by His grace.

Mary's new role is to become a follower of Jesus Christ. He doesn't make Mary the queen of heaven, He doesn't make Mary the mediator between God and men, in fact, the bible says, ***"there is only one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ who gave Himself as a ransom for many."***

If ever there was a time when Jesus was going to make Mary a mediator or someone we should pray to, it would have been at that moment. But He did not make her a saint to pray to, her role as a special, chosen vessel is over.

When the angel, Gabrielle, spoke to her, he did not say, Mary, blessed art thou "above" women, the angel said, blessed art thou "among" women.

Jesus died for you and me, and He died for Mary as well. However, Jesus saw her needs. He knew that one of those needs was that someone needed to take care of Mary in her old age.

So, He looked to John, the beloved disciple, and He said to Mary, ***"Woman, behold your Son."*** He was going to see that her needs were met.

He then turned to John and said, ***"Behold, your mother."*** He was saying, "John, the responsibilities I have had while I was here on earth, the things I have done, now it is your responsibility. I want you to take care of my mother. I want you to do the things that I did here on an earth.

CONCLUSION:

These first sayings happened before the darkness and were all directed toward us.

First there was His Cry of SYMPATHY. *"Father Forgive them..."*

We pray for DESTRUCTION.

He prays for their DELIVERANCE.

We pray for their PUNISHMENT.

He prays for their PARDON.

We pray for their MISERY.

He prays for their MERCY.

He dies with what He lived/what He preached.

Second, His Cry of SECURITY!

(Luke 23:43) "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Third, His Cry of SINCERITY!

(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."