



**Every year during “Passion week” leading to “Good Friday”**, Christians take time to meditate on the depth of Jesus' sacrifice for us in suffering a humiliating, bloody death by crucifixion. It's a time to dwell on what Jesus suffered for us ... in all its pain and intensity, without rushing straight ahead to the good news of Resurrection, and new life.

Remembering the agony experienced by Jesus in His death on the Cross, crucified by Roman soldiers is so profound, isn't it? In the final hours of His earthly time, as Jesus hung on the Cross, He made seven statements – each teaching us more about Jesus and His character. *These are from four Gospel accounts, and are known as Jesus' “seven last sayings.”* Let's spend some time today reading (and reflecting) on these 7 last sayings that Jesus spoke from the Cross. **And let us, “Wrestle” with the significance of these statements and their profound impact on us ...**

### **What Was Happening in the Bible When Jesus Spoke His Last Words?**

Jesus was tortured, ridiculed, betrayed by the Jews, He took up His cross, and was finally killed on the cross (a criminal's death). Jesus hung, stripped of His garments, on the cross between two criminals. He suffered publically after the Jewish people betrayed Him and insisted that He be killed despite not committing any crime.

The Gospels record these last phrases during the six hours that Jesus was hanging on the cross. The words hold meaning because they are the last words of Jesus before He died and they show us that Jesus was consistent in His message and mission up until His very last breath. Each of these seven recorded phrases speaks different truths to us as believers. They also confirm aspects of who Jesus was and how His life and death fulfilled the Scriptures.

**1<sup>st</sup> WORD – FORGIVENESS:** Luke 23:33-34 (NASU), “<sup>33</sup> When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. <sup>34</sup> But Jesus was saying, *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”* And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

- Why did Jesus ask for forgiveness for those who were crucifying Him?
- Who were those who were crucifying Jesus?

- Do you really believe God has forgiven your sins?
- Do you take time on a regular basis to confess your sins so that you might enjoy the freedom of forgiveness?
- Do you need to experience God's forgiveness in a fresh way today?

**2<sup>ND</sup> WORD – FELLOWSHIP:** Luke 23:39-43 (NASU), “<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” <sup>40</sup> But the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? <sup>41</sup> “And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” <sup>42</sup> And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” <sup>43</sup> And He said to him, ***“Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”***”

- What is the significance of Jesus' statement?
- Have you staked your life on Jesus?
- Have you put your ultimate trust in Him?
- Do you know that, when your time comes, you will be with Him in paradise?

**3<sup>RD</sup> WORD – FAMILY:** John 19:26-27 (NASU), “<sup>26</sup> When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, ***“Woman, behold, your son!”*** <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, ***“Behold, your mother!”*** From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.”

A few hours before, Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, teaching them to humbly serve others. Likewise, while our spiritual relationship with God is our most important commitment in life, we must never ignore the responsibilities we carry in our physical relationships.

- What do you think Jesus was teaching us in this moment?
- Was Jesus teaching us something about new relationships as Christians?

**4<sup>TH</sup> WORD – FORSAKEN:** Mark 15:33-34 (NASU), “<sup>33</sup> When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup> At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ***“ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?”*** which is translated, ***“MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”***”

- Surely His Father had not forsaken Him! Later statements show Jesus knew His Father didn't, but did momentarily leave Him helpless. Why?
- What did Jesus mean by, “Why have You forsaken Me?”
- Is there any prophetic significance to this statement?
- Have you ever felt alone, forsaken?

**5<sup>TH</sup> WORD – THIRST:** John 19:28 (NKJV), “<sup>28</sup> After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, **“I thirst!”**”

Jesus had a body. That may seem like an overly obvious observation but sometimes it can be easy to forget that Jesus experienced real unimaginable physical suffering. His deity did not negate His humanity.

- Why did Jesus say He was thirsty?
- Why should Jesus’ thirst be significant to us?
- Do you ever thirst for God?

**6<sup>TH</sup> WORD – COMPLETION:** John 19:29-30a (NKJV), “<sup>29</sup> Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. <sup>30</sup> So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, **“It is finished.”**”

- What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is finished”?
- What did He finish?
- What has God given you to finish?
- Can we be as dedicated as the One who endured to the end to complete His work for us?

**7<sup>TH</sup> WORD – COMMITMENT:** Luke 23:44-46 (NASU), “<sup>44</sup> It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, <sup>45</sup> because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup> And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, **“Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.”**”

- What Did Jesus Mean When He Said He Was Committing His Spirit to the Father?

He who freely gave Himself into the hands of His executioners was now committing Himself into the hands of His Father. In life He had always submitted to His Father’s will, and now in death it would be no different.

- Can we, likewise, put ourselves in God’s hands ... not only when we die but, like Christ, in every day that we live?
- Considering that He gave His life for us, the least we can do is live our lives for Him, isn’t it?

***Thank God, the story doesn't end here; there is the hope we celebrate on Resurrection Sunday!*** But for now, let's take a moment to acknowledge the suffering sacrifice of our Lord and Savior. ***“Give thanks to Jesus” ... for His steadfast love and faithfulness that led Him to lay down His life for you as a ransom!***