

## 7 Sayings from the Cross

The words of Jesus on the cross have been an inspiration and meditation for 2000 years. Some have used each saying as a meditation for each day leading up to Resurrection Sunday. Certainly, on this day we remember the crucifixion, we should consider them.

The first was a word of forgiveness. "*Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.*" Luke 23:34 Jesus preached forgiveness. He taught that it was a part of prayer. He warned that if we would not forgive, then we would not be forgiven. Jesus practiced what He preached. Even in this most difficult situation, He showed us that we can forgive anyone of anything.

The second was to a thief on a cross beside Him. Common thieves were not crucified. This thief must have tried to rob a tax collection booth, or a paymaster, or some influential Roman. He had been hurling insults at Jesus, but as he faced his imminent death, his heart was moved to repent. Jesus told him, "*Today you will be with me in Paradise.*" Luke 23:43 You can never be too bad for Jesus. As long as you have breath, it is not too late. Jesus showed us that all we need do is repent and acknowledge Him as Lord.

The third was a loving familial obligation. Women of that day had great difficulty making a living without a male relative to care for them. Jesus' half brothers did not yet believe. Jesus assigned his youngest disciple, John the beloved, to care for Mary. "*Woman, behold, your son!*"<sup>27</sup> *Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"* John 19:26-27 Jesus wasn't bound by tradition. He did what He was led to do by the Holy Spirit. History records that John fulfilled that obligation. I wonder what John learned from Mary, and what she learned from John.

At noon, darkness covered the land. It was one of the curses that Egypt faced in the days of Moses. Jews and Romans interpreted darkness as an evil omen. Jesus cried out. "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" Matthew 27:46 It was an Aramaic rendering of the first verse of Psalm 21. Some believe He was just crying out of desperation over the situation. That interpretation ignores His ministry that is steeped in quotes and allusions to Old Testament passages. Psalm 21 describes some of the details of what was happening and what He was enduring. The disciples would have known the psalm as well and should have looked to it to see this was all predestined and spoken of 1000 years before. The end of the psalm points to the victory that lay ahead.

At the end of the three mysterious hours of darkness, Jesus said, "*I thirst.*" John 19:28 Dehydration was just one of the many painful ingredients of crucifixion. Jesus was every bit human, as He was every bit God. His mouth needed the moisture to make His last declaration.

*"It is finished!"* John 19:30 One word in Greek. Completed! Accomplished! He declared it with a loud shout. (Matthew 27:50) It was the word stamped on invoices when they were paid in full. He was telling the world that the sin debt of all who will come to Him is paid. You can be right with God.

His life ended in a whispered prayer. *"Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit."* God the Son, told God the Father, "Take over." "Commit" was a banking term that meant to deposit or entrust to another. As Jesus' let go of His earthly life He deposited His spirit into the Father's hands. He had been in those hands all His earthly life, but now, for a moment, He would have to let go. He breathed His last breath.

It is done. It's Friday, but Sunday is coming!

We usually celebrate communion as our redemption purchased, but tonight, this one night of the year, let us solely focus on the great price that was paid for us.