

SEVEN FINAL WORDS

Cries from the Cross of Christ

Part 1: A Cry of Forgiveness (Lk. 23:32-38)

INTRO: For seven weeks we journey on very holy ground as we stand at the foot of the cross. The days from Crucifixion to Resurrection are pivotal points of human history. For six agonizing and painfully excruciated hours, Jesus hung on the cross (9-3), slowly dying willingly for us. While on that cross He spoke (cried out) seven sayings, each addressing a key word revealing the very heart of God. W. Barclay writes, “The Cross was window in time to allow us to see the suffering love which is eternally in the heart of God.” These are Jesus’ last words as He dies for a lost world.

SETTING: Hung on the cross from 9AM-3PM. What has happened to previous 8 hours? Chronology of events . . .

LAST WORDS are interesting and can be revealing. I’ve asked many at the point of death but coherent, “If could live again on earth, what would you do differently?” For some these were last words. Others last words . . . Let’s look at Jesus’ final words. The first cry is only in Luke 23:32-38 (Read). Actually more of a prayer in those opening hours on the cross: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (v. 34). Opening final words for other’s forgiveness (our greatest need).

I. THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER TO JESUS

- A. IN LIFE – Jesus’ earthly human life was saturated with prayer. He prayed at different times, in different places, and for different reasons. Of about 100 days of life of Jesus recorded, at least 15 recorded instances of Jesus praying. Also Heb. 5:7.
- B. AT DEATH – As I said the first cry is really a prayer to the Father (as are cries 4 and 7).

II. THE PLACE OF THIS CRY (v. 33a “they came to the place which is called The Skull, . . .”)

- A. PUBLIC PLACE. This was a public place outside the city walls. In that day crucifixions were common. The place was known as the “skull” or the head (Aramaic). Jews knew as Golgotha. Latin called Calvary. MAP . . .
- B. PAINFUL PLACE. Death by crucifixion was unbearable. Swindoll writes, “at the death site . . .”

III. THE PRAYER ITSELF (v. 33)

- A. Three comments. This prayer is:
 - 1. Prophecy fulfilled (Isa. 53:12; Psalms 22) – prays for the guilty

- 2. Repetitiously spoken – He continuously prayed these words (imperfect)
- 3. Personally practiced – Jesus forgave sinners (Mk. 2:5; Lk. 7:48)

B. Three components to the Prayer

- 1. The *Addressee* – To Whom He Prayed “the Father” – 1st of 3 sayings. Taught us to do (Lord’s Prayer). He practiced in His life.
- 2. The *Appeal* – For What He Prayed (“Forgive them”). Forgiveness meets our greatest need. Jesus offered forgiveness. It’s why He came, was dying, and be resurrected. Forgiveness is the most *essential*, *blessed*, and *costly* act of God for us. Most *essential* because it keeps us out of hell, most *blessed* because it provides joy and fellowship with God, and most *costly* because it took the life of the Son of God. God’s forgiveness is free, full, and forever. See Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:22. Who is “them”? soldiers, Pilate, crowd, religious leaders – largely “enemies” (Matt. 5:43-47). Paul (Rom. 12:14-21).
- 3. The *Argument* (“for they know not what they do”). “They” is “them”. Jesus is NOT excusing ignorance. Their human sinfulness had blinded and hardened their hearts (Acts 3:12-17).

IV. WAS JESUS’ PRAYER ANSWERED?

He asked His Father to forgive all who repent and believe, including His enemies. He came to forgive and save sinners not to condemn (result of rejecting but not His intention). He is patient (2 Pet. 3:9). We get chance after chance. We still live in season of grace. Judgment will come. God DID answer “Yes”! Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 2:13; 3:12-13. Our responsibility is to accept His forgiveness and to ALWAYS forgive others!

CONC: What a start to His Final Words – what we need most: FORGIVENESS. Anyone need God’s forgiveness today? Anyone need YOUR forgiveness today?