

SEVEN FINAL WORDS
Cries from the Cross of Christ
Part 7: A Cry of Hope (Lk. 23:44-49)

INTRO: We come to Christ's seventh and final cry from the cross. With it we watch Him die. He has hung on that rugged cross for six excruciating hours. For the third time He addresses His heavenly Father. It's 3pm and time to die. His crucifixion was real. He actually died that day. His organs shut down systematically. He gasped for his last breath. His lungs collapsed. His heart stopped pumping. He died!

Three hours of sunlight have been followed by three hours of supernatural darkness (darkness=judgment). Luke, the physician, alone records His final words of hope (not hope so). Each word revealed much about the way He died and the way we should live.

I. THE SAVIOR'S FINAL WORDS (Lk. 23:46)

- A. "Father" was His favorite title for God. It spoke to their intimate relationship. Since He departed the Upper Room He and his father were in constant communication Jesus is seen somewhere between the Upper Room and the Garden praying, "Father, the hour has come . . . (Jn. 17). ". In Gethsemane, He prayed, "Father, not my will . . ." (Matt. 26:39). Hours later, after on the cross Cry #1 "Father, forgive", Cry #2 "My God, . . ." Now here in Luke, His final cry He again turns to His Father in prayer. We do not worship or pray to an idea of God. As adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus, we pray to His Father who is now our Father (Matt. 6:9).
- B. "into Your hands". Every son longs for his father's touch and embrace. His hands are powerful and assuring. It speaks of safety (Jn. 10:27-30). It speaks of approval and validation, "I'm proud of you, Son." Every son (and daughter) is eager to hear these words.
For hours He had been in wicked and angry hands. Soldiers' hands had scourged Him, crowned Him and nailed Him to a cross. All that was behind Him now. His future rested in His Father's strong hands. Now, He safely and victoriously returns to His Father's hands.
- C. "I commit" is a phrase of action. It means to safely deposit something of value (Safety deposit boxes at banks). We place our most valuable possessions in them.
- D. "My spirit" includes His very life, His personal existence. I place my life back into your hands. His work expressed a commitment He learned as a child. These words cite Psa. 31:5 adding only the word "Father." Jewish mothers taught their children to say that verse every

night as they went to bed. Quite possibly, it was one of the first verses they ever learned. Familiar child's prayer: Now I lay me down . . .

Death is near. Jesus has seconds to live. He had accomplished all He came to do. Now it is time to die.

II. THE SAYINGS FINAL LESSONS

- A. *His earthly sufferings are over.* See Mk. 8:31; 1 Pet. 2:21. No more rejection, disappointment, being misunderstood, anger, pain, suffering, and death. It had been "excruciating", Latin for "out of the cross." How fitting! One day for us no more . . . Rev. 21:1-4
- B. *He voluntarily gave up His life.* Circumstances may say differently, but He volunteered to die for us. See John 10:17-18; 19:10-11; Acts 2:22-24. He knew it was time to die. He wasn't afraid to die. He died with mission accomplished. He died without anger or bitterness. He died in complete control of His senses and His circumstances. He died knowing where He was going – back into the Father's hands. He died: violently, voluntarily, victoriously. He died quoting Scripture, praying, believing. What an example of courage in the face of death.
- C. *Such an extreme price paid for our salvation calls for an extreme commitment* (1 Pet. 1:16-19).
- D. *His resurrection assures ours and gives us hope* (1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Pet. 1:3; 3:15). 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-23

The curtain (veil) in temple was torn. What had separated God (represented by Priest) from people was eliminated. Everyone has access (Rom. 5:2). No more do sinners need earthly temples, altars, sacrifices, or priests, for all has been fulfilled in the finished work of Christ.

The centurion was converted (Lk. 23:47).

The coming resurrection would be God's Amen to Christ's sacrificial death. Death brings fear. It is the final enemy. Jesus says, "Fear not, I have conquered death!" (1 Cor. 15:26, 54; Heb. 2:14-15)

CONC: Illus – A boy named Kenneth . . . Hymn "When I Survey . . ." (all four verses on screen.).

Prayer on screen: Our Father, we thank you for a hope beyond this dying world. We live, we die, and through Jesus Christ, we pass into your loving hands. Teach us to live each day as if it were our last because someday it will be true. Today, we recommit our lives to you believing that you will be faithful to us, in life and death and in the life to come. We pray these things in the name of Him who conquered death, Jesus our Lord. Amen.