

Mark 15:33-41

³³ Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" ³⁵ Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that*, said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" ³⁶ Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down." ³⁷ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. ³⁸ Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" ⁴⁰ There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, ⁴¹ who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

Have you ever tried to get the details of something that happened from several different people? Maybe it was something that happened among your kids if you have kids. There are some people that take a week's preparation to get to the point. They circle the airport so many times you wonder if they are ever going to land. Then there are others who reduce the story to a sentence and you don't need to waste time with details that don't relate.

Mark wrote like the second kind of person. His Gospel is the shortest and is short on details.

Given that Christ's death on the cross is so very important, we don't want to skimp on the details. We have been trying to look at this story with a view to what all the Gospel writers say, but sticking most closely to Mark.

This morning we are going to look at the seven things that Jesus said on the cross. Again we need to set the scene. Jesus is as stressed as a human being can be physically, spiritually, socially and emotionally. It is possible that there have been humans who have been more stressed in one area or the other than Christ. But no one has ever had such a full on onslaught as Christ.

Spiritually, He took upon Himself the weight of our sin. He had never experienced guilt before. Now, all at once he has the weight of the sin of all believers for all time upon Him.

Emotionally, He has experienced separation from His Father for the first time ever. Christ held tight communion with His Father continually, and now His Father has turned His head.

Socially, Christ had all His followers flee Him. He knew that Peter denied Him with great vehemence. There was no human being who could console Him. Their help was very little help.

Physically, Christ was barely hanging on. This strong Carpenter who was accustomed to carrying around timber and who spent much of his life walking is now so weak that even the Roman guards can see it is impossible for Christ to lift the 40 pound cross beam. His blood loss and scourging and beatings had left Him barely making it. And then He was hung on the cross.

We can't imagine anyone in a more stressed condition. This is the situation that Christ is in as we look at His last quotes.

So we will begin with the first.

Luke 23:34

³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

We need to be very careful with what we do with this quote. If this is **all that scripture said about forgiveness** we would get a very wrong idea about the topic. Do you see anywhere in scripture where God grants saving forgiveness, true absolution of all sin, to a person who doesn't ask for it and probably isn't even aware of their sinful condition? I know of nothing of that sort being promised in scripture.

OK then, was Christ saving the souls of those who were crucifying Him? We see no evidence of that at all.

What then does this mean? What kind of forgiveness is Christ appealing for here? Well, as always we need to look at the context. The Roman guards were in the process of dividing Christ's garments. Now think about this. What were these Roman guards who had put Christ on the cross really guilty of? These guys were just showing up for work and doing another day's work. In many cases, when **they did their work** they were probably carrying out **justice** that is appropriate for civil governments to carry out. Scripture says that Civil Governments wield the sword. So normally when these soldiers obeyed their commands they may have been doing some good. And we cannot know if these men were the same ones that were mocking and beating Christ earlier.

I believe that what Jesus is asking for here is that the Father would not hold these Roman soldiers guilty for this particular sin. They were not the ones guilty of Christ's death on the cross, even though they were the pawns used to carry out the task. We have already seen the guilty parties. Pilate, Herod, the Jewish leadership, and the Jewish crowd have already been seen as the ones guilty of Christ's conviction. And they **DID** know better. They **DID** know what they were doing. They knew, if nothing else, that Christ was not guilty of a crime worthy of death under the Roman legal system.

In fact, you and I who believe in Christ have more of a part in Christ's death than any Roman soldier who would never come to a saving faith in Christ. If we are in Christ, **our guilt** put Christ on the cross. He had to die for our sin if He were to save us.

So it could not be said of those four parties who **were** responsible for putting Christ on the cross that they "Did not know what they do." But it could be said of **these Roman soldiers** that they did not understand the miscarriage of justice that was happening at their hands. I think the prayer is very specific for a very specific act. I don't believe these Roman guards all came to a saving faith at this point. We see no evidence of that. They were not atoned for at this point. They were simply not going to be held guilty for this specific sin on this specific day because they were ignorant of what they were doing.

We can't get the idea that Christ was a person who was so sympathetic to the human condition that He would hand out forgiveness willy nilly whenever He felt sad for someone. And we can't get the idea that we are being **like Him** when we want to do such a thing. Forgiveness is the most expensive thing in the universe. The penalty for sin must always justly be paid. It cannot and will not be overlooked under the absolute justice of a Just God. Justice is an attribute of God. God is Just. We cannot think that God grants blanket forgiveness to anyone who has not come to an awareness of their sinfulness and has not asked God to forgive them. The wording may not always be perfect or clear that people use to describe it. Their theology may not be very well developed. But even the thief on the cross had to confess his unworthiness and appeal to Christ's grace.

Forgiveness never came to the **mocking thief** on the cross. But **it did come** to the one who asked for salvation. Christians are in the business of forgiveness. We had better understand what it means and how God forgives.

So Christ, on the cross, was looking out for the good of the Roman soldiers that were crucifying Him. He did not want His Father to hold this particular sin against them. They may still go to hell under the weight of the sins they have already committed and the sinners they were. But this particular sin should not be in that list.

Luke 23:43

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Jesus was doing evangelism, even on the cross. Even in the shape He was in. That is absolutely amazing. He cared about this man being crucified next to Him, even though this man, as we explored last week, had never done a single thing for Christ. Christ is our perfect example here. Oh that we would care for those around us, even in our extreme distress, the way Christ did.

John 19:26-27

²⁶ **When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"** ²⁷ **Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.**

Now wasn't it Christ who said that **Luke 14:26-27**

²⁶ **"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.** ²⁷ **And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.**

We always do best to interpret the Bible by the Bible, not our experience or bright ideas. We won't go into what these verses **do mean**, but we can very clearly see what they **do not mean**.

Here is the Son of God carrying out the most cosmically important task of all human history. He only says a few sentences on the cross. But 1/7 of His conversation had to do with taking care of His mom. I kinda' hope all my kids listen to this sermon.

Christ's widowed mom was probably around 50 years old. She had other children to take care of her. We don't know why Christ didn't choose **them** for this task. But He didn't. Maybe he knew that John would share the proper priorities. His family probably had not come around to the proper understanding of Christ and His ministry yet. But ponder this. Christ held **taking care of his mother** as a high priority, even while He hung on the cross. If that is true, how important should taking care of our families be to us? I Timothy 5:8 says that the man who does not take care of his family is worse than an infidel. The word for infidel means those who reject Christ. It is pretty bad to take the name of Christ and then act in a way that is worse than those who reject Him. That is the point.

The application is simple. Take care of your family. Even when you yourself are in distress. That is what Christ did. And that is our example to follow.

I was always impressed by what Mike did after Russell died. He didn't want Mary to be alone so he arranged for someone always to be there. I watched and thought, that is how it is done.

Here is the third thing Christ said.

Matt 27:46 **Matthew 27:46**

⁴⁶ **And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"**
Ay lee' Ay lee' La mah' Sah bach tha Nee'

We assume that Christ is giving voice to his great agony of separation from His Father. And that is true. But did you know that Christ was quoting scripture here?

Psalm 22:1

¹ My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?*

Jesus was quoting scripture when describing what He was experiencing. It is interesting that much of what Christ said in His ministry was actually stated in the Old Testament. Basically Christ thought in scripture.

There is a quote from Spurgeon I would like to read. He says-

I would quote John Bunyan as an instance of what I mean. Read anything of his and you will see that it is almost like reading the Bible itself. He had read *the Bible* till his very soul was saturated with Scripture and though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his *Pilgrim's Progress*—that sweetest of all prose poems—without continually making us feel and say, “Why, this man is a living Bible!” Prick him anywhere—his blood is Bibline—the very essence of the Bible flows from him! He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God. I commend His example to you, Beloved and, still more, the example of our Lord Jesus! If the Spirit of God is in you, He will make you love the Word of God and, if any of you imagine that the Spirit of God will lead you to dispense with the Bible, you are under the influence of another spirit which is not the Spirit of God at all! I trust that the Holy Spirit will endear to you every page of this Divine Record so that you will feed upon it and, afterwards, speak it out to others. I think it is well worthy of your constant remembrance that, even in death, our blessed Master showed the ruling passion of His spirit so that His last words were a quotation from Scripture. Spurgeon

I speak a lot. So do many of you. But how fluidly do **words of scripture** come out in our speech? I sometimes talk to people about their souls. So do many of you. But what do we say? Our ideas? Our understanding? I think Tom's message from months ago would be good to apply here. We fill our minds with all kinds of nonsense. Why not use that time better. Why not hardcode scripture into our thinking? Yeah. I guess it is a discipline to memorize scripture. But really, what are we doing that is better or more important than that. We know that it cannot come out of us if it is not in us.

Now let's look at what Christ said.

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

The word for forsaken means to leave behind, to desert.

I think of the time when Carla and I drove home from Brad and Diane's house thinking that our parents had already taken our children. When we got home we found out that we were guilty of abandoning our children. Fortunately they were among friends and were no worse for wear.

Have you ever been truly deserted? Have you ever had someone you absolutely trusted depart from you, maybe when you depended upon them most? It reminds me of the 70's song. You left me, just when I needed you most. How did you feel when that happened?

Well here is Christ. He took on this project to come to planet earth to save its inhabitants in conjunction with His Father. Here is Christ in His greatest agony. And His agony is compounded because in Christ's condition, God found Christ repugnant. Christ had taken upon Himself all of our sin that God so hates. Can you imagine the agony of that? Take your abandonment and multiply it. No wonder Christ cried out. There is nothing worse than the abandonment of God the Father. It is unfortunate that so much of our world doesn't even mind being abandoned by God. In fact, they seem to prefer it.

Think about this. Christ experienced this separation so that we would never need to experience it again. We were born separated from God. But now we don't have to spend a moment separated from Him. With what Christ did for us, how do we regard the things that cause distance with God so lightly? Two things come to mind. Why would we ever choose sin when we know that will distance us from God. Christ paid so that such a thing need never happen. But we choose it willingly sometimes. Why would we do such a thing? The obvious answer is- because we want to. But what a foolish decision.

The other application is prayer. Why do we pray so little when Christ paid so much for the privilege? I think this is worthy of some serious thought this week. It is our duty to pray, but oh what an expensive privilege.

Let's move on to the next quote from Christ on the Cross.

We will actually include two in this verse to show them in context.

John 19:28-30

²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

So the next thing Christ says is "I thirst". The following is a quote from somewhere.

The fulfillment of the Scripture may well be from Psalm 69:21 where it is written that "They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour

wine to drink” because they then took a “jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth”

So Christ appears to have said what He said in a direct effort to fulfill scripture, which He did. I don't know that there is much more to glean from this.

Next is the 6th thing Christ said.

John 19:30

³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Do you remember what Christ said when His mother chided Christ after they had left Christ in Jerusalem and then returned to find Him? They said, Why have you done this to us? And this was Christ's response:

Luke 2:49

⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Those were the first recorded words of Christ. “It is finished” are very nearly the last words of Christ. And they fit together perfectly. Christ had to be about His Father's business, until His Father's business was finished for Christ.

The word for finished was accomplished. Christ accomplished what He had set out to do. The endless lamb sacrifices were finished. The need for the priest to represent man to God and the prophet to represent God to man was done. The separating curtain to keep man from God was about to be ripped from top to bottom. The character of God had not changed. But the way that man interacted with God was done. Now it is only Jesus Christ who is the way the truth and the life. Now it is salvation by grace alone by faith alone according to scripture alone. No more blood of lambs.

Christ was the lamb of God. He had taken upon Himself the sin of everyone He would ever save. And He was about to die in their place. He had fulfilled every prophesy. Now it is simply a matter of dying.

How wonderful those words should be to us. Christ **finished** everything that we needed for our salvation. Now we can come to Him simply trusting that His death in our place for our sin is enough. God is satisfied with what Christ has finished, with what Christ has accomplished.

Next is the last quote of Christ from the Cross

Luke 23:46

⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.

Did you know that this too is a quote from the Old Testament? How perfectly God had prepared His true people for this Messiah. There were plenty of people

who were not ready. Because this kind of Messiah was not something they were really interested in.

Psalm 31:5

⁵ Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

What we see in Christ this morning is that which we should emulate. We should copy Christ's example. Christ knew the misery He was going to face. We often don't. But the example is the same. Let me quote a bit more from our fellow Baptist- Spurgeon

Let us cheerfully entrust our souls to God and feel that they are quite safe in His hands. Our spirit is the noblest part of our being; our body is only the husk, our spirit is the living kernel, so let us put it into God's keeping. Some of you have never yet done that, so I invite you to do it now. It is the act of faith which saves the soul, that act which a man performs when he says, "I trust myself to God as He reveals Himself in Christ Jesus. I cannot keep myself, but He can keep me and, by the precious blood of Christ He can cleanse me. So I just take my spirit and give it over into the great Father's hands." You never really live till you do that! All that comes before that act of full surrender is death!

But when you have once trusted Christ, then you have truly begun to live. And every day, as long as you live, take care that you repeat this process and cheerfully leave yourselves in God's hands without any reserve. That is to say, give your-self up to God—your body, to be healthy or to be sick, to be long-lived or to be suddenly cut off. Your soul and spirit, give them, also, up to God, to be made happy or to be made sad, just as He pleases. Give Your whole self up to Him and say to Him, "My Father, make me rich or make me poor, give me sight or make me blind. Let me have all my senses or take them away. Make me famous or leave me to be obscure. I give myself up to You—into Your hands I commit my spirit. I will no longer exercise my own choice, but You shall choose My inheritance for me. My times are in Your hands."

Now, dear children of God, are you always doing this? Have you ever done it? I am afraid that there are some, even among Christ's professing followers, who kick against God's will and even when they say to God, "Your will be done," they spoil it by adding, in their own mind, "and my will, too." They pray, "Lord, make my will Your will," instead of saying, "Make Your will my will." Let us each one pray this prayer every day, "Into Your hands I commit my spirit." I like, at family prayer, to put myself and all that I have into God's hands in the morning—and then, at night, to just look between His hands and see how safe I have been. And then to say to Him, "Lord, shut me up again tonight! Take care of me all through the night watches. 'Into Your hands I commit my spirit

What Spurgeon describes is the Divine trust for which we were created. We rob ourselves of all kinds of things when we will not give it. We think we are being smart, but we are just being dumb. We are stupid not to obey and trust the God who has shown us over and over again that **He and only He** is worthy of absolute trust. He has told us that **He and only He** will never leave us or forsake us. He and **only He** knows our needs even before we ask. He promises to meet our needs, no matter how foolishly we might wrongly ask for things. His love is never ending.

This morning we have a wonderful example of someone who believed Christ. He is one of the best examples in scripture of people who lived a godly life. How do we know? Well we know by what came out of him when he was squeezed by death. This guy was a deacon. Now a deacon was a position of leadership, but it was **servant** leadership. He was a waiter of tables. He wasn't a Peter. He wasn't a Paul. He was someone with a ministry that anyone could do. But look at this man and understand that this is what we can be. This is what we can do.

Acts 7:59-60

⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Do you get this? Do you understand it? Stephen caught the disease of Christ likeness. This man had stones thrown at him. He knew he had done nothing wrong to deserve this particular penalty. Oh, sure, Stephen knew he was a sinner deserving death at God's hand. But he had done nothing to be stoned by the Jewish leadership. And look at what oozed out of him. Christ oozed out of him. He called upon **Christ to do** what Christ had asked **His Father to do**. At his death he asked Christ to receive his spirit. Which we know that Christ was certain to do. He does that to everyone who calls upon Him by faith. When we, as believers, call out to God to save us, when we call out to Him to take our salvation to completion, Christ is certain to do it. He is the author and the finisher of our faith according to Hebrews 12:2. He will finish what He started always.

Then Stephen called out to God to not hold this particular sin to the people who were committing it. I don't know if God answered this prayer or not. But it is notable that Stephen emulated his Lord even in this. He was not even holding a grudge against those who were killing him because he assumed they were doing it in ignorance.

Wow. What an example to follow. Stephen had caught the disease of Christ. He understood it. He lived the life of grace. He emulated Christ, even in his unjust murder.

Oh that we could learn to trust Christ with our lives. That is really the essence of the last thing that Christ said. Trust. Yes simple trust. That is the core

component of the Christian life. To trust God with our lives. That is the apex of Christian living. It isn't fancy. It isn't complicated. It is the most childish of virtues. But it is crucial and it is full of faith. Do you trust your life with Christ? Do you really trust your life with Christ? Can you say from the depth of your heart Jesus, into your hands I commit my spirit?

Sing Take my life and let it be.