

Jesus' Final Words and His Sacrificial Death (John 19:25-30)

The path of redemption led Jesus to the cross. Crucified in our place, crucified for our sins, Jesus uttered His final words before dismissing His spirit. John's Gospel presents a succinct account of Jesus' death, including three statements Jesus made that aren't recorded in the other Gospels. These three statements provide an outline for John 19:25-30. Jesus expressed compassion for His mother, Mary. He acknowledged His own thirst and received some relief from the onlookers. He then declared that His work was finished. At that point Jesus died—not having His life taken from Him but willingly surrendering His life for us. Jesus' finished work of redemption invites us to a restored relationship with God.

In His dire agony Jesus showed deep compassion for His mother Mary (19:25-27).

Not everyone abandoned Jesus at the time of His crucifixion. Several women and at least one of His disciples witnessed His suffering on the cross.

Jesus' mother and some other women stood nearby and witnessed His crucifixion (19:25).

There were a number of women who followed Jesus and supported Him in His earthly ministry, and several of them were present at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. Mary, Jesus' mother, was prominent among these witnesses. Certainly Simeon's prophecy about a sword piercing Mary's heart, as recorded in Luke 2:35, was fulfilled in this moment. Mary, who had swaddled Jesus as a baby now watched her son writhe in agony on the cross. With Mary were her sister (probably Salome, the mother of James and John based on Matthew 27:55 and Mark 15:40), Mary the wife of a man named Clopas (possibly the mother of two other disciples, James the Younger and Joses), and Mary Magdalene. It's unfortunate that Mary Magdalene has been mistaken for the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears (Luke 7:36-39). Mary Magdalene was free from such a reputation but had been delivered from demon possession by Jesus and had subsequently shown her gratitude by faithfully following Him (Luke 8:2). These four women were present to witness Jesus' crucifixion and their presence, no doubt, brought at least some sense of comfort to Jesus as He looked at them from the cross.

Jesus entrusted His mother to the care of one of His closest disciples (19:26-27).

However, even though the presence of these women might have comforted Jesus to an extent, the presence of His mother concerned Him deeply. Near Mary was "the disciple whom he loved," presumably a reference to John. Jesus engaged in yet another act of compassion even as He hung on the cross. Although Jesus had half-brothers who could have cared for Mary, these didn't believe in Him and were likely not present at the crucifixion. Therefore, Jesus entrusted Mary to John's care. He said to Mary in the most respectful and tender terms, "Dear woman, here is your son," pointing her toward John. He then said to John, "Here is your mother." Jesus loved His mother and entrusted her to the beloved disciple. At that point John took Mary to "his own" home (compare the same phrase in John 1:11). Presumably, John and his family

maintained living quarters in Jerusalem as well as Galilee. He took Jesus' grieving mother away from the scene of agony and death to the safety of that home. Jesus' words to His mother from the cross proved His love for her, and His sacrificial death proves His love for us. In His dire agony Jesus showed deep compassion for His mother.

**In His redemptive work Jesus
fulfilled the prophecies of Scripture (19:28-29).**

Jesus fully understood His redemptive mission and the Old Testament prophecies relating to His sacrificial death. In His second statement from the cross recorded by John, Jesus indicated that He was thirsty.

Knowing that the end of His redemptive work drew near Jesus said that He was thirsty (19:28).

As the time of His death drew near, Jesus knew that everything necessary for our redemption was finished. But to fulfill one more prophecy of Scripture, Jesus said, "I thirst." Psalm 22:15 was most likely prominent in Jesus' mind, a messianic prediction about His searing thirst. Likewise, Psalm 69:21 refers to vinegar as the beverage offered to quench that thirst. Jesus had earlier refused to accept a sedative concoction (Matthew 27:34). Now, however, Jesus welcomed a non-sedating, albeit bitter, drink.

The soldiers gave Jesus a taste of wine vinegar to ease His thirst (19:29).

A jar of cheap sour wine vinegar was apparently available for the guards at the crucifixion site. One of the guards, possibly as an act of mercy, soaked a sponge with some of this wine vinegar, put the sponge on the end of a hyssop stick, and lifted it to Jesus' parched lips. This small token of relief may have been enough to enable Jesus to utter His final words from the cross.

**With His final words Jesus released
His spirit in a volitional act of sacrifice (19:30).**

After hours of grueling agony on the cross Jesus finally died. His death, however, was unlike any other. No one took His life. Instead, He gave His life. He dismissed His spirit as a volitional act of sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus declared that His redemptive work was finished (19:30a).

Having received the wine vinegar, Jesus was able to declare with resonating assurance, "It is finished!" This was the same word used in verse 28 to describe Jesus' confidence in the completion of His work. This simple phrase, a single word in the original Greek, carries great significance. Jesus came into this world to redeem us from our sins. His sacrificial death completed that work. There is nothing left that we must add to secure our salvation. We must

simply believe. Faith alone in Jesus Christ alone is all that's required. His finished work on the cross assures us that His work was sufficient, satisfactory, and worthy of our trust. Those who try to add to Jesus' finished work of redemption by relying on their own efforts and good works fail to grasp His declaration from the cross, "It is finished!" Our salvation has been won by the one who died for us.

Jesus bowed His head and released His spirit in death (19:30b).

Having finished His redemptive work, Jesus laid His head down as if in sleep and willfully surrendered His spirit to the Father. Previously Jesus had stated that no one would take His life from Him but that He would lay it down Himself (John 10:17-18). He also promised that He would rise from the dead, a promise that He would soon fulfill. But for the moment Jesus was dead. He had completed His redemptive work. He had given His life as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. The darkness that covered the land mimicked the darkness of the moment, the darkness of the human heart. But in that darkness there was hope. Jesus' finished work of redemption invites us to a restored relationship with God.