

# **SEVEN SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS**

## **7 – IN THE FATHER’S HANDS**

Luke 23:46

### **INTRODUCTION**

- In music, *cadence* brings the tension and dissonance that is created in a piece of music back to resolution and consonance
- Cadence is essential to bring resolution, finality and completion, closure to a musical work.
- If we were to liken the Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ to a musical work there is much of tension and dissonance.
- Just as a fine work of music will come to closure, so the Lord Jesus concludes these sayings, and His life, with a final “perfect chord” of resolution, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”
- The number seven in Scripture represents completeness or perfection.
- Seven is also the number of rest (Genesis 2:2)
- On the sixth day God completed the creation – in Christ’s sixth saying, He declared “It is finished”.
- On the seventh day God rested from His work – in Christ’s seventh saying, He took His rest, commending His spirit to the Father.

### **I. THE EXPRESSION OF A SON**

- A. His first and last sayings begin with “Father”
- B. Christ came to declare the Father
  1. While this is a quote from Psalm 31:5, Christ adds the word “Father” to it
  2. The Old Testament does not reveal God as Father, except as Creator and Preserver (Malachi 2:10)
  3. The Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels made known the first Person of the Godhead as the Father (John 1:18; Matthew 11:27)

4. The first recorded words of Jesus at the age of twelve deal with His "Father's business" (Luke 2:49)
  5. The Sermon on the Mount refers to Father seventeen times
  6. In His discourse with the disciples in John 14-16 He uses "Father" forty-five times.
  7. In His prayer in John 17, He calls God "Father" six times
- C. This is a term of relationship and communion
1. When bearing our sins, and forsaken by the Father, He cried, "My God..."
  2. His final cry of "Father" is evidence that God has accepted Christ's sacrifice
  3. His propitiatory work is indeed finished, and He is now reconciled with the Father
- D. Through faith in Christ, we too can call God our Father
1. By nature, we are children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), children of hell (Matthew 23:15), and children of the devil (John 8:44)
  2. Those who receive Christ, and believe on His name, become adopted as "sons of God" (John 1:12-13; Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6-7)
  3. Jesus' Father can be our Father (John 20:17)

## **II. THE ENTRUSTING OF HIS SPIRIT**

- A. In His death, the Lord Jesus turned His thoughts to the words of Scripture
1. His whole ministry was characterised by a reliance upon the word of God (cf. Matthew 4:1-11)
  2. It is the word of God that will sustain the believer through this "vale of tears" and through the "vale of death" ((Jeremiah 15:16-18; Colossians 3:16)
- B. David's words are used by his greater Son
1. Jewish children were taught to say this prayer every evening

2. At the evening of His earthly life, as He breathes His last, He prays this prayer
- C. From the hands of men to the hands of the Father
1. In His passion, He suffered in the hands of men (Matthew 17:22-23; 26:45; Luke 24:6-7)
  2. Though they did their worst, He emerged victorious from their hands and resigned His spirit into His father's hands
  3. His humiliation now over, He prepares to return to the glory He had with the Father before the world was. (John 17:5)
- D. Jesus' death was like no other death
1. The verb *commend* means to "deposit for safe keeping"
  2. He died because He voluntarily gave up His life
  3. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:11-18)
  4. Death by crucifixion usually took days, sometimes over a week, yet He died after six hours (John 19:31-33; Mark 15:44)
  5. None of the four gospels use the terms "death" or "died", but use language to express the extraordinary nature of His death

### III. THE EXAMPLE TO THE SAINTS

- A. The Lord Jesus in these words teaches His people how to die
1. Many Christians throughout history have departed this world with this same prayer
  2. Polycarp, Jerome of Prague, John Huss, Lady Jane Grey and John Knox all died with these words on their lips
- B. Both our life and our death ought to bring glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:20; John 21:18-19)
- C. Death can be faced with confidence because of what Christ has done
1. Confident and willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8)
  2. To depart and be with Christ is far better than to remain in this world (Philippians 1:21-23)

3. There are no safer hands than the Father's hands (John 10:29)

## **CONCLUSION**

1. At His death, there was an earthquake, the temple veil was torn, and the graves were opened (Matthew 27:50-53)
2. The quake has echoes of Sinai (cf. Exodus 19:16ff) and teaches us that the demands of the law have been fully met (Hebrews 12:18-24)
3. The rent veil teaches us that the believer has boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh (Hebrews 10:20)
4. The opened grave and raised saints prove that He defeated death (2 Timothy 1:10)
5. There were varied reactions from those who witnessed Christ's death:
  - Some confessed Christ as the Son of God (Luke 23:47; Matthew 27:54)
  - Some walked away in awe and dread, contemplating the terrible scene (Luke 23:48)
  - Some stood afar off, beholding (Luke 23:49)
  - Some openly associated themselves with the crucified Lord (Luke 23:51-56; John 19:38-40)
6. What is your response?
7. Most people think Christianity is simply following a set of teachings and rules
8. They miss the essence of true religion, which is being reconciled to God through faith in Christ, and born of the Spirit into the family of God
9. Have you been born again so that you can call God your Father?
10. In His death Christ committed His spirit to the Father, and this was consistent with His whole life
11. Make this your daily prayer, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."
12. We must commit our souls to Christ for justification and eternal life (2 Timothy 1:12)
13. We must commit our souls to Christ in our sufferings and trials (1 Peter 4:19)
14. We must commit our souls to Christ in our final hour (Acts 7:59-60)