

## Last Words: Sayings from the Cross and from Beyond the Grave (The Word of Affection) John 19:23-27

### INTRODUCTION

1 Peter 2:21 says, *“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”* This verse says that Christ is our example not only in the way He lived, but also in His death. So often we learn more about the character of a person by how he or she dies than by how he or she lived.

From the earliest years the Christian church has observed the death of Christ by remembering His last seven sayings on the cross. So far, we have looked at **two of the seven**. Today, we focus on the third saying. Please turn in your Bible to **John 19:23-27**.

*As we consider this 3rd statement from the cross, please note with me...*

### I. The \_\_\_\_\_ gathered (19:23-25)

There are **2 groups** of people I would like for us to focus on:

#### A. The apathetic \_\_\_\_\_ (19:23-24)

They were so close to the foot of the cross and had somehow missed it. How is that possible?

I think there were at least three reasons.

#### 1. \_\_\_\_\_

By the time of Christ, crucifixion had become the favorite method of execution in the Roman Empire. Historians tell us that Rome had already crucified more than 30,000 people in and around Judea. Crucifixions had become methodical to these soldiers. It's what they did for a living, so they had become numb to it.

**This was not just a problem in the first century. The Cross today has largely lost its impact because it's so familiar.** It's amazing to realize that the instrument of execution in the first century has become a fashion statement today. We've sanitized and beautified what was once loathed and feared. Some of us are no longer moved by what Jesus did on the cross because we've simply become too used to it. Those of us who have been Christians for a while can become numb and even bored by the cross. **It's not proximity that makes us believers. Sometimes those who grow up closest to the cross end up rejecting Him completely.**

## 2. \_\_\_\_\_

A second reason the soldiers missed what was happening is because the Romans hated the Jews and the soldiers stationed there would have found great pleasure in executing a Jewish man. That's why they mocked Him with the robe, put a crown of thorns on Him and spit on Him. Maybe you're not moved by the Cross because you're prejudiced against the people the cross represents. **Perhaps a preacher has turned you off. Or a church has rubbed you the wrong way.** Maybe you've been hurt by the hypocrisy of a Christ follower. Whatever it is, I encourage you to look beyond imperfect Christians and see Christ Himself.

## 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Roman law granted the soldiers the right to the clothes the executed man was wearing. **John 19:23** tells us that they took the wardrobe of Jesus and divided it into four equal shares. **The humiliation of crucifixion was accentuated by the shame of nakedness.**

Imagine with me what this scene must have looked like to Jesus. As He looked down past his bloody feet, He saw common soldiers playing their part in the world's most uncommon drama. As far as they're concerned, it's just another Friday morning and He's just another criminal. They were so busy looking down at the ground, thinking of material things that they never looked up to see the Savior of the world. They divided up used clothes while ignoring the eternal riches Jesus was offering them. They heard the first two sayings from the Savior offering forgiveness and salvation but were too locked in on material things to pay any attention to Him. **Is it possible that you're focused more on material things than on eternal realities? Don't gamble your life away on things that won't last.**

## *The next group at the cross is...*

### **B. The hurting \_\_\_\_\_ (19:25)**

Jesus, in His dying moments, thought not of Himself, but others. Look at **verse 25**. These women were related in some way to the Twelve and were among Jesus' most loyal followers. These four women were **"near"** to the cross, not far away. They also **"stood"** strong instead of shutting down in their indescribable grief. It took courage for them to stand near the one who had been crucified.

**Let me say that of the entire circle of 11 devoted disciples, only one male follower showed up at the cross.** And that was after bailing on Jesus earlier. But there were four women! It's women who show up at the resurrection site and are the first witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

## II. The \_\_\_\_\_ given (19:26-27)

### A. To \_\_\_\_\_ (19:26)

Notice that Jesus does not refer to Mary as “*mother*.” In fact, Jesus never called her “*mother*” in the Gospels. As He did in **John 2:4**, so again he calls her, “*Woman*.” I can think of several reasons why He may have done this.

- To reinforce \_\_\_\_\_
- To establish His role as (her) \_\_\_\_\_
- To initiate \_\_\_\_\_ into family of God

### B. To \_\_\_\_\_ (19:27)

## CONCLUSION

**Remember...even in His dying Jesus Christ teaches us how to live. What lessons can you & I draw from this third Saying from the Cross?** While others were indifferent to Christ’s final act of sacrificial love, Jesus was not indifferent to the needs of those present. The same is true today. He knows all about your needs. When He hung on the Cross, He thought of others. He forgave the unforgivable, He saved a vile sinner, and He cared for His mother. And His care continues today in at least **five ways**.

1. By \_\_\_\_\_ those who have \_\_\_\_\_ away.
2. By giving us the \_\_\_\_\_ to take His place.
3. By launching a caring community called the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. By modeling how to honor our \_\_\_\_\_.
5. By \_\_\_\_\_ people into His family today.