

The Seven Last Words of Christ

The Seventh Word: Contentment

Luke 23:44-46

Rev. Freddy Fritz

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Introduction

Herbert Lockyer, in his book titled *All the Last Words of Saints and Sinners*, says,

The last words of both saints and sinners about to enter eternity, what they had to say before their stammering tongues lay silent in the grave, demands our deepest attention and most earnest concern. If, when the soul is face to face with eternal realities, true character is almost invariably manifest, then we can expect the lips to express glorious certainty or terror concerning the future.¹

For the past six years we have been examining the so-called “last words” of Christ. Tonight, we come to the seventh and final word that Jesus uttered on the cross, found in Luke 23:44-46:

⁴⁴It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46)

Lesson

Tonight I would like to briefly examine two aspects of Christ’s last word: **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”**

I. Christ Quotes from the Word of God

First, notice that Christ quotes from the Word of God.

¹ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Last Words of Saints and Sinners* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1969), 12.

Christ was an original thinker, and he could have given us words of his own. But instead he quoted Psalm 31:5a: “Into your hands I commit my spirit.” He never lacked suitable words for any occasion, for “no one ever spoke like this man” (John 7:46)!

Have you noticed how Jesus continually quoted Scripture? The great majority of his expressions can be traced to the Old Testament. Even where they are not exact quotations, his words drop into Scriptural shape and form. You can see that the Bible has been his one Book. He is clearly familiar with it from the first page to the last, and not with its letter only, but with the innermost soul of its most secret sense. And, therefore, when dying, it seemed only natural for him to use a passage from a Psalm of David as his dying words.

Jesus could have made an original speech as his dying declaration. Even though his body was in tremendous pain, his mind was clear and focused. In fact, he was perfectly content, for he had said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). So his sufferings were over, and he was already beginning to taste the delights of victory. Yet, with all the clearness of mind, enormity of intellect, and fluency of words that might have been possible to him, he did not invent a new sentence, but he went to the Psalms, and took from the Holy Spirit this expression, **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”**

How instructive to us is this great truth that the Incarnate Word lived on the Inspired Word! It was food to him, as it is to us. And, brothers and sisters, if Christ thus lived upon the Word of God, should not you and I do the same?

He, in some respects, did not need this Book as much as we do. The Spirit of God rested upon him without measure. Yet he loved the Scripture, and he went to it, and read it, and studied it, and memorized it, and used its expressions continually.

Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God, and get that Word into ourselves!

Charles Spurgeon once said of John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*: “Read anything of his, and you will see that it

is almost like reading the Bible itself. He had studied the Bible. He had read it 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* without continually making us feel and say, 'Why, this man is a living Bible!' Prick him anywhere; [and I love this phrase] *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, 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 one 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 yourselves, and afterwards speak it out to others.

I think it is well worth your constant remembrance that, even in death, Jesus showed the ruling passion of his spirit, so that his last words were a quotation from Scripture.

II. Christ Commits His Spirit to the Father

And second, Christ commits his spirit to the Father.

Jesus said, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!**"

When we come to die, we may say these words, and God will accept them. But none of us, with strict propriety, can use them.

These were the final words of Polycarp, Bernard, Luther, Melancthon, Jerome of Prague, John Huss, and an almost endless list of saints. But, in the sense in which Jesus uttered these words, none of us can use them fully.

We can commit our spirit to God but remember that, unless the Lord comes first, we must die, and dying is not an act on our part. We are passive in the process, because it is no longer in our power to retain our life.

But there was no necessity for Jesus to die except the necessi-

ty which he had taken upon himself in becoming the Substitute for his people. If he had willed to do so, he could have unloosed the nails and come down into the midst of the crowd that stood mocking him. He died of his own free will, “the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18).

Jesus was committing to the Father the spirit which he might have kept if he had chosen to do so. “No one takes it from me,” he said concerning his life, “but I lay it down of my own accord” (John 10:18). There is here an intentional willingness to commit his spirit into his Father’s hands.

It is rather remarkable that none of the Evangelists describe our Lord as dying. He did die, but they all speak of him as breathing his last or giving up his spirit. You and I die *passively*, but he *actively* committed his spirit to his Father. In his case, death was an act; and he performed that act from the glorious motive of redeeming us from death and hell. So, in this sense, Christ stands alone in his death.

Conclusion

A small boy was turning the pages of a book of religious art. When he came to a picture of the crucifixion he looked at it for a long time, and a sad look came to his face.

Finally he said, “If God had been there, he wouldn’t have let them do it.”

The little boy did not understand that God was there. He did not understand why Jesus died. He did not understand what the crucifixion really meant.

Jesus died, as I said earlier, of his own free will, “the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18).

And so I conclude with Paul’s words to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21:

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¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Have you been reconciled to God? “We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” For this is why Christ died. Amen.

Mission Statement

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*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and **membership** in his church family,
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,
equip them for their **ministry** in the church
and life **mission** in the world,
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

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Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Answers for Life!

Address: 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33647

Telephone: (813) 973-2484

Fax: (813) 973-4673

Email: Office@TampaBayPresbyterian.org

Web site: www.TampaBayPresbyterian.org