

A Word of Commitment

Luke 23:46

Jesus' Prayers From the Cross #3

© 2015 Daniel R. Hyde

The Word of God records for us seven words that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke from the cross. Is there significance in there being seven words? I'll come to that in a moment. Recall for now these seven words:

The first word was to the Father, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)

The second word was to the repentant thief on the cross, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

The third word was to Mary and John, "Woman, this is your son...This is your mother." (John 19:26, 27)

The fourth word was to the Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34)

The fifth word was a declaration, "I thirst." (John 19:28)

The sixth word was a declaration, "It is finished." (John 19:30)

The seventh and last word was to the Father, "**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**" (Luke 23:46)

These seem so anti-climactic compared to—say—Alexander the Great, who died without an heir and who therefore said of his worldwide kingdom: "To the strongest."

They seem so anti-climactic to Roman Emperor, Julian known as the Apostate, who tried to destroy Christianity: “You have won, O Galilean.” But note with me how significant Jesus’ last words for the work he accomplished and how they benefit you.

1. ***A Word of Rest***
2. ***A Word of Representation***
3. ***A Word of Reconciliation***

A Word of Rest

“**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**” This is *a word of rest*. I mentioned that Jesus is recorded as speaking seven words from the cross. Do you think this is a coincidence? What do you think the significance of this is? Think about your Old Testament. We speak about the creation week because he completed his work in six days and then on the seventh day he rested. And so there on the cross Jesus spoke seven words. He was given a work to do and he completed the work. And his sixth word, like the end of creation on the sixth day, was a word of completion: “It is finished.” And now here in the seventh word he gives his spirit into the hands of God the Father to rest: “**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**” In the end of the creation week God looked back at all he had done and rested from his work; at the end of his work on the cross that began a new creation, Jesus entered God’s rest. As A.W. Pink said, “Christ’s head rested on a crown of thorns, but beneath were the Father’s hands!”²

¹ Arthur W. Pink, *The Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross* (1958; repr., Mt. Zion Publications, 1997), 132.

² Pink, *Seven Sayings*, 143.

And notice the contrast in Jesus' words here, "**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,**" and what we read him saying over and over again in his ministry:

"The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men" (Matt. 17:22; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:44; 24:7).

"The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Matt. 26:45).

"The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death" (Matt. 20:18).

How is this significant for you and me? This should comfort you as you meditate on Jesus on the cross resting in God alone. Not only was he accomplishing your redemption but he is also teaching you here to find your true rest and peace in God alone. As you live your life for however long God gives you, you will experience life like a winding, rapid-filled river. It turbulently churns you up and down, this way and that way. But eventually, like that river will reaches its rest in a lake or ocean, so too Jesus is showing you that when you give yourself to God in the end of all the turbulence of life, there is rest and peace in his presence.³

A Word of Representation

"**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**" Not only do we learn something from Jesus' example on the cross, but most importantly he was there for you. And so this is also *a word of representation*.

³ This illustration is adapted from John Flavel, *Works*, 1:442

When Jesus said, “**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,**” he rested after all his work of accomplishing and meriting your full reconciliation as your representative. And so when he gave the Father his spirit for safe keeping he was the Head of the entire Body of the church. And you are its members. Although you were not born yet and had not trusted in Jesus yet, Jesus gave himself into the hands of the Father along with the spirits of all his brothers and sisters to come. I recently heard that the ancient Jewish Talmud states that if a group of Jews were required to give up one of their group for death so that the others might live they were required to die together, as a group. Isn't it amazing how on the cross Jesus goes to die without our having given him up. He died that we might live. And so when his spirit is taken into the rest of God he also took our spirits be as well. The old Heidelberg theologian, David Pareus, once said, “He commends not his soul to the Father on his own personal account, but the souls of all the faithful bound up as it were in one bundle, that they might be kept in safety together with his own.”⁴

Are you in that bundle? If you trust in Jesus tonight God assures you that Jesus entrusted you to the Father on the cross so much so that he not only was saying, “**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,**” but also, “**Father, into your hands I commend Danny's spirit.**” Can you commend yourself like this tonight, my friend? It is a sad state to be in to be separated from God at death. You may be surrounded by all your family and friends, but you will be alone with God. How will he look at you? How will you regard him? One of the saddest things is to see an unbeliever not yet at death's door

⁴ Cited in Flavel, *Works*, 1:442.

preparing for that door by saying if he has a deathbed conversion, it means he was not in his right mind. This is how Christopher Hitchens prepared for his death, militantly opposed to the God who created him.

A Word of Reconciliation

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Finally, this is *a word of reconciliation*. Jesus could say this because he had rested from his work representing sinners like you and me. And what was that work? Living according to God’s commands as Adam failed to do in the Garden and as you and I fail to do daily. And because of that his work was also to suffer under the weight of God’s jealous wrath his entire life, but especially on the cross, where God poured out all his wrath reserved for those in hell on his own Son. Because Jesus lived and died like this you can be reconciled to God.

Tonight I declare to you on Good Friday that when you trust in Jesus you go from being an enemy of God to a friend of God; from a hater of God to being loved by God; from being at war with God to being at peace with God; from being hell-bound to being heaven-bound.

Now that’s a climactic, significant last word! Amen.