

SLIDE Seven Words from the Cross
Introduction (Zac)

Welcome and explanation of today's message. (Zac)

introduction (Jon)

The normally silent Via Dolorosa clambered with crowds of people yelling at the top of their lungs, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The haggard shell of a man stumbled down the way, crimson streams of blood covering his body. His tattered hair and patchy beard were barely recognizable as the Roman soldiers taunted the Jews in the crowd. He convulsed and then collapsed in the middle of the road, the crossbeam slamming into his back. The Romans plucked another man from the crowd and made him carry the cross.

On the hill called "The Skull" they laid the man across the beams and struck the nails through his hands into the wood as the man's bloodcurdling screaming could be heard even above the crowds. As they pulled the cross into a standing position with ropes and it slid into the hole the body bounced violently. There he hung for six hours from 9 AM to 3 PM. The innocent yet condemned Savior uttered seven sayings from that cross that reach through the corridors of time and speak even to you and me today.

SLIDE 1. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34) (Zac)

SLIDE/S Luke 23:34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Theme: Forgiveness

Explanation

- This prayer for His enemies—a picture of love and forgiveness to the end.
- The picture is of Jesus the Mediator. He had come for this very purpose, to stand as the Mediator between God and sinful man. Therefore upon the cross, He prayed for those who stood below crucifying Him. Even in his very last words Jesus is practicing what he preached.
- Jesus was practicing what He taught in *Luke 6:27-27* "*But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.*"
- "*For they do not know what they are doing*" refers most likely to the Jews, but it is also for the Roman soldiers, although all who participated in Jesus' death were included in his prayer for forgiveness. The Jews in particular made a serious mistake, for they failed to realize God's plan for their nation. If they had known what they were doing, they would not have done it.

- The religious leaders who were threatened by his message chose to not embrace it but decided to scheme together and find a way to put him to death.
- Jesus was asking forgiveness for JUDAS, who had betrayed Him
- for Herod and PILOT who had been derelict in their duty; for Jewish Religious Leaders who had plotted Jesus's execution for The Centurians who had scourged Him, mocked Him, rammed a crown of thorns into His head, nailed him to the cross and cast lots for his clothing; and for every man, woman and child in that crowd who had shouted in a frenzy, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"
- Not only did Jesus forgive those who crucified Him, the religious leaders, the Jews but He also forgave one of the thieves crucified next to Him. When the thieves were put on the cross both of them cursed Jesus but, as time elapsed, one of the thieves had a change of heart.
- Can you get anymore unselfish.
- So not only was he practicing what he taught....
- But he was fulfilling prophecy that was recorded hundreds of years earlier. *Isaiah 53:12 because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*
- Now do not infer from this prayer that ignorance is a basis for forgiveness, or that those who sinned against Jesus were automatically forgiven because He prayed. Certainly both the Jews and the Romans were ignorant of the *enormity* of their sin, but that could not absolve them. What they did moving forward was up to them.
- Forgiveness is not a feeling, its not acting like nothing happened, trying enough to get over it or condoning the behavior.
- But forgiveness is praying for the other person, giving good for the evil they gave you, not getting even, not demanding restitution, not talking negatively about them but you simply place the situation, the person into the hands of God. *1 Peter 2:23* talks about Jesus example, *vs 22 says he committed no sin, no deceit in his mouth* and it says this.... *When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him (God) who judges justly.*

Application

- #1. Now if you want to talk about something that's Beyond Forgiveness, Unforgiveable. You would think what the soldiers did that day was unforgivable
- When you crucify Jesus, God in flesh, you would think that's the definition of what unforgivable is. And yet Jesus still forgave them.
- Some people live under a blanket of guilt because they think that some sin they've committed is just too bad, too heinous, too wicked, or too depraved for God to forgive. But what sin could be worse; what crime more heinous; what choice more wicked; what

act more depraved than crucifying the sinless, innocent Son of God and yet Jesus was desiring to forgive them all.

- The about most wonderful truth in all the world is this: God will hold no sin against any man, if that man will personally trust His Son.
- If God has the ability to forgive the very men who killed His only Son, God will forgive any man for any sin—if they will just ask.
- *1 John 1:7 the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin*
- #2. How can we not offer that same forgiveness to others. The Bible says *Matthew 16:24* that we are to take up our cross and follow him, it is a cross of forgiveness.
- Forgiveness it not feeling but it's a conscious decision we need to make and as a result it cuts the tie from the past so you are positioned or poisoned for the future.
- PG used to say unforgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.
- I believe we need to be a quick to forgive others as quick as we would want God to forgive us.
- In the Lord's prayer: *Matthew 6:12 "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us"*
- Forgiveness may cost you your pride but unforgiveness may cost you your freedom. It is one of the greatest gifts that you can give yourself.

SLIDE 2. "Today, you will be with me in paradise." (Matthew 23:43) (Jon)

SLIDE/S Luke 23:39–43 (ESV)

43 And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Theme: Grace and Mercy

Explanation

- Matthew 27:44 tells us that both criminals were reviling Jesus but Luke reports that one reviled him while another defended him. Luke may be talking about later on in the day.
- The first criminal selfishly demanded that Jesus save himself and them, only wanting to get out of his punishment. His statement, "If you are the Son of God," reflects disbelief.
- Jesus' mission involved salvation of the human race through his shed blood and death on the cross. If Jesus saved himself, he would have ended God's plan for all of humanity.

- The second criminal accepted the justice of the punishment. But Jesus was innocent. Perhaps he previously heard about Jesus, personally witnessed his ministry, or realized who Jesus was on Golgotha. He believed the evidence proclaimed by unbelievers.
- In desperation, this man realizes his sin and turns to Jesus. He understood physical death as his just punishment but Jesus grants him eternal life. His request, “Remember me” asks to enter Jesus’ kingdom.
- “Today” shows Jesus’ salvation and grace. It can either refer to Jesus granting his request that very day or the immediacy of being in God’s presence at the moment of death.
- “Paradise” is an import from the Persian language. In the Septuagint, this word was used for the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8) where God walked with Adam in the cool of the day. It also refers to the new Garden of Eden (Revelation 2:7) in the new creation, the place where God’s presence dwells.
- Jesus grants salvation and eternal life to this criminal who is repentant for his sins. Even while dying on the cross, Jesus fulfills his mission to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).
- At the moment of death Jesus grants this criminal mercy, promising him a place in the presence of God despite his crimes, giving him eternal life.
- The first criminal chooses to align himself with those who persecuted Jesus while the second criminal chooses Jesus and eternal life.

Application

- It is never too late to turn to Christ. Deeds do not save you. The love of Christ and your repentance lead you to paradise, where you can dwell in God’s presence for eternity.
- Do you come to Jesus like he is a fire escape, only to get out of your situation? Or do you come to Jesus knowing your sin, confessing who he is, and longing to be with him?
- You must make a choice about Jesus. How will you respond to him? Today is a great day to know him. Today you can be in God’s presence.

SLIDE 3. Behold your son; behold your mother (John 19:26-27) (Zac)

SLIDE/S John 19:26-27 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"
27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Theme: Security and Responsibility

Explanation

- I want you to see something about this group of women, along with the Apostle John, that stood near the cross. They were there at great risk. Jesus was not only a revolutionary in the eyes of Rome but he was heretic in the eyes of the religionists.
- Any supporter of Jesus who stood at the cross ran the risk of ridicule and possible arrest. And the women still stood there and put their reputation and life at risk. Why? They loved Him. There is no other explanation: they simply loved Him. He had done so much for them that they were willing to stand by Him no matter the cost.
- There are so many ways to prepare for death. One of the ways we do this is to divide up our possessions for the care of others when we are gone from this life. I think this is symbolic with the guards taking and dividing up Jesus clothing, casting lots. I think it is so devaluing and dishonoring of a life and yet we see the tension that death creates in many families as they are fighting over possessions. Jesus focus here is not on possessions but people.
- The guards priority was on getting what they could from Jesus possessions but Jesus priority was in the people, and in this statement it was his mother.
- The law required the firstborn son to take care of his parents, and Jesus was obeying the law of God up until the end. Early in His ministry Jesus emphasized His respect for the law: *Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill it.*
- Look at the care Jesus had not only for others but his mother. He was touched with the feelings of Mary's hurt and pain. All of Mary's hopes and dreams must have been crushed as she saw Jesus slowly dying and suffocating on the cross.
- What a sense of helplessness she must have felt.
- In the last moments of His life upon earth, He is making arrangements for her care. Jesus assured her of His love, and He gave His choicest disciple, to be her adopted son and to care for her.
- We do know that he cared for her and that she was among the believers in *Acts 1:14* the Upper Room as they awaited. Even while He was performing the great act of redemption, Jesus was not beyond being faithful to His responsibilities as a son.
- Jesus did not entrust his mother to the care of his own brothers because apparently they did not as yet believe in him and Jesus felt it was more natural to have someone in His "spiritual family" care for his mother.

Application

- Jesus is touched with the feeling of our hurt and pain, and he takes care of us.

- *Hebrews 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
- Jesus is willing care for people in their hour if need. Is Jesus ever too busy to see and attend to your needs? The Third Word from the cross declares an emphatic “No!” to that question.
- Most importantly, we learn that people are more important than things in life. We learn that Jesus put people ahead of items that He owned in His earthly life. Jesus had a priority of people over things because things are temporal and we can’t take them with us, but people have a soul that lives on. We must invest in people
- Jesus' brothers were not there; they had been skeptical of Jesus and had probably remained in Capernaum. So Jesus commissioned John to care for Mary.
- On the surface, we see that Jesus is looking after His mother, but there’s a deeper truth. Jesus was beginning the formation of a new family—the family of God. Jesus created a new relationship between His mother and His friend—with Himself as the connector; with Himself as the common ground between the two of them.
- In Christ's greater family, the church, fellow believers may be more of a family to us than our blood relatives. When you trust in Christ as Savior, you get a new family. When you look around this room this morning do you just see a bunch of people or do you see your spiritual family?
- Physically, Jesus was limited in this hour. His strength and breath is diminishing. He can’t help himself but he can help his mother. He has no hands but John’s hands. He has no feet but John’s feet. He has no arms to hold his mother but John’s arms. He has no way to comfort or care and provide for his mother but through John.
- Its interesting to think that John is the only disciple at the cross. He may not have been the most capable but he was the one who was most available because he was there.

SLIDE 4. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34)

(Jon)

SLIDE/S Matthew 27:45–49 (ESV) [Mark 15:33-36]

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Theme: Loneliness and Abandonment

Explanation

- Darkness covered the land during Jesus' hanging on the cross from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, from noon to 3:00 PM. This is a supernatural darkness over all the land, probably of Israel, and is symbolic of God's judgment upon sin, represented by Jesus as sacrificial lamb on the cross.
- This darkness could represent several themes in Scripture: the judgment of God from the darkness plague of Exodus (Exodus 10:22), apocalyptic judgment (Joel 2:10; Amos 8:9), the momentary triumph of evil, and the Father mourning for the death of his Son.
- Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Matthew gives this in Hebrew while Mark gives it in Aramaic, which is most likely what Jesus spoke.
- The word "forsake" can mean to abandon, leave, or desert. Jesus uses it to allude to Psalm 22:1. Did God abandon Jesus on the cross? Hebrews 13:5 states that God does not abandon or forsake his people (cf. Joshua 1:5).
- While some scholars believe that God the Father abandoned Jesus on the cross, this is not the case. The darkness could refer to the Father turning his face from Jesus who became the sacrificial lamb for the sins of the world.
- Jesus had been in constant connection with God the Father since before time. Now as the weight of the whole world's sin was placed on his shoulders (2 Corinthians 5:21), the Father turned his face away (Habakkuk 1:13) from his Son. Jesus was separated from communion with the Father.
- "Eli" sounds like Elijah in Aramaic. Because of the crowd noise people confuse his quote with Elijah. His allusion to Psalm 22 was misunderstood.
- Earlier they offered Jesus wine mixed with painkillers, which he did not accept. This was a common, cheap drink used by Roman soldiers. Putting sour wine on the sponge and giving it to Jesus fulfills prophecy (Psalm 69:21).
- The crowd wondered if Elijah would come and save Jesus. Jewish folklore suggested that because Elijah was taken up into heaven by a whirlwind he could return in bodily form.
- Jesus did not express doubt in the Father. In his moment of weakness, he cries out to God calling him, "My God." Though he feels distant from God, he is not abandoned.
- Jesus alludes to Psalm 22. When rabbis alluded to Scripture, they referenced the entire section. Psalm 22 contains prophetic references to Jesus' crucifixion.
- Psalm 22:7-8 speak of those who mock Jesus and say, "Let God rescue him."
- Psalm 22:14-15 speak of Jesus' physical weakness on the cross.
- Psalm 22:16 mentions his pierced hands and feet while verse 18 speaks of soldiers dividing up Jesus' clothes and casting lots for them.

- Psalm 22:21-22 express confidence in God in the midst of darkness and feeling all alone.
- Psalm 22:24 expresses trust that God does not abandon his people, but hears their cries.

Application

- Jesus understands the depths of your suffering. He has experienced the deepest suffering that anyone will ever know. He also understands the pain and heartache that you feel.
- Even when you feel like you're all alone, Jesus is always with you. In Hebrews 13:5, He promised he will never abandon you. He walks with us through our suffering. We can have complete confidence that even when we don't feel his presence, he is still right there with us.

SLIDE 5. I thirst (John 19:28) Zac

SLIDE/S John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."

Theme: Suffering and Human Need

Explanation

- Jesus knew what was going on; He was fully in control as He obeyed the Father's will. Jesus had completed all the work that his father had given him and every detail of his life perfectly fulfilled scripture.
- He had refused to drink the pain-deadening wine that was always offered to those about to be crucified. This sour wine was not the same as the drugged wine offered to Jesus earlier "wine mixed with myrrh," Jesus did not take the wine earlier because he wanted to be fully conscious through the entire process.
- This statement is to be seen through two different lenses.
- In saying "**I thirst**" Jesus was bound to be thirsty. It had been hours since He had had a drink of water.
- Jesus was enduring real physical suffering, He had a real human body. He had just emerged from three hours of darkness when He felt the wrath of God and separation from God. *Matthew 27:45 from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.*
- When you combine darkness, thirst, and isolation, you have a picture of hell. There were physical reasons for His thirst *Psalm 22:15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.* but there were also spiritual reasons *Psalm 42:1-2 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

- I believe that the stress of Jesus' words was not that He was physically thirsty. He was not complaining of thirst, not even asking for a drink.
- The emphasis was upon His fulfilling Scripture. At this point Jesus knew that the work of redemption is about to be finished and he gives a sign that it is now finished by fulfilling scripture.
- *Psalm 69:21 They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.* This statement was...
 - to show that Jesus was *truly* the **Promised Messiah**, the One who fulfilled Scripture.
 - to show that Jesus' mind was *set on fulfilling the Scriptures* of the promised Messiah.
 - to show that Jesus had come as the **Promised Messiah to do the will of God**, dying as the sacrifice for man. He refused to do God's will unthoughtfully, with deadened senses and a semi-conscious mind. He had work to do in sacrificing His life for man: He was to taste death for all men, and He would taste it in full consciousness, being as mentally alert as possible.
- One of the soldiers took pity on Jesus and moistened His lips The sponge soaked with sour wine was lifted to Jesus' lips "on a stalk of the hyssop plant." As they are lifting up this hyssop branch it also reminds me.
- When hyssop branches were used by the people of God in the OT not to lift up a sponge of wine but to sprinkle blood on the doors of their homes the night that they were delivered from captivity in *Exodus 12:22*.
- Jesus also told Peter, we talked about him last week. Jesus told him in the garden that he must drink the cup which his father had given him, drink down to every last bit of residue of suffering.

Application

- Thirsting, even more importantly, is also a spiritual matter. Throughout the Bible, we see the image of God as quenching our spiritual thirst.
- *John 4 and 7 "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,"* He told the Samaritan woman, *"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life".*

SLIDE 6. "It is finished." (John 19:30) (Jon)

SLIDE/S John 19:30 (ESV)

30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Theme: Victory and Salvation

Explanation

- After Jesus was given sour wine to drink, with a loud cry he spoke one of the most profound statements in the entire New Testament.
- Jesus responded, “It is finished.” This is a cry of victory, not defeat. This three word sentence in English is only one word in Greek. It is the word for accomplishment, completion and culmination.
- This special Greek word means that this action that happened in the past has long-lasting and continual present effects. Jesus’ death on the cross brings salvation from the moment he died to the present and until the moment he returns in the second coming.
- This phrase is better translated, “It has been finished” and means that Jesus was proclaiming his victory over sin, Satan, hell, death and the grave! Jesus’ mission to seek and save the lost was finally accomplished.
- When Jesus spoke this word, any human being who trusts in His sacrifice on the cross can now be saved out of sin and into eternal life with Him.
- Jesus made a way to God by dying the innocent death on that tree, and because of Him, salvation is granted to you and me.
- Since God created the world good, Satan has been trying to destroy it. Sin entered the world and took the human race captive. There has been a battle for your soul ever since.
- Salvation was made available to every human being but the only way to apply it is for each individual to accept and trust in Jesus’ sacrifice when he took our place on the cross.
- This was the culmination of God’s plan of salvation since the very beginning. He had been working through human history on the ultimate salvation of those who turn to him.
- Jesus placed the final piece, dying on the cross. The Law, sacrificial system and prophets of the Old Testament looked forward to and proclaimed this bold move by God to give up His unique Son for the salvation of the world.
- **Illustration:** The sacrificial system demanded a pure and spotless animal’s blood to make the sinner right with God. Jesus provided the perfect, innocent and sinless sacrifice by offering himself. The law showed us how far away from God we are while Jesus opened the door of grace so that God sees his righteousness instead of us.
- Satan thought he had won the war when he saw the Son of God die on the cross but it was the death knell to his power.

Application

- When Jesus proclaimed, “It is finished,” he completed God’s plan for you and I to be reconciled to him. We are now free from sin and overcomers with him.

- If you accept and trust in Jesus' sacrifice, the perfect sacrifice, you will be restored in your relationship with God and be able to walk with him. You will be granted eternal life so that when you die physically you will live forever with God in heaven.
- God has been working on your behalf since the beginning of time. He has done everything he can to ensure that you join him for eternity. But God is a gentleman. He will not force you to do something you do not want to. He has given you free will to make the choice.

SLIDE 7. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (Luke 23:46) (Zac)

SLIDE/S Luke 23:46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, says in his final statement on the cross, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

Theme: Peace

Explanation

- After this declaration of victory. He had finished the work the Father gave Him to do John 17:4. The work of redemption was completed, Jesus now says ***Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.***
- These last words of Jesus corresponded to the prayer that the Jewish mothers taught their children to say before going to sleep. This prayer is an expression of total trust in God. It comes from a psalm in which King David put his future into the hands of the Lord God with the certainty that God would act in his favour (Psalm 31:16).
- It tells us how our Lord Jesus died: confidently, willingly ***John 10:17-18 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.***"
- *Father, into your hands* – God hands are a place of peace and comfort.
- For 15 hours Jesus has been in the hands of wicked men. With their hands - they **beat** him. With their hands - they **slapped** him. With their hands - they **abused** him. With their hands - they **crowned** him with thorns. With their hands - they **ripped out his beard**. With their hands - they **smashed him black and blue**. With their hands - they **whipped his back** until it was torn to bits.
- But no more. All that is behind him now. Wicked hands have done all they can do. Jesus **now returns to his Father's hands.**
- *John 10:29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*
- The Jesus had a ***loud voice*** at all shows his tremendous will. But these were Jesus' very last words from the cross. In committing his spirit to the Father, Jesus died, fulfilling the

words of *Psalm 31:5* ***Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.***

- Jesus did not faint; he did not become unconscious only to be revived later—he *breathed his last*. Jesus died as a human being—voluntarily, sacrificially, in the place of sinners.
- He who freely gave Himself into the hands of His executioners was now committing Himself into the hands of His Father.

Application

- Just as Jesus lays down his life confidently, willingly and victoriously. Those who know Jesus as their Savior are to live and to die with the same confidence and assurance.
- Once you have been born - you are going to exist forever. You see we are spiritual beings and spiritual beings last for eternity. Where you spend eternity is up to you - but you're going to exist somewhere.
- Time = The space what God gives man to repent before they go into eternity.

Conclusion (Zac)

When our Lord released His spirit, the veil of the temple was torn in two *Mark 15:38* "***from the top to the bottom***". *Hebrews* tells us that this miracle announced to the priests and people that the way into God's presence was open for all who would come to Him by faith through Jesus Christ. No more do sinners need earthly temples, altars, sacrifices, or priests, for all had now been fulfilled in the finished work of the Son of God. This curtain up to this point signified that the separation between God and humanity and not that it had now been severed. Now there is freedom and we have Access into the Holy Place, the presence of God.

As we prepare to close....

Luke recorded three responses to the events of the last moments of Christ's death, and we still see these three responses even today:

1. First, the **centurion, the head Roman soldier** (this powerful and strong leader who had authority over 100 men) who was in charge of the execution testified, ***Surely this was a righteous man.***, meaning he was innocent of the crimes accused". He may have mocked and ridiculed Jesus earlier but he realized he was no ordinary man. He was probably still in awe and wonder by the darkness, the earthquake and certainly the way Jesus suffered and died. He must have been **shocked** when Jesus shouted and then instantly died, for victims of crucifixion often lingered for days and did not have the strength to speak.
2. The **people** who came to "*see the spectacle*" Luke says that ***began to drift away one by one, some of them beating their breasts as they felt their guilt.*** Were these people believers? Probably not. They were spectators who were attracted to the execution, but certainly they saw and heard enough to convict them of their own sins.

3. Finally, our **Jesus followers** were there, including the women who followed Jesus. It is significant that the women were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb on Easter morning.