

SEVEN SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS

LUKE 23:20-24 • TV065A

A television broadcast sermon delivered

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By

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“Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.”

The Holy Spirit of God took special care that each of the seven statements which our Lord made from Calvary’s cross be recorded and preserved for all time. There were seven statements or seven words from Calvary.

The first one after our Lord had been nailed to the cross, the first thing He said as He looked over the multitude of people before Him; lifted His eyes to heaven and said, *“Father; forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*

Later on, when one of the thieves crucified with Him cried, *“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom, the Lord Jesus said, today; shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”*

And then farther along He saw Mary, the woman who brought Him into the world, the means that God used to bring His Son to this earth; He saw her standing somewhere around the cross,

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looking on with a broken heart, weeping, and He said as He pointed to John (or referring to John with His eyes), "*Woman; behold thy Son.* And then he said to John, "*Son, behold thy mother.*"

And then the fourth and simple word of the seven was cried out in soul agony, "*My God, my God; why hast thou forsaken me?*" This was the central point of His suffering and of His sacrifice, "*My God; why hast thou forsaken me?*"

The fifth word from the cross, our Lord said: "*I thirst, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*"

Then the sixth saying from the cross; He cried with a loud voice, "*It is finished.*"

And then, before He closed His eyes in death, our Lord said: "*Father; into thy hands I commend my spirit.*"

Now, there's been a mountain of words spoken and written about these seven statements from Calvary. I don't hope to add anything to what's been written or what's been said. But I believe that I can give you some things that the Holy Spirit has revealed to me from these seven statements of our Lord, the seven words from Calvary. And I believe you'll see in them some very important truths.

Now, here's the only fear I have in speaking from this subject: "**THE SEVEN STATEMENTS OF CHRIST FROM CALVARY**" and that is that we might reduce these words to cold, calculated theology.

That concerns me and that disturbs me. I do not want to take these words of our blessed Lord when He was on the battlefield of Calvary engaged in battle with sin, death, judgment, and eternal wrath from a Holy God, and reduced them to words or to doctrine of theology.

"*Our Lord Jesus Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree.*" He was engaged in the great work of redemption. And all of these statements are heavy with meaning and heavy with compassion and love.

One hymn writer put it this way; he said:

**"The enormous load of human guilt
Was on my Saviour laid
With woes as with a garment
He for sinners was arrayed.**

**And in those awful pangs of death
He wept and prayed for me
Love then embraced my guilty soul
While He was nailed to that cursed tree.**

O love amazing

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Love beyond the reach of human tongue Love which shall be my theme Of everlasting song.”

This is the only fear I have as we look at these words. I don't want to present them in an argumentative way or in a way to be debated, in a way to be considered as presenting only doctrine and theology.

But I want us to see the glory of them, the beauty of them, and the truth of them. And I want us to get a blessing from them.

And there are so many things that we could bring out from these seven statements but I want to present three to you in the time that we have together.

First of all: I believe in these seven statements from the cross. We have the person and work of our Lord revealed.

Secondly: From these seven statements of our Lord spoken from Calvary's cross; we have the main doctrines of the Christian faith, those doctrines which form the foundation of Christianity, of what we believe.

Thirdly: We have in these seven statements the duties of every believer.

Now let's look at those:

First of all: In these seven statements we have the attributes or the person and work of our blessed Lord!

Listen to Him, the first statement: *“Father; forgive them for they know not what they do.”* Here is Christ the Mediator. Now my friends; there must be a mediator between God and the guilty. There must be a mediator between almighty God, the Holy, eternal God and sinful man.

All the way through the Scriptures you meet with the office of a mediator. And every time you meet with a mediator you meet with one who is typical of Christ. When God gave the law from Sinai and the mountain was surrounded with smoke, clouds, thunder, and lightning and the voice of God spoke; the people trembled. And they backed off away from that awful mountain. And they said, “Moses; you speak to God for us. Don't let God speak to us, lest we die.” And so Moses served as a mediator between the sinner and God almighty, between the perfect God and fallen man. He was a mediator.

And then we have the people in **Numbers chapter 16**. The people had sinned and God had brought judgment upon them, a plague, and the people were perishing. And Moses prayed to God for relief. He prayed to God for deliverance.

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And God told him to send Eleazar; the great high priest with the incense between God and the people. And he ran between the wrath of God and the guilty people and he waved the incense which is typical of the prayers of our Lord for His people.

And immediately the plague was stayed when the mediator came between God and the people. The Scripture says: *“There’s one God and one mediator between God and men.”* There must be a mediator between God and men.

And every time the high priest in the Old Testament went under the veil into the Holy of Holies and put the blood on the mercy seat; there’s the mediator, there’s the intercessor, there’s the one praying for God’s people, pleading for God’s people, presenting the sacrifice before God on behalf of the people.

And the high priest or the mediator must always be one of God’s choice. The Scripture says, *“No man taketh this honor unto himself.”*

One day our Lord Jesus Christ told Peter that he would deny Him. And Peter made all kinds of boasts and promises. He said, *“The rest of them may deny you but I’ll never.”* And Christ said, *“Before the cock crows three times you’ll deny me three times.”*

But He said, *“Peter, I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.”* Our Lord prays for His people. He’s the Mediator. He’s the Intercessor. Our Lord Jesus Christ on the right hand of God prays for His people. He is our one Mediator with God almighty.

And God will not speak to nor be spoken to by a sinner except through a mediator. You must have the mediator. And when our Lord Jesus Christ cried from the cross: *“Father; forgive them, they know not what they do;”* He was presenting His office as Mediator.

Second: And then when the thief, both thieves, the Scripture says, *“Railed on Him.”* One of them said, *“If you be the Christ save yourself and us.”* And finally the other one said, *“Don’t you fear God seeing that we’re in the same condemnation and we indeed justly, for we are getting exactly what we deserve? But this man had done nothing amiss.”* And then he said, *“Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”* That’s when Christ said to him, *“Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.”*

Do you know what office I see here? I see the king. I see the king, the sovereign Lord, opening the door which no man can open. I see the sovereign Lord opening the door which no man can close. I see the sovereign Lord who has all authority over all flesh that He should save, give eternal life, to as many as God hath given Him.

A dying thief pleads for mercy at the throne of the King and the King gives him mercy. Our Lord said: *“I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”*

“ I’ll to the gracious king approach

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**Whose scepter pardon gives
Perhaps he will hear my plea
And then the sinner live.”**

Jesus Christ is Lord and that thief recognized Him as Lord. Jesus Christ is King and that thief recognized Him as a King with a kingdom. He said, “Lord; you are not going to stay dead. You’re coming into a kingdom. When you come into your kingdom remember me.” And the king said, *“I will not only remember you but today you will be with me in Paradise.”*

Thirdly: Our Lord looked down from the cross and saw Mary and there He saw John and He said to Mary: *“Woman; behold your Son and son behold your mother”*

Do you know the office I see here? I see Christ the lover of His people. Even in the agonies of death, even under the severe penalty of sin, even enduring the wrath of the Heavenly Father, even bearing the hell of the cross, He shows His great love for His own.

“Having loved His own He loved them to the end.” Nothing, not even the cross, nothing, not even the agonies and suffering at Calvary, nothing, *“Not even death can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ our Lord.”*

He cares for you. The Scripture says, *“Cast your care on Him.”* He cares for you and He cared for this woman, and He cared for this disciple, and He cared for them even in the agonies of death.

**“Such love is too great
Too great for thought
Its length and its breath
In vain or sought;**

**No tongue can tell
Its depth and height
The love of Christ
Is everlasting and infinite**

**Oh love of God, how rich how pure
How measureless, how strong
It shall forever more endure
(Not only the cross, not only death,
Not only judgment for sin)
But the saint’s and angel’s song.”**

Here’s Christ who loved His people.

Fourthly: Our Lord cried with a loud voice: *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

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Do you know what I see here? I see Christ the substitute. I see Christ Jesus the substitute. Now you listen carefully to me. This is the central point of all the suffering of Calvary, of all the agony of Calvary; this is the zenith; this is the top, this is the central point: *“My God; why hast thou forsaken me?”*

When our Lord uttered this He had been forsaken by the Heavenly Father. Someone said, “Even the Father turned His back on Christ.” He suffered alone and He walked alone. Even the Father was not with Him.

Now, preach this I do, but explain it I cannot. Believe this I do; understand it, I do not. I understand how that God can clothe Himself in human flesh and come down here to this earth and as my representative *“born under the law (subject to the law as a man) tempted, tried, and tested in all points as I am, yet without sin”* He can meet the law and obey it, *“in every jot and tittle”* in my place and stead.

And impute to me and give to me and reckon to my account a perfect righteousness. I can fathom that to a degree. I can understand how He can do it. Why He can do it, *“According to the good pleasure of His own will it seemed good in His sight.”*

I can fathom to a certain degree Christ being made flesh and obeying by active obedience the law and giving us a perfect standing before the Father as far as holiness and righteousness are concerned.

But, for God the Son, to be separated from God the Father; that I cannot explain and that I cannot understand any more than I can explain to you how God can say, *“You’re sins I’ll remember no more.”* God never learns anything; He knows all things. He never forgets anything because He knows all things. And yet He says, *“Their sins will I remember no more.”*

And I do not understand how Jesus Christ in the flesh, the God-Man can be separated for the moment from His Father’s presence and as our scapegoat bear our guilt and our punishment, and yes, our hell; this is the essence of hell.

What is hell? A lot of people just talk about the fire in hell and that’s about all they say. But the essence of hell is soul agony and separation from God.

And on this cross our Lord made His soul an offering for sin. And when sin covered His soul, and when He was subjected to the punishment of our sins, and when He endured the wrath and judgment of God and when He bore the hell that we deserve for our sins on that cross, He said, *“My God; why hast thou forsaken me?”*

But I preach it, I believe it, I rest upon it, and I trust in it. Christ is our Substitute. He’s already paid the debt:

**“All the debt I owe
Sin left a crimson stain**

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He washed it white as snow.”

I owe nothing. Christ has borne my sins and paid my debt and satisfied the law of God and the justice of God. And there's no hell waiting for any believer because it's already exhausted itself in the person of Christ, upon the soul and body of our Lord. Christ died for our sins. And because He died we shall not die.

Fifthly: He said, *“I thirst.”*

This is a cry of a man. This is the cry of a man. How truly man was our Lord Jesus Christ, *“Bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.”*

God made the oceans. God made the rivers. God made the seas. God made the stream. God made the springs that come from the mountains. God made the clouds that give forth their rain. If He were thirsty He wouldn't ask us; no God wouldn't.

But He would if He was a man. And that's exactly what Christ was. And that's what this Scripture is saying right here; Christ cried from the cross; *“I thirst,”* because He was thirsty and because He was a man.

This is the cry of man. This is the need of a man. Our Lord Jesus Christ cried this because He was a man just like we are in human flesh, the God-Man.

Sixthly: He cried *“It is finished.”*

Here you have Christ the Redeemer. What were the first words, the first recorded words of Christ on this earth? He was born of Mary and lived with His family there in the carpenter shop of Joseph. And when He was about 12 years of age they went up to Jerusalem for a certain feast.

And Mary and Joseph left and started home and discovered that they'd left the boy. And they went back after Him and hunted him several days. Finally, they found Him in the temple talking to the doctors, scribes, lawyers, and Pharisees.

One of them said, “Son, why have you treated us this way? We've been looking for you everywhere. Don't you know you've grieved us?” Here were His first words recorded in this Scripture while He was here on this earth as a man in the flesh.

He said; *“Wist me not that I must be about my Father's business?”* Those were His first words, *“I must be about my Father's business.”* What was His Father's business? He said: *“I came to do the will of Him that sent me. And this is the will of Him that sent me that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him might have everlasting life.”* He came down here to give life and to give it more abundantly.

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The angel, when he announced the birth of Christ said, *“Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sin.”* He came to save His people. He said in **Luke 19:10:** *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.”* He came to save the lost!

Paul said, *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”* He came to save sinners.

So, when He cried from the cross, *“It is finished;”* He meant He finished what He came to do. He finished the salvation of sinners. He finished obedience to the ceremonial law. He finished complete submission to the Father’s will.

He finished all that He came to do. Our Lord Jesus Christ had completed His work. The ceremonial law was now completely fulfilled on behalf of every one of God’s people. The Holy law was completely satisfied.

The justice of God was completely fulfilled. The redemption of the church was totally complete and the price was totally paid. Jesus Christ our Lord said when He was hanging on that cross, *“It is finished.”* *“What I came to do is finished. The task that I came to perform is finished. The work that I came to do is done. The will of the Father is complete; it’s finished.”*

Seventh: Now watch the last statement; He said, *“Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.”* What do I see here? I see Christ the accepted one. On that cross in these seven statements you have Christ Jesus the Mediator. You have Christ Jesus the King. *“Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”*

You have Christ Jesus who loves His people, the lover of His people. You have Christ the human, *“I thirst.”* You have Christ Jesus the Redeemer, *“It is finished.”* You have Christ Jesus now, the accepted one.

Now listen to me, it is one thing to slay a sacrifice. The priest of the Old Testament would take the lamb and they would slay that lamb. And they would put the bullock and the lamb’s body on the altar and roast it and burn it.

And then they would take the blood in a basin and go into the Holy Place and go about their ceremonies and then under the veil, into the Holy of Holies, into the very presence of God, to put that blood on the mercy seat covering the broken law.

Now that’s all well and good but it has to be done. That’s the substitute bearing the sins of the people. That’s a picture of Christ. But now here; this is important too; most anyone could do that, most anyone could slay a lamb, burn its body, take the blood in a basin, go into the Holy place, and then under the veil, into the Holy of Holies.

But here’s the key, the one who carried the right sacrifice, the sufficient sacrifice, the accepted sacrifice, would come out. The other wouldn’t come out. They’d drag him out by his heels.

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And so, Israel would stand outside the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement and the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies with the proper sacrifice, with the proper blood, and they would wait for him to come out.

And when he came out there would be a cheer go up from the people because the sacrifice had been accepted. Well let me tell you this; when our Lord Jesus Christ said, "*It is finished;*" His blood was shed, His body was broken, the sacrifice was complete, when He said; "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;*" He declared that He is the accepted one.

Jesus Christ died for our sins; yea rather, He rose again. And if He didn't rise again, Paul said, "*You are yet in your sins. He is even at the right hand of God and He intercedes for us.*" There is the person and work of Christ in every one of those sayings.

Now watch the second thing and I'll move quickly along. In these seven statements from the cross you have the main doctrines of our faith.

First of all: You have the forgiveness of sin!

"*Father forgive them.*" God will forgive sin. Here is forgiveness, free, full, and total, not based on the merits of men. These people didn't deserve to be forgiven; they were at that moment crucifying the Lord.

But here you have a free declaration of a full pardon for those who crucified the Son of God on the merits of our interceding Lord.

Secondly: Our Lord said, "*Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.*"

Here you have heaven and eternal life is to be with Christ. "*Today thou shalt be with me.*" Our Lord said, "*If I go and prepare a place for you I'll come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also.*"

Paul the apostle said, "*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. And I have a desire to part and be with Christ.*" That's what eternal life is. That's what heaven is. That's what glory is; it's to be with Christ.

David said that, "*I'll be satisfied when I awake with His likeness.*" Eternal life is to be with Christ and to be like Christ.

And then you have heaven, which immediately follows death for the believer. Christ said to the thief: "*Today shalt thou be with me.*" This is the day of your death. This is the day of your coronation. This is the day you leave earth. This is the day you'll enter heaven.

Thirdly: We have our Lord, "*Woman; behold thy Son.*"

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Notice He didn't call her, "mother." He called her, "*Woman.*" We're not to worship Mary as the mother of God. God has no mother. Our Lord has no beginning or ending of days. He said, "*Woman; behold thy Son.*"

But you have the care of Christ for His people. He cares for His people. He protects His people. He provides for His people. He will not leave them alone.

And then you have the great substitute, the penalty paid, "*My God; why hast thou forsaken me?*" God won't clear the guilty. God must punish sin. "*The soul that sinneth; it shall surely die.*"

Well, Christ was punished. That's why we have hope of eternal life because our debt's paid. That's why we have hope of eternal victory because Christ Jesus won the victory.

And then you have: "*I thirst that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*" The Scripture will be fulfilled. The Word of God is infallible. It cannot be broken. "*Heaven and earth shall pass away but not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the Word of God until it is all fulfilled,*" the infallibility of Scripture.

And then you have complete justification. Our Lord said, "*It is finished,*" it is complete. Nothing needs to be added to salvation. You receive it by faith. You receive it as a gift. You don't add anything to it because it is finished.

If someone brought you a gift and said, "Now this is all finished," would you try to add something to it? It's all finished. It doesn't need you to add anything to it. Christ finished our redemption. The redemptive work of the church is complete in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ and is given to us as a gift.

Last of all: "*We are seated with Him.*" He said: "*Father; into thy hands I commend my Spirit.*" And my friend; every one of us when Christ ascended we ascended with Him and we are seated with Him on the right hand of God.

Now then; here are the duties of every believer: To forgive others of their sins and to repent and confess our sins as the thief on the cross and to care for others as our Lord cares for us.

And not to be able to bear separation from God and to turn to the Scriptures for all things and to finish our course and to keep the faith and to resign in total commitment to our Lord, our souls, and all that we have.

"Into thy hands I commend thy Spirit!"