

Last Words

There's something about a person's last words that inspire our curiosity or seem especially important

While Jesus hung on the cross in His last hours He made several short statements that are commonly known by many preachers as Jesus', "Seven Last Words"

From the cross, Jesus voiced *three prayers, a promise, a piece of family business, a complaint, and a declaration*

- Jesus is not only the Son of God but also the greatest teacher of all time
- He continued teaching to His last breath
- These Last Words still have a great deal to say to you and I

A Word of Forgiveness

Luke 23:34 (NLT)

³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."* And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.*

- Remember you and I put Jesus on the cross as surely as anyone in His own day
- That means He was interceding with the father on our behalf
- He makes this statement almost immediately after being lifted up on the cross

A Word of Salvation

Luke 23:43 (NLT)

⁴³ And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

- That day there were three crosses on Calvary’s hill

Luke 23:32–33 (NLT)

³² Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. ³³ When they came to a place called The Skull,* they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

- Jesus hangs on a cross in the middle of two criminals
- He had taken the place of a revolutionary who committed murder named Barabbas
- It was the Governor’s custom to release one prisoner during Passover
- Pilate suggested releasing the “King of the Jews” Jesus
- The crowd insisted that Jesus be crucified and Barabbas released instead

Mark 15:13–15 (NLT)

¹³ They shouted back, “Crucify him!” ¹⁴ “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?” But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!” ¹⁵ So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

Isaiah 53:12 (NKJV)

¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- Three Crosses = 2 Choices
 - The Cross of Redemption
 - The Cross of Rebellion
 - The Cross of Repentance
- On one cross hangs a criminal that is hostile towards God
- On the other cross a criminal that turns to Jesus for mercy
- The difference in the outcomes between the two choices is extreme

Jesus faced a lot of mocking and jeering while on the cross

Luke 23:35, 37 (NKJV)

³⁵ And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.”

³⁷ and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”

- Even the criminals hurled insults – “*Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!*”
- These mockers didn’t know it but they presented Jesus with an impossible alternative
 - Saving Himself was the only thing Jesus couldn’t do
 - And he couldn’t save us if He saved Himself from the cross

After a while the second criminal has a change of heart

Luke 23:40–41 (NLT)

⁴⁰ But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? ⁴¹ We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.”

- Why did he say this?
- Perhaps he heard the rumors flying around the city that Jesus was the Messiah
- Maybe he had even heard Him preach
- Maybe something he saw in the way Jesus faced death
- No matter the reason, he started to believe Jesus was who He said He was
- He turns his face toward the center cross in what should have seemed the most hopeless time of his life

Luke 23:42, 43 (NLT)

⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

⁴³ And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

- Paradise: a term that meant, “*delight*” and was used to refer to the Garden of Eden
- The repentant thief, after a sinful life and a horrible death, was going to a place of delight, where all things are made right
- His earthly journey with Jesus would be over almost as soon as it began

What about you?

- Would you say you have received God's salvation?
 - If so, when?
- What have you been saved from
- What have you been saved for?
- How has your salvation changed you?
- How is God still in the process of changing you today?
- What does your salvation mean to you in terms of the choices you make in your daily living?
- How do you testify of your salvation to others?
- How does your salvation give you hope for the future?

Jesus not only remembered the thief but was going to act on his behalf – He'll do the same for you!

- If you have turned to Jesus for forgiveness your life has changed forever
- You have left the kingdom of this world and entered the kingdom of God – **Colossians 1:13**
- You belong to Jesus now
- You belong with Jesus
- He is going to take you where He is – into the presence of God

Jesus keeps His promises

John 14:2–3 (NLT)

² There is more than enough room in my Father's home.* If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?* ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.

In many ways, Joseph is a type of Jesus

- He honored God, yet was a victim of injustice
- He was thrown in prison for a crime he didn't commit
- He was in prison with two others
 - A baker and a cupbearer
 - They both had dreams

Genesis 40:7–10 (NLT)

⁷ “Why do you look so worried today?” he asked them. ⁸ And they replied, “We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean.” “Interpreting dreams is God’s business,” Joseph replied. “Go ahead and tell me your dreams.” ⁹ So the chief cup-bearer told Joseph his dream first. “In my dream,” he said, “I saw a grapevine in front of me. ¹⁰ The vine had three branches that began to bud and blossom, and soon it produced clusters of ripe grapes.

- Joseph interprets their dreams
- For both men, the outcome was exactly like the interpretation
- In three days, the cupbearer would have his freedom
- In three days, the baker would have his head cut off
 - Remind you of a couple of thieves?
 - Three days? – Sound familiar?
- Joseph makes a request of the cupbearer

Genesis 40:14 (NLT)

¹⁴ And please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place.

Jesus remembered the repentant thief and brought him to paradise, but the cupbearer forgot Joseph

- Joseph probably expected him to remember him
- Got himself ready, collected a few things
- Said goodbye to a few other inmates
- Maybe he would even be released that day?
- Or the next?

As time passed it became ever clearer the cupbearer had forgotten Joseph

- Ever felt that way?
 - Forgotten
 - Doomed to face your desperate situation
 - We had hope once but now it's fading
- Joseph's story wasn't over and neither is yours!

The day finally came when Pharaoh had a dream and needed it interpreted

Genesis 41:9–10 (NLT)

⁹ Finally, the king's chief cup-bearer spoke up. "Today I have been reminded of my failure," he told Pharaoh. ¹⁰ "Some time ago, you were angry with the chief baker and me, and you imprisoned us in the palace of the captain of the guard.

- The cupbearer might have forgotten but God never did
- God saw that Joseph got the rescue he needed even if it wasn't on his schedule
- Jesus says, "I won't forget you, I won't leave you in prison."
- Whatever your situation, you are not to be forgotten by God

People like to say, “*I got saved when I was eight, or twenty, or fifty.*”

- What they really mean is they started a relationship with God at that time
 - Salvation is not a one-time experience
 - It’s a process

Ephesians 2:8 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

- Yes, we were saved in a moment, when our sins “*were*” forgiven – Past tense

2 Corinthians 4:16 (NLT)

¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are* being renewed every day.

- But now we “*are*” being renewed (saved) – Present tense

Not only that, but we can look forward to when we “*will*” be saved – Future tense

1 Peter 1:5 (NLT)

⁵ And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

- Salvation is past, present, and future
- It’s a process!
- The marriage isn’t over after the honeymoon
- You aren’t done raising a child when he or she is born
- Your relationship with God doesn’t end the moment you make Him your Savior

So, we don't need Jesus to remember us only once

- We need Him to remember us over and over again

We need Him to remember us when...

- We're being tempted
- Life's been hard and we're discouraged
- We're fearful
- We're confused and don't know what to do
- Others break our hearts
- We have to make decisions
- We need Him to remember us when death draws near

Parable of the Persistent Widow

Luke 18:1–8 (NLT)

One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. ² “There was a judge in a certain city,” he said, “who neither feared God nor cared about people. ³ A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, ‘Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.’ ⁴ The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, ‘I don’t fear God or care about people, ⁵ but this woman is driving me crazy. I’m going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!’ ” ⁶ Then the Lord said, “Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. ⁷ Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man* returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?”

Jesus wasn't condemning the widow who refused to be put off

He was commending her for her persistence

- We ought to always pray and never give up!
- It isn't selfish or a lack of faith to keep asking
- In fact, Jesus said this is what faith looks like

Do you need a breakthrough in an area of your life right now?

- Keep saying, Remember me!
- It's not that God is unaware or indifferent
- He just may have a different timing or solution in mind
- He invites us to keep coming persistently
- We will get our answer
- We will see what He's up to
- Persistence shows that you're trusting Him
- It's a positive part of your developing relationship with God
- It's part of the process

Luke 22:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me."

- Passover: Deliverance from Egypt – a picture of the suffering and deliverance Messiah would bring
 - Jesus said, "Remember Me."
 - The thief said to Jesus, "Remember me."
 - We can say every day, "Remember me."
- Then start living like it

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NLT)

²² The faithful love of the LORD never ends!* His mercies never cease. ²³ Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

- People you meet in life may not always remember you
 - God will always remember you!
- He will never fail you
- His mercies are new every morning
 - Another chance
 - A renewed hope
 - A new twenty-four hours

Remind yourself daily, that God’s compassions will not fail

- Need some deliverance today?
- Need a reminder that God has forgiven and saved you?
- You’ve got a new twenty-four
- God in heaven remembers you

John 6:3, 39 (NLT)

³⁷ However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them.

³⁹ And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.

Luke 22:20 (NLT)

²⁰ After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new “*covenant*” between God and his people—“*an agreement confirmed*” with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.*