

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 23:42, 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.”

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

- Keep saying, Remember me!
- Jesus keeps His promises

A Word of Relationship

John 19:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.

Galatians 4:4–7 (NKJV)

⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

- He is smiling over you
- He loves you and wants to be in relationship with you as your loving Father

A Word of Abandonment

Matthew 27:46 (NLT)

⁴⁶ At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli,* lema sabachthani?*" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

- Jesus has to face abandonment from the Father
- He has just started to form a new family
- He faces abandonment so we will never have to

Jesus hung on the cross approximately 6 hours

- From nine to three
- Seems He spoke the first three words early in the ordeal
- The remaining four words came near the end
 - one after another
- At about three in the afternoon Jesus is speaking the opening line in **Psalm 22**
- This Psalm describes the suffering of Messiah in detail
 - Hands and feet being pierced
 - Bones being pulled out of joint
 - Clothes being gambled for
 - Mockery and thirst
- It ends on a note of confidence but begins with an honest cry of divine abandonment

It makes sense that Judas would betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver or even that Peter would deny Him three times, or the others run away – But His Father?

- The wrath of God temporarily laid upon Him
- Jesus accepted this for our sakes

Romans 5:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

- Anyone hung on a tree or pole for capital punishment would be under God's curse – **Deuteronomy 21:23**
- Jesus endured our death sentence and redeemed us from the curse

Galatians 3:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*"),

- It was a willing sacrifice

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus submitted to a baptism of repentance

John 1:29, 36 (NKJV)

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

- Jesus had never sinned
- He did this to identify with us

Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- It's no coincidence that His death occurred around three p.m. on the same day the Passover lamb was slaughtered in the temple

1 Peter 1:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

- At the baptism, God was pleased with His son
- At the cross the Father turns His back on Him
- Jesus gave Himself up for the will of the Father
- He had to take our sin upon Himself

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- The greatest pain Jesus endured had nothing to do with whips, thorns, nails and asphyxiation
- It was separation from His Father
- Something He had never known
- Because He was willing we will never have to endure that separation

Sometimes we feel separated from God even though Jesus took this separation for us

- Have you ever felt as if God was hiding His presence from you?
- Have you ever felt as if God withdrew His presence from you?
- Have you ever gone through depression?
- Did it raise questions about your faith and relationship to God?

“Darkness is such that I really do not see—neither with my mind nor with my reason—the place of God in my soul is blank.— There is no God in me—when the pain of longing is so great—I just long & long for God—and then it is that I feel—He does not want me—He is not there....The torture and pain I can’t explain.” – Mother Teresa, Come by my light

This feeling of separation described had a benefit to her lifelong work

- It helped her better understand the people whom she was serving
- She also began to identify her painful sense of abandonment with the suffering of Jesus
- It helped her to accept darkness and keep going in faithfulness to God, despite it

If Jesus and Mother Teresa went through it, why not you and I?

- Don’t let it drive you to despair
- Believe God is with you, and in faith act accordingly

It is possible you are experiencing separation from God because of sin you refuse to repent of

- If that's the case repent and keep moving forward

1 Peter 4:1 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

- Difficult times should turn us to want more of God
- When we do He will show us things that are hindering our relationship with Him
- When He does, repent

Suffering can be a sign that you are reaching spiritual maturity

- God is now allowing you to experience some harder stuff

Philippians 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

- A “dark night” of the soul usually doesn't come to new believers
- Maybe, in a strange way take it as a vote of confidence from God
- He's letting you go through it, because He knows you can handle it

Make use of the Word of God, His Spirit and the people around you to mature and experience more of the power of God

- Pain is more bearable when it has a purpose

Maybe you don't feel distant from God

- Maybe you never will
 - I hope not
- Chances are at some time you will

When you keep trusting and remain obedient even while God seems out of sight, you'll come out on the other side of the darkness stronger than ever

- Maybe He wants you to focus on "knowing" Him better rather than "doing" things for Him
- Maybe He's using it to help you understand and serve others better

Remember: If you think God has withdrawn, He hasn't

- There will come a time He will reveal himself to you again
- He will make you fruitful in your frustration
- He is going to bless you if you submit to the mystery of His will in this season of life

John 14:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

- Remember we've been adopted
- God never gives up on us
- Whatever it is you are suffering through He will use it for His glory

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,

A look at the life of Job

- He is a very wealthy man with business interests in farming and livestock
- He is the father of seven sons and three daughters
- He was a respected husband, father, businessman and a believer
- One day things went terribly wrong
- His livestock is stolen by raiders
- They kill all of his servants
- Fire destroys another part of his business
- A great wind collapsed the building where his children were celebrating and killed them
- His body broke out in sores from the top of his head to his toes
- Things went from, *“It couldn’t get any better.”* to *“It couldn’t get any worse.”*

After his wife bails on him and his friends who tell him he has brought all of this on himself, what’s Job’s response?

Job 23:10–12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ But He knows the way that I take; *When* He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. ¹¹ My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. ¹² I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary *food*.

After thirty-seven chapters, worth of reckless words between Job and his friends, the Lord speaks to Job

Job's response

Job 42:2–6 (NKJV)

² “I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. ³ You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’

⁵ “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. ⁶ Therefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.”

- This man's good works and integrity led him to prosperity and made him a great man
- But suffering led him to hear God as never before
 - He had only heard of God
 - Now He knew Him face to face
- Suffering brings us into a deeper relationship with our Father
 - If we let it

When we get to the lowest point in life we have nothing else we can do but throw ourselves on the mercy and grace of God

- We may not understand why he has allowed it or what He is doing yet we trust Him

James 1:2–3 (NKJV)

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,
³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

- There are things gained through suffering that can be gained no other way?
- Are you suffering now?
- Allow it to become a strength in your life
- God's desire is to let your test produce patience and make you complete – James 1:4

Job 42:10, 12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

¹² Now the LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

- Job turns suffering into a deeper relationship with God
- As he prays for his friends God double everything in his life

Remember Joseph?

Genesis 39:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* confined. And he was there in the prison. ²¹ But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Believe in the Bubble

- You text something
- While you're waiting for the reply a balloon pops up
- Like from a cartoon
- Inside are three dots scrolling
- That "the bubble"

It tells you that the person texting you is writing something back to you

- You just need to wait till they're done and you'll see the response

Have you ever had the bubble appear and reappear for what's like five minutes?

- You're thinking...
- Oh, they're typing something deep
- Maybe typing me a poem
- Maybe they're finally telling me how they feel about me
- You can't wait to find out what they say

An important thing to remember, they can see the bubbles too

Sometimes it feels like we sent God a message and we're waiting and waiting

- Did He forget about me?
- Is He too busy?
- Is the signal weak in heaven?

We've got to learn to trust God...even when all we see is bubbles