

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.*

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."

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*.

- Jesus starts a new family
- We have been adopted – **Romans 8:14-16**

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 so we never have to

A Word of Distress

John 19:28 (NLT)

The Death of Jesus

²⁸ Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.”*

- God will bypass what you think you need to give you what you really need
- Don’t take the first drink

John 19:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!”

- This is the epitome of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat
- His enemies milling around the cross, licking their chops
- The devil must have looked on with glee

Psalms 22:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled Me. ¹³ They gape at Me *with* their mouths, *Like* a raging and roaring lion.

- Likened to David going up against Goliath
- Mano-a-mano – toe to toe
- Jesus scored big for His side
- All the hardships we must endure
- All the setbacks we experience
- All our own failures
- They’re all redeemed in the Great Reversal of Jesus’ victory

Jesus went straight from a pitiful word of distress – “I am thirsty” – to a heroic last word of triumph

- “It is finished”
 - Seems so vague

Yet reveals how Jesus sabotaged the plans of the devil as well as His human enemies

- Simply the most incredible turnaround of all time

John 17:4 (NKJV)

⁴ I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

- This, of course had been Jesus' plan all along
- Now His claim was fully and absolutely true
- “it is finished” – Tetelestai – done, over

What exactly was it that was finished?

- Jesus's whole life's work was finished.

From his birth as a baby in a stable, to hiding out in a foreign land during his toddler years, to the obedience of growing up as a human son, to the humbling of his baptism and the hardship of his temptation, to the preaching to the crowds, to the press of people wanting his miracles, to nights spent in prayer, to his disappointments in the men he was trying to make his representatives, to the opposition from religious leaders, to the spiritual agony in Gethsemane, to his arrest and the whole bloody mess that followed—it was all done, all over with, all complete now.

- The Passover Lamb had been slain, and its sweet savor was rising to heaven. He had completed the sacrifice necessary to atone for the sins of the world.

- Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's earthly coming were finished. That's what Jesus disclosed to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. As hard as it could be for people to get their minds around it, Jesus had fulfilled the predictions perfectly.

- The Old Testament Law was finished in the sense that its inner meaning was fulfilled in the grace that Jesus established for us at the cross.
- The priesthood and its sacrifices, along with the whole system of symbolism represented in temple-based worship, was finished. This too was fulfilled in Jesus's dual role as High Priest and Sacrifice at the cross.
- The mastery of the devil was finished. As the first prophecy in the Bible says, Eve's offspring (Jesus), having been bruised in the heel by the serpent (his murder on the cross inspired by the devil), had crushed the serpent's head (robbed the devil's power).
- Your hopelessness and mine about our ability to triumph over our own shortcomings and the stresses of a temporary earthly life were finished too. We share in the victory through faith.

Where are you longing for victory today?

- What is causing you to lose or fail in those areas?
- What might a win look like?
- Are you ready to trust God? – His way and timing?
- What sustains your faith in God's willingness and ability to give you victory?
- How does the promise of the resurrection inspire you?

1 Corinthians 15:57 (NKJV)

⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus was once a suffering servant but now He is the risen King of kings and Lord of lords

- This sixth word is a shout of victory
- He won and all who are with Him win too

I can't promise you'll have the exact kind of victory you desire, *"though it may be more possible than you think"*

One thing for sure, one way or another all your defeats will be overwhelmed in Christ's victory

2 Corinthians 4:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

The Gospel message is one of resurrection not restriction

- It's not do this and you'll be saved
- We aren't saved because of what we do
- We are saved because of what He's done
- We're totally forgiven and empowered to experience everyday victory over sin and enjoy prosperity
 - God has great plans for you!

Jesus has already put the finishing touches on your salvation

- He has delivered the deathblow
- "It is finished"

If we were to live a thousand lifetimes we couldn't pay for our sin

What freedom would you live in if you understood that today?

- Christianity isn't about a bad person becoming good
- It's about a dead person being made alive

Ephesians 2:1–9 (NKJV)

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

How would your relationship with God and your life change if you truly realized there was no longer enmity between you and Him? – Ephesians 2:16

They say that unless you are a trained life guard you shouldn't try to save a person who is drowning until they've settled down or worn themselves out

- If you try to save someone who's fighting to be saved you may both drown
- This is the position many of us put God

Psalm 46:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ “Cease *striving* and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

- The salvation of God begins when our human striving ends
- You don't have to put the finishing touches on salvation
- It's already secured for you

When we realize the work of Christ is finished and that we have been made alive in Him it breaks the power of sin and we live in victory

- Jesus wore a crown of thorns so that we could wear a crown of victory

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NLT)

²⁴ Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! ²⁵ All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. ²⁶ So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. ²⁷ I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

Am I living my life as if I'm engaged in a fight worth fighting

- Do I run as if I'll win?
- Do I give up as so many others have?
 - If we hold on we receive a prize

2 Timothy 4:6–8 (NLT)

⁶ As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.

⁸ And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

- Paul had plenty of reasons to quit
- He would have been beheaded shortly after writing these words
- We all know what it's like to want to give up
- The circumstances have turned against us
- It looks like there's nothing we can do
- If we quit we'll miss what the Lord has for us
 - In this life and the life to come

2 Timothy 2:11–12 (NLT)

¹¹ This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him. ¹² If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.

- Temporary or apparent defeat may have twisted a crown of thorns on your head
- But by the grace of God, and the power of faith it will become a beautiful crown of victory

Are you living life with audacious faith that enables you to ask God for the impossible?

- God works miracles and gives His people victories that are impossible by human standards
 - An old man with a staff named Moses lead an entire slave nation into freedom
 - A farmer named Gideon defeated the Midianite army with an army that God said was too big – 32,000 to 300
 - A woman named Esther saved her people from inhalation by a wicked Political Adviser to the Persian king named Haman
 - A teenage boy named David defeated a giant in battle
 - A fisherman named Peter became the “rock” on which Jesus would start to build His church

Are you looking up at a wall that seems too high to scale?

- Don't give in to defeat
- Ask God to help you get over it
 - Better yet, ask Him to knock it down

Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

- The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you!
- Don't allow the enemy to hold you back based on your ability
- God's ability is way beyond what you can imagine
- Don't quit when it looks like a dead end

What if the victory doesn't come the way you hoped it would?

- What if you don't receive your healing miraculously?
- What if your business fails?
- What if you don't marry the one you thought you would?

The God who felt the pain of letting His own son die on the cross, understands your suffering better than anyone

- Even if victories don't come in this life, we are still victors!

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

- This doesn't mean bad things don't happen
- It means God converts those bad things into good uses
- Sin, opposition, scarcity, failure, even death all play into God's Grand Plan of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Reconciliation:

- the act of causing two people or groups to become friendly again after an argument or disagreement
- the process of finding a way to make two different ideas, facts, etc., exist or be true at the same time

1 John 5:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

- Faith doesn't deny what we see
- Faith is the choice to not live by what we see
- We realize that there is a parallel truth that is greater than what we see now
- It's all based on our belief in the "finished" work of Jesus Christ
- Our victory comes through walking through life with Jesus
- Becoming like Him and seeking to know Him better

The Last Enemy

There is one kind of defeat we must all face eventually

- Most of us don't like to talk about it
- Death

The good news

Jesus has already faced this enemy and triumphed over it as well

- Yes, our bodies do fail but it's not final
- We face only a physical death not a spiritual one
- After death, our spirits keep going without a moment's notice

1 Corinthians 15:54–55 (NKJV)

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: *“Death is swallowed up in victory.”*

⁵⁵ *“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”*

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

- If you're misunderstood, stand firm
- If you're tempted, stand firm
- If you're hurting, stand firm
- If you're in trouble, stand firm
- Keep your faith!

Be consistent in doing what you know you ought to do

- Hold on to your hope
- Look ahead expectantly
- Live lightheartedly
- Your victory is forever

Revelation 21:6 (NKJV)

⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

- It is finished