

## Christ's Seven Words on the Cross

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church

Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.

April 10, 2022

Text Psalm 22, Isaiah 53:1-12

Purpose: The last words of Christ on the cross are also found in Psalm 22.  
We need to experience the words of the cross, mark our bibles for future reference, and know that the way of the cross leads home.

It was Palm Sunday but because of a sore throat, 5-year-old Johnny had to stay home from church with a sitter.

When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm fronds. Johnny asked them what they were for.

"People held them over Jesus' head as he walked by," his father told him.

"Wouldn't you know it," Johnny fumed, "the one Sunday I don't go and He shows up." <sup>1</sup>

Today we are celebrating what is called Palm Sunday. Many churches across America are waving palm branches, singing songs like, "*All Glory, Laud, and Honor*", "*The King of Glory Comes*", or "*Lift Up Your Heads.*"



We want to experience personal involvement in the praise of Christ. Palm Sunday is a difficult sermon to preach. On one hand you have the celebration of Christ's entry into Jerusalem – but on Friday we have a crucifixion.

This morning each person was handed a palm branch. Over the past few years, we have laid our palms leaves at the front of the church. This year, I would like for you to take them home with you, along with your Individual Prayer Guide, to reflect on this special week – Holy Week. It is great when we can praise the Lord. Everyone wants to be involved with something related to praise and celebration. But when the tough times come – when Good Friday comes – it seems as if everyone scatters.

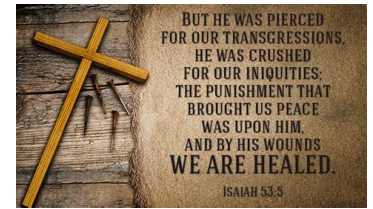
Our scripture reading this morning was taken from Isaiah 53. I wanted us to hear the word of the Prophet Isaiah. This book of Isaiah was written almost 400 years before the birth of Jesus. In the 1947, in a small cave outside Jerusalem, in a community known as Qumran, near the Dead Sea, a shepherd boy found some old jars stored. In those jars were manuscripts written before the birth of Jesus. One of the jars contained a manuscript of the book of Isaiah. When I was in Israel I went to the “Shrine of the Book” which housed the copy of the scroll. I walked around the room examining that text and was amazed to see this written over 2400 years ago.



Prior to finding the Dead Sea Scrolls, several scholars insisted that Isaiah 53 was written after the crucifixion of Jesus. The accuracy of Jesus' crucifixion, the details of what happened that day, the preciseness of the events

baffled those skeptic scholars. God knew what he was doing when He instructed Isaiah to write those words.

*“Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But He was wounded for our  
transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed. (4-5).*

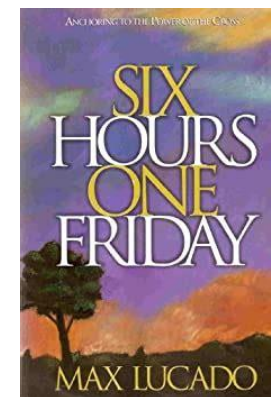


*He was oppressed, and yet did not open His mouth. (7)  
They made His grave with the wicked, but with the rich in his death. (9)*

I want us to all understand that Jesus was the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8) Before God created the world, before He molded man in the dust, before He hung the first star in the sky, before He separated the light from the darkness, it was in the council of God that He would have to send His only Son to die to redeem His creation. God loves each one of us with an everlasting love – that is why He sent His Son to die on the cross.



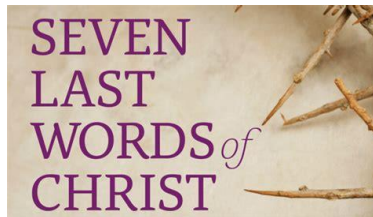
Today, I want us to look at the last seven words, or phrases, that Christ said while nailed to the cross.



Max Lucado, in the book, “*Six Hours one Friday,*” graphically describes every thought uttered, and summarizes every pain that Jesus endured. If you have seen the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, then you know exactly what grief and torture Christ went through.

If you have your Bible, I want you to pull it out and open it to Psalm 22. During the time we have remaining this morning; I want us to look at the cross, through the lens of this Old Testament passage, and into the New Testament. If you have a pencil or pen, it is alright to write your thoughts and comments in the margins.

D. L. Moody once said that you needed to take your Bible and write in the margins, underline certain words, and jot your observations while you read a passage. He went so far as saying, “If you aren’t willing to make notes in your Bible, then you might as well not have bought it.” He was passionate about making notes as he studied. That is good advice for us today.



The morning of Jesus’ crucifixion, it was about nine o’clock – the third hour of the day. That was when Pilate ordered that Jesus be taken out and crucified. They had mocked Him, they had platted a crown of thorns, they had whipped Him, they had spat upon Him, and they humiliated Him by stripping Him of his clothes. Now as a symbol of cruelty and power, they nailed Jesus to the tree.

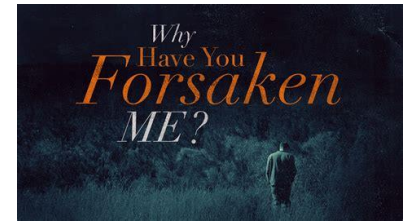
On the left and right of Jesus were two criminals. They had been tried, convicted and now the sentence of judgment was being given out. At the foot of the cross stood his mother

Mary, Mary Magdalene, and nearby stood John the beloved disciple. The Roman guards stood guard to make sure no one took these criminals down from their cross. Justice was to be administered, and death was the only accepted option.

These seven phrases or words that Jesus uttered while on the cross are found in the gospels. When you compare Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you find all seven of these phrases can be attributed to Psalm 22. The very first phrase Jesus began to quote was the first line in Psalm 22.

## I. Psalm 22:1-5 – “*My God, My God.*” – A Word to God

**Jesus said, “Eloi, lama sabachthani?” Which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46, Mark 15:34)**



### Psalm 22:1-5

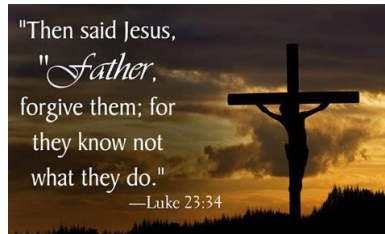
*<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. <sup>3</sup> But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup> Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. <sup>5</sup> They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*

Ever since eternity began, there was no separation between God and Christ. They were one in purpose, one in thought, and yet separate in their personages. Sin is awful. It creates separation between God and us. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, God turned His head and could not watch. God could not look upon sin. While Christ was on the cross, God turned away.

Many times, I have had the opportunity to go see the Easter drama performed at Tanglewood Church in Kinston called “*The Victor*.” This drama passionately demonstrated the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. In the crucifixion scene, I always turned my head when they crucified Christ. I could not watch as they nail the nails in his hands. I could not watch as they pierce his side.

While Jesus was on the cross, God turned His head and forsook Christ.

## II. Psalm 22:6-8 – “*Father Forgive them.*” – A Word to All



In the midst of unspeakable cruelty, Jesus forgave them. In the midst of unspeakable hatred, He forgave them. In the midst of humanity’s worst, Jesus gave His best – FORGIVENESS.

The one message I want you to get this morning is that Christ is also willing to forgive you. No matter what you have done or said, Christ is willing to forgive you!

**“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34)**

<sup>6</sup> *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.* <sup>7</sup> *All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,* <sup>8</sup> *He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

## III. Psalm 22:9-13 – “*Woman Behold Thy Son*” – A Word to His Mother



In that culture, the oldest son was responsible for the care of His mother. During that time, the oldest son receives a double portion of the inheritance for that sole reason – to care for his parents. In other passages, Jesus said he had no place to lay his head. He only had the clothes on his back. He had no 401K plan, no retirement fund, no stock portfolio, and no lands of his own. The only thing he had to take care of was the care of his mother. Standing nearby was his friend, and disciple, John. That moment on the cross, Jesus gave His mother to John to care for her.

I have often wondered where James, the brother of Jesus was. But for some reason, John was the chosen guardian.

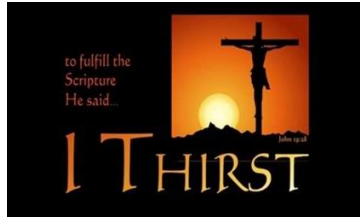
## “*Woman, Behold your son!*” To the disciple Jesus said, “*Behold your mother.*” (John 19:26-27)

<sup>9</sup> *But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.* <sup>10</sup> *I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.* <sup>11</sup> *Be not far from me; for trouble is*



near; for there is none to help. <sup>12</sup> Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. <sup>13</sup> They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

#### **IV. Psalm 22:15-18 – “I Thirst” – A Word of Physical Suffering**



There at the cross, was a person designated to give the condemned a sip of vinegar mixed with gall to ease their pain, and help quench their thirst. The beating that Jesus underwent prior to his crucifixion often resulted in massive amounts of blood being spilt. His body was going through shock and dehydration. It was only natural that he would say, “*I thirst.*”

If you listen to BBN radio 92.5, Lynn Brooks a few years ago read the book “*Vinegar Boy.*” It comes on at 12:15 every day. In that book, it tells the story of the cross as told through the eyes of the person who gave Jesus this drink - that Vinegar Boy.

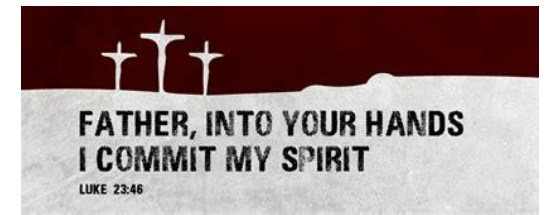
#### **So that scripture may be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst!” (John 19:28)**

<sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. <sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. <sup>17</sup> I may tell all my bones: they look

and stare upon me. <sup>18</sup> They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

Around noon on that Friday, the entire sky turned dark. It lasted for three hours. Can you imagine the fear and dread that came upon the crowd? Even nature was covering this sin transaction with darkness. If you have ever experienced an eclipse, you know it only lasts about 30 minutes. God caused a supernatural darkening of the sky. It is during this time that Jesus neared his final hours.

#### **V. Psalm 22:19-24 – “Father into Thy hands, I commit My Spirit” – A Word to God the Father**

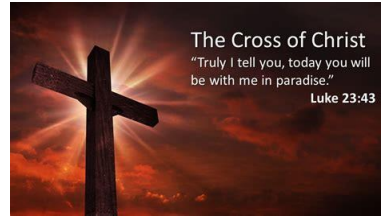


#### **“Father, into Thy hands, I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23:46, Psalm 31:5)**

<sup>19</sup> But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. <sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. <sup>21</sup> Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. <sup>22</sup> I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. <sup>23</sup> Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

Remember there were two others being crucified upon that hill known as Golgotha – the hill of the skull. One of the thieves’ mocked Jesus and said, *“If you are so powerful, save yourself and us as well!”* The other thief rebuked the first thief and said, *“We are receiving our just reward. This man has done nothing. Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

**VI. Psalm 22:25-31 –  
“Today, you will be with me  
in paradise.” – A Word to  
the Repentant Sinner**



**“Assuredly, I say to you, today, you will be  
with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)**

*25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. 26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. 27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD’S: and he is the governor among the nations. 29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. 30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

Some people point to this verse to aid their theology on baptism and tithing. Some say that the thief on the cross

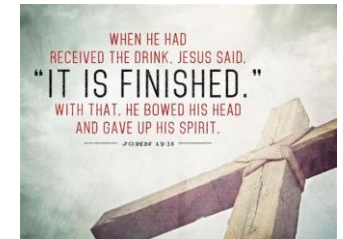
was never baptized – so why should I? The thief never had the opportunity to testify to his faith, we do.

Another person I know has chosen to use this thief on the cross to say he did not have to give to the church. The man on the cross didn’t give financially to support the church, so why should I? One minister rebuked the man by saying, “The man on the cross was a dying thief, You sir are a living thief.” He never had the opportunity to give, but you do!

When we use texts like this to defend our lack of obedience, we only bring condemnation upon ourselves. While we have time to confess Christ, we need to. Don’t wait till you are on your death bed to confess Christ. Do it today!

Don’t shirk your responsibility to support the work of the church by saying that the thief on the cross was forgiven and he did not give. You have an opportunity to give.

**VII. After Psalm 22:31 –  
“It is Finished” – A Word  
of Victory**



**Tetelestai! Which  
means, “It is Finished!” (John 19:30)**

What had Christ finished?

1. He had finished the work His Father gave Him.
2. He had finished the work of salvation for mankind.
3. He had fulfilled EVERY prophecy in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah’s life and death.
4. He had laid down His life for His friends – and we are included.

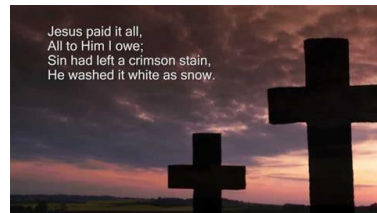
This week, as we enter into what is known as Holy Week, I want you to think about what great price Jesus paid for your salvation.

Many people say, “Salvation is Free.”

In many ways it is free, but it was **VERY** costly for Christ. Jesus expects us to “*Take up our cross and follow Him.*” He does not expect us to simply SIT and wait. The process of becoming a disciple is costly.

Every year during the drama *The Victor*, previously performed at Tanglewood Church, as Jesus is hanging on the cross, the words of this hymn ring out quietly and respectfully.

“Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.  
Sin had left a crimson stain;  
He washed it white as snow.”



Apart from Christ there is no salvation.  
Apart from Christ there is no forgiveness of sin.  
Apart from Christ is eternal separation from God.

If you are in Christ, then you have acceptance and salvation.  
If you are in Christ, your sins were nailed to that cross and you have been forgiven.  
If you are in Christ, nothing will ever separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

**LET US PRAY**