



The Seven Last Words of Jesus

Kicking It Off:

If you could witness any miracle from the Bible firsthand, which one would you choose and why?

Read:

John 20:1-18

Summary

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a supernatural event that transcends the natural world and defies rational explanation. It is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, fulfilling the New Covenant and inviting believers to partake in the miraculous power of God. This New Covenant radically changes our understanding of religion, showing that it is not about earning God's love and acceptance through good works, but rather receiving the work Christ has already done on our behalf. His sacrificial death allows us to have a relationship with the Father based on faith, not merit.

The resurrection powerfully demonstrates God's unconditional love for humanity. Despite our brokenness, selfishness, and rejection of Him, God went to incredible lengths to reconcile us to Himself, ultimately giving His own Son. This act of love is a profound mystery that collides with our natural understanding, inviting us to believe and receive new life in Christ.

The resurrection offers a glimpse of the restored, eternal life God desires for us. Christ was raised in a perfected body, still bearing the marks of His suffering, showing that God values our individuality. We are not destined to lose our identity in heaven, but rather to become fully redeemed versions of ourselves. Through Christ, God is calling, justifying, and glorifying us, teaching us our true identity as His beloved children and citizens of heaven.

This truth has deep implications for how we view our identity and purpose in this life. We are not alone, left to define ourselves and find meaning on our own terms. Instead, God has adopted us into His kingdom, giving us a new foundation for life. Our earthly existence is temporary, but our true identity is grounded in eternity. This frees us from the pressure to live for ourselves and our own desires, and instead live for God's glory out of gratitude.

Following Jesus means surrendering to Him as both Savior and King. When we crucify our selfish ambition and allow Christ to live through us, we discover who we were truly created to be. God knows us intimately - our gifts, abilities, hopes, and dreams - and wants to guide us into His perfect plan.

Ultimately, the beauty of the resurrection lies in the invitation to a deep, personal relationship with God. He desires our time and attention not out of obligation, but loving devotion. Each day is an opportunity to die to our old ways and walk in the new life Christ has won for us. This is the heart of Easter - being reconciled to our Heavenly Father and learning to abide in His steadfast love. As we build our lives upon this humbling yet hopeful truth, we experience the true power of the resurrection in all its transformative glory.

Discussion Questions

1. The resurrection is a supernatural event that challenges our natural understanding of the world. It invites us to believe in something beyond what we can logically explain. **How does the resurrection challenge your personal worldview and understanding of reality?**

2. The New Covenant shows us that our relationship with God is not based on our own merit or good works, but on faith in what Christ has done for us. This can be a difficult concept to grasp, especially in a society that emphasizes earning and achieving. **How does the truth of the New Covenant challenge your understanding of what it means to have a relationship with God?**
3. God's unconditional love for us, demonstrated through the sacrifice of His Son, is a profound mystery that collides with our natural understanding of love. It can be hard to fathom a love that is not based on our performance or worthiness. **How have you experienced God's unconditional love in your own life, and how does it differ from the love you've experienced in human relationships?**
4. The resurrection gives us a glimpse of the restored, eternal life God has in store for us. It shows that our individuality is valued and that we are destined to become fully redeemed versions of ourselves in heaven. **How does this understanding of eternity impact the way you view your identity and purpose in this earthly life?**
5. Surrendering to Jesus as both Savior and King means letting go of our selfish ambitions and allowing Christ to live through us. This can be a daily struggle, as our natural inclination is often to pursue our own desires and plans. **What does it practically look like for you to surrender to Jesus as King in your daily life, and how do you discern between your own plans and God's perfect plan for you?**

Bible Passage

John 20:1-18

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. The resurrection as a supernatural miracle that transcends the natural world
 - B. Acknowledging the value of logic, facts, and science in understanding tangible reality
 - C. The resurrection of Jesus Christ defies natural explanation
- II. Point 1: The New Covenant Fulfilled
 - A. The resurrection fulfills the New Covenant and invites us to partake in God's supernatural power
 - B. The New Covenant changes religious thinking
 - 1. Not about earning God's love and acceptance through good works
 - 2. God Himself did the work on our behalf through Jesus
 - 3. Christ's sacrificial death allows us to have a relationship with the Father based on faith
 - C. The resurrection demonstrates God's unconditional love for humanity
 - 1. Despite our brokenness and rejection, God loves us steadfastly
 - 2. God went to incredible lengths to reconcile us to Himself, ultimately sacrificing His own Son
- III. Point 2: The Promise of Glorification
 - A. The resurrection offers a glimpse of the restored, eternal life God desires for us
 - 1. Christ was raised in a perfected body, still bearing the marks of His suffering
 - 2. God values our individuality; we are destined to be fully redeemed versions of ourselves in heaven
 - B. Through Christ, God is calling, justifying, and glorifying us
 - 1. He is teaching us our true identity as His beloved children
 - 2. Our identity is that of citizens of heaven, being transformed from the inside out
- IV. Point 3: The Foundation of Life and Ethics

- A. The resurrection has profound implications for our identity and purpose
 - 1. We are not alone; God has adopted us and welcomed us into His kingdom
 - 2. This earthly life and body are temporary; our true identity is grounded in eternity
- B. Following Jesus means surrendering to Him as both Savior and King
 - 1. When we crucify our selfish ambition, we discover who we were truly created to be
 - 2. God knows us intimately and wants to guide us into His perfect plans
- C. The resurrection invites us into a deep, personal relationship with God
 - 1. God desires our time and attention out of loving devotion
 - 2. Each day is a chance to die to our old ways and walk in the new life Christ has won for us
- V. Conclusion
 - A. The resurrection is the heart of Easter, reconciling us to our Heavenly Father
 - B. We are called to abide in God's love, building our lives upon this humbling and hopeful truth

Notes

The beauty and power of the resurrection lies in the fact that it was a supernatural miracle, transcending the natural world we live in. As someone who values logic, facts and science, I recognize that there are physical laws and observable phenomena that govern our tangible reality. However, the resurrection of Jesus Christ defies natural explanation.

What makes the resurrection so paramount is that it fulfills the New Covenant and invites us to partake in the supernatural power of God. While Jesus performed many miracles during his earthly ministry, it was through conquering death itself that he opened the way for us to experience the miraculous.

The New Covenant turns religious thinking on its head. It's not about us doing enough good works to earn God's love and acceptance. Rather, through Jesus, God Himself has done the work on our behalf. Christ shed his blood as the ultimate sacrifice, paying the price so that we could have a relationship with the Father based not on our merit, but on faith in what He accomplished.

Although it may not make logical sense, I believe that God did this out of His great love for us. The resurrection is the linchpin of the Christian faith, without which we would have no access to God's supernatural power. It humbles me to consider that the Almighty would give His Son for my sake. In this, the natural and supernatural collide in a profound mystery, inviting me to believe and receive new life in Christ.

Love is a powerful, transcendent force that defies mere natural explanation. There is something supernatural about the deep connection and self-sacrificing care we can have for one another. And God's love for humanity is the ultimate example of this.

Despite our brokenness, selfishness and rejection of Him, God loves us unconditionally. He looks at our messy, mud-covered lives and still desires relationship with us. The angels may question why He would bother with such difficult creatures, but God's love remains steadfast.

God has gone to incredible lengths to make a way for us to be reconciled to Him. He established covenants, sent miracle after miracle, and

ultimately sacrificed His own Son to wash us clean with His blood. In God's eyes, we are worth it. He longs to redeem and glorify us.

The resurrection of Jesus offers a glimpse of the restored, eternal life God desires for us. Christ was raised in a perfected body that still bore the marks of His suffering. This tells me that God values our individuality. We are not destined to be an amorphous blob in heaven, but rather fully redeemed versions of ourselves.

Through Christ, God is calling me, justifying me, and glorifying me. He is teaching me who I truly am - not defined by my sins and failures, but as His beloved child. My identity is that of a citizen of heaven, and God wants to transform me from the inside out to reflect this reality. What a humbling, hopeful truth to build my life upon.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has profound implications for how I view my identity and purpose in this life. It's so easy to live as though I'm an orphan - alone in this world, fighting to define myself and make something of my life on my own terms. But God is constantly reminding me that I am not alone. He has adopted me as His beloved child and welcomed me into His kingdom.

This earthly life and body are just a temporary lease. My true identity is grounded in eternity as a citizen of heaven. Understanding this frees me from the pressure to live for myself and my own desires. While I'm still forgiven no matter what I do, I now have the opportunity to live this life for God's glory out of gratitude for what He's done.

Following Jesus isn't just about claiming Him as my Savior, but also surrendering to Him as my King. And there is great freedom in this! Left to my own devices, I make a mess of things. But when I crucify my selfish ambition and let Christ live through me, I discover who I was truly created to be. God knows me better than I know myself - my gifts, abilities, hopes and dreams. He wants to guide me into His perfect plans for my life.

The beauty of the resurrection is that God is inviting me into deep, personal relationship with Him. He desires my time and attention, not out of obligation, but loving devotion. Each day is a chance to die to my old ways and walk in the new life Christ has won for me. This is the heart of Easter - being reconciled to my Heavenly Father and learning to abide in His love.

The Seven Last Words of Christ

Good Friday, the day when Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, holds immense significance in the Christian faith. It is a day of solemn reflection, as believers contemplate the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for the redemption of humanity. Central to the events of Good Friday are the Seven Last Words, the final phrases uttered by Jesus as he hung on the cross.

The Seven Last Words, as recorded in the Gospels, are as follows:

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)
2. "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)
3. "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." (John 19:26-27)
4. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)
5. "I thirst." (John 19:28)
6. "It is finished." (John 19:30)
7. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

Each of these statements reveals a different aspect of Jesus' character and the significance of his death on the cross. By examining them closely, we can gain a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and the profound impact of Good Friday. In the following sections, we will delve into each of the Seven Last Words, exploring their biblical context, their meaning, and the lessons they offer for our own lives. As we reflect on these powerful words, may we be drawn closer to the heart of God and inspired to live a life that honors the sacrifice of our Savior.

The First Word: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

As Jesus hung on the cross, enduring unimaginable pain and suffering, his first recorded words were not of anger or vengeance, but of compassion and forgiveness. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). These words, spoken in the face of great injustice and cruelty, demonstrate the depth of Jesus' love and the power of his message. In this moment, Jesus exemplified the very essence of his teachings. He had preached love, mercy, and forgiveness throughout his ministry, and now, in his darkest hour, he lived out those principles. Jesus recognized that those who crucified him, mocked him, and reviled him were acting out of ignorance and misunderstanding. Instead of condemning them, he chose to extend forgiveness, even as he bore the weight of their sins. This act of compassion and forgiveness in the face of extreme adversity is a testament to Jesus' character and the transformative power of his love. It shows us that no matter the circumstances, we are called to respond with grace and mercy, just as our Savior did.

Jesus' words from the cross underscore the centrality of forgiveness in the Christian faith. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). This teaching emphasizes that our own forgiveness is intimately tied to our willingness to forgive others. The Apostle Paul echoes this sentiment in his letter to the Colossians, urging believers to "bear with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Colossians 3:13). Forgiveness is not merely a suggestion, but a command, modeled after the forgiveness we have received through Christ.

The Second Word: "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Jesus' second statement from the cross was directed to one of the criminals crucified alongside him. While one thief mocked Jesus, the other recognized

his innocence and acknowledged him as Lord. In response to this repentant thief's plea, Jesus promised, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). This remarkable exchange illustrates the depth of Jesus' grace and the power of faith. Even in his final moments, Jesus extended salvation to a repentant sinner, assuring him of a place in Paradise. This promise demonstrates that it is never too late to turn to God and that the gift of salvation is available to all who believe, regardless of their past.

Jesus' words to the thief on the cross underscore the central message of the Christian faith: salvation by grace through faith. As the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is not earned through good deeds or moral living, but is a free gift, made possible by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Furthermore, the simplicity of the thief's faith highlights the accessibility of salvation. As Paul states in Romans, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). The repentant thief's humble acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord was sufficient for him to receive the promise of eternal life.

The Third Word: "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." (John 19:26-27)

Amidst his own suffering, Jesus took a moment to address his mother, Mary, and the beloved disciple John, who were standing near the cross. He said to Mary, "Woman, behold your son," and to John, "Son, behold your mother" (John 19:26-27). With these words, Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to his disciple, demonstrating his deep love and concern for his family.

Even in his darkest hour, Jesus prioritized the well-being of his loved ones. He recognized the grief and hardship his mother would face after his death and ensured that she would be cared for by someone he trusted. This act of compassion reveals Jesus' humanity and his understanding of the importance of family bonds.

Jesus' words also highlight the significance of relationships and community within the Christian faith. As Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). The Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation, but in the context of loving, supportive relationships. Moreover, the Apostle John emphasizes the centrality of love in the Christian community, stating, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). By entrusting Mary to John's care, Jesus demonstrates the kind of sacrificial love that should characterize the relationships within the body of Christ.

The Fourth Word: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)

In the midst of his agony on the cross, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34). These words, which are the opening line of Psalm 22, express the profound sense of abandonment and suffering that Jesus experienced in his final moments.

This anguished cry reveals the depth of Jesus' suffering, not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually. As he bore the weight of humanity's sin, Jesus experienced a momentary separation from the Father, a pain beyond comprehension. This moment of abandonment highlights the immense cost of our redemption and the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. Jesus' words from the cross directly quote the opening line of Psalm 22, a prophetic psalm that describes the suffering and ultimate victory of the Messiah. Many of the details in this psalm, such as the mocking of the crowd (Psalm 22:7-8) and the piercing of hands and feet (Psalm 22:16), find their fulfillment in Jesus' crucifixion. By quoting this psalm, Jesus identifies himself as the suffering servant foretold in Scripture, underlining the divine purpose behind his death.

The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus, the sinless one, took upon himself the sins of the world, experiencing the full consequence of our transgressions. As Isaiah prophesied, "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our

iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus' cry of abandonment underscores the profound depths of his sacrifice on our behalf.

The Fifth Word: "I thirst." (John 19:28)

As Jesus neared the end of his earthly life, he uttered the words, "I thirst" (John 19:28). This simple statement serves as a powerful reminder of both Jesus' physical suffering and his spiritual longing.

The words "I thirst" underscore the physical agony Jesus endured on the cross. After hours of torture, blood loss, and hanging in the scorching sun, Jesus experienced the intense pain and thirst that come with crucifixion. This statement highlights Jesus' full humanity, reminding us that he bore our physical limitations and suffered in ways we can relate to.

On a deeper level, Jesus' thirst can also be understood as a spiritual longing for righteousness and the fulfillment of God's will. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). Throughout his ministry, Jesus emphasized the importance of seeking God above all else, as he told the Samaritan woman at the well, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again" (John 4:13-14). Jesus' thirst on the cross can be seen as a manifestation of his unwavering commitment to accomplishing the Father's will and securing our salvation.

The Sixth Word: "It is finished." (John 19:30)

As Jesus' earthly life drew to a close, he declared, "It is finished" (John 19:30). These powerful words signify the completion of his mission and the fulfillment of God's plan for our redemption.

With this statement, Jesus proclaimed that the work he came to accomplish was now complete. He had perfectly fulfilled every prophecy and every requirement of the law, living a sinless life and offering himself as the ultimate

sacrifice for our sins. As Jesus himself declared in his high priestly prayer, "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4). His death on the cross marked the culmination of his earthly mission and the fulfillment of Scripture.

The writer of Hebrews explains the significance of Jesus' finished work, stating, "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11-12). Through his death, Jesus accomplished what the old sacrificial system could not: a complete and permanent atonement for sin. Furthermore, as Paul writes in Romans, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Romans 3:23-25). Jesus' finished work on the cross provides the basis for our justification and reconciliation with God.

The Seventh Word: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

With his final breath, Jesus entrusted his spirit into the hands of the Father, declaring, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). These words, which echo Psalm 31:5, reveal Jesus' unwavering trust in God and his submission to the Father's will.

Even in the face of unimaginable suffering and death, Jesus demonstrated complete trust in his heavenly Father. He had consistently sought to do the Father's will throughout his ministry, as he affirmed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). Now, at the moment of his death, Jesus reaffirmed his trust and surrendered his spirit into the Father's loving hands.

Jesus' final words serve as an example for all believers, reminding us of the importance of entrusting our lives to God. The book of Proverbs urges us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). As we face the challenges and uncertainties of life, we are called to place our trust in God, knowing that he holds our lives in his capable hands. Similarly, the Apostle Peter encourages us to follow in Christ's footsteps, writing, "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good" (1 Peter 4:19). Just as Jesus entrusted his spirit to the Father, we too can find comfort and strength in surrendering our lives to God, confident in his love and faithfulness.