

We'll begin reading at verse 16 of John chapter 19. According to the cumulative witness of the four gospels, the order of the famous seven last sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ from the cross is as follows. Can you remember them in order?

First of all, Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Secondly, to the thief on the cross who repented, Jesus said, today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Thirdly, to his very own mother as he hung on the cross while John, the beloved disciple, stood near her. Woman, behold thy son. And to the beloved disciple, behold thy mother. Fourthly, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Fifthly, I thirst. Sixthly, it is finished. And finally, Father, into thy hands do I commend my spirit.

But there's one point concerning our Lord's death that we must remember carefully. And that is that the death of Jesus was entirely a voluntary act on his part. In this one respect, Jesus' death was unlike that of any other common man. And we need not wonder at this when we consider that Jesus was both God and man in one person. The final separation between body and soul in his case could not take place until he willed it to happen and all the power of Jews and Romans together could not have affected it against his will.

You see, we die because we cannot help it. We cannot stop it. Christ died because he willed to die and not until the moment arrived when he saw that it was best. Remember, he had said earlier in John 10, 18, no man takes life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. And as a matter of fact, we know that our Lord was crucified about nine o'clock in the morning and that he died about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. And mere physical suffering would not account for this, because normally a person crucified in full health was known sometimes to linger on alive for three days. Can you imagine?

It is evident, therefore, that our Lord willed to give up His spirit in the same day that He was crucified. And by doing so, He secured the fullest publicity for his atoning death, for he died in broad daylight in the sight of myriads of spectators, and thus the reality of his death could never be denied. No, nothing in the details of our Lord's death we must forever remember was accidental or by chance. Every part of his great sacrifice for sin at Calvary was foreordained and arranged in the eternal councils of the Trinity, even down to the very words that he was to speak on the cross, especially these last seven sayings of Jesus's before his death.

And what I would like for us to do this evening, I want us to look at three of these last sayings of Jesus that are recorded for us in the Gospel of John very closely together, And I want to look at why they should matter to us as Christians. But before I read the passage to us and preach the word, let's pray.

Amazing love. Father, we stand in amazement when we think that you would devote that sacred head for such people as we are. And yet, Father, it is true that you loved us beyond all that we could possibly imagine. And as Max spoke of that incomprehensible love that you showed for us, as he spoke of that this morning, Lord, I pray that we would be in awe of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, that we would stand in awe of our sympathizing, suffering, and satisfying Savior who stood as our substitute at Calvary. Lord God, would you come this night, would you send your spirit, Lord, for all of this is in vain unless your spirit works in and through me and through the hearts of your people. Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner, but Lord God, bring your word to bear upon our hearts and our lives. that Christ would be exalted in the hearts and lives of all here and that you would draw out our affections to him for all that he has done for us. We pray this in his precious name. Amen.

If you'll look with me at John chapter 19 beginning at verse 16, this again is the word of the Lord. And so Pilate delivered Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and he went out bearing his own cross to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. And there they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this inscription for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. And it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priest of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write the king of the Jews, but rather this man said, I am king of the Jews. Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be. This was to fulfill the scripture, which says, they divided my garments among them and for my clothing, they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things.

but standing by the cross of Jesus, where his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. And when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loves standing nearby, he said to his mother, woman, behold your son. And then he said to the disciple, behold your mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the scripture, I thirst. A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, it is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

May the Lord bless the reading and now the preaching of his word to our souls. I want to look at these three sayings three of these last sayings of Jesus that are recorded for us in verses 25 through 30. And I want to divide it up this way. I first of all want you to see the sympathizing Savior, the sympathizing Savior that we see in verses 25 through 27. Secondly, I want you to see the suffering Savior, the suffering Savior that we see in verses 28 and 29. And finally, I want you to see the satisfying Savior, the satisfying Savior that we see in verse 30.

But first of all, look with me at verses 25 through 27. The first of these sayings I want you to see is the sympathizing Savior. And we might summarize this as an incredibly selfless love in the words of Jesus to both his mother and the disciple John, the disciple whom he loved. Look with me again at verses 25 through 27. But standing by the cross of Jesus, where his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene, when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, woman, behold your son. And then he said to the disciple, behold your mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her into his own home.

This incident and these sayings we find nowhere else in the other three Gospels, only here in John's Gospel.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the other women who were with her stood by the cross on which our Lord hung. And the expression, love as strong as death, would certainly apply here. For even amidst the crowd of taunting Jews and

rough Roman soldiers, these holy women were determined to stand by our Lord to the very end and to show their unceasing affection to him.

But who, who can imagine what Mary, the mother of Jesus, was going through as she watched her firstborn her firstborn son suffering such an ignoble and devastating death. And who can doubt that when she saw her son hanging on the cross, that the words of old Simeon's prophecy from 33 years earlier in the temple came home to her soul with gut-wrenching force when he had said, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also.

You who are mothers in the congregation tonight, can you possibly imagine what it would have been like to have watched your firstborn son die in such a way? No, no one could possibly grasp the unimaginable agony of this mother's heart as she endured before all the public humiliation and degrading treatment an unimaginable suffering of the son of her love.

Yet there was one who could grasp it. And he acted very swiftly to comfort her, despite what he himself was experiencing on the cross. For John tells us that even in the awful agonies of body and mind and soul that our Lord was enduring, he did not forget her of whom he was born. How could he? He mercifully remembered Mary's desolate condition and the crushing effect of the sorrowful sight before her. He knew that holy as she was, she was only a woman, and that as a woman, she must feel deeply the death of such a son.

And what did Jesus do? He therefore commended Mary to the protection and care of his best love and best loving disciple in brief and utterly touching words. Woman, he said, behold thy son. And then to the disciple John, whom he loved in turn, behold thy mother. And from that hour, it says, John took Mary into his own home.

Brothers and sisters, I want you to see tonight, from this sublime moment at the cross, we as believers should take comfort in the thought that we have in Jesus a Savior of matchless tenderness, a Savior of matchless sympathy, and a Savior of matchless consideration for the condition of all his believing people.

If you are a believer in this room tonight, never forget Jesus's words that he said from Mark 335. Whosoever shall do the will of God, that same person is my brother and my sister and my mother. If you are a believer in here tonight, you are Jesus's brother and sister. And he never forgets those who belong to him. How can he? He died for you. Your name is engraven on the palms of his hands. And the heart that even on the cross felt for Mary is a heart that never changes now. Jesus never forgets any that love him. And even in their worst estate, he remembers their need. Brothers and sisters, think of the encouragement this is to go to the one who has loved you and given himself for you. He loves you with a sympathy and a love that you could never imagine. And he begs you to come to him. No wonder that Peter would say later in 1 Peter 5, 7, cast all your care upon him, for he cares for you.

And so first of all, I want you to see the sympathizing Savior, even as he hung on the cross. But secondly, I want you to see the second of these sayings, and that is the one where Jesus says, I thirst. And we might summarize this as an indescribably excruciating suffering in this phrase that Jesus makes here, and I thirst.

Look with me again at verses 28 and 29. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the scripture, I thirst. A jar full of sour wine stood there. So they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

And I want you to see two things about this phrase where Jesus says, I thirst. I want you to see, first of all, that Jesus used this phrase to give public testimony to the reality and the intensity of his bodily sufferings, and to prevent anyone from thinking, because of his incredible calmness and patience at this time, that he was miraculously free from pain and suffering.

I think sometimes we think that because, yes, he was man, and yes, he was God, and I think sometimes we think that because he was God, he suffered less than a regular human being would do in this case. But nothing could be further from the truth. On the contrary, Jesus by this statement was making abundantly clear that he felt, among other things, what all severely wounded people and especially what all crucified people feel, a burning and consuming thirst.

Do you realize that crucified individuals experienced intense, often deadly dehydration from blood loss, from exertion, from having to pull themselves up just to be able to breathe. And dehydration, especially from the climate, which was very dry there, leading to dry mouth, swollen tongues. Dehydration worsened the already excruciating agony, causing headaches, muscle cramps, and general physical distress. And victims who were put in this place frequently slowly suffocated as fluids filled their lungs, making swallowing and speaking difficult.

So brothers and sisters, when we read in the scriptures that Jesus suffered for our sins, we are to understand that He really and truly suffered physically. And not only did He suffer physically, He suffered the indescribable pains of hell that He endured when God poured His full, unmitigated wrath upon Him for the sins of the elect.

I want you to listen to what Matthew Henry says right here. The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst and the complaint of the rich man who begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. You remember that parable that Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus. And Matthew Henry says, to that everlasting thirst, we had all been condemned if Christ had not suffered on the cross and said, I thirst.

You see, thirst was a picture of judgment. It was a sign of our broken relationship with God and of our sin. It was a physical representation of our spiritual dehydration and of our utter need for salvation from the wrath of God and of our need for someone to bear our thirst curse for us and to give us the living water of eternal life. This is who Jesus is and this is what Jesus does. He offers us the living water of eternal life so that we will never thirst again. As he tells us or told us in John 6, 35, whoever believes in me shall never thirst. And remember in his conversation with the woman at the well in John chapter 4, verses 13 and 14, He told the woman there, whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

And so I have to ask you this evening, have you tasted the eternal water of life that Jesus offers you? As Max said this morning, have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Do you know the eternal life that he offers you so that you will never thirst again?

But not only was Jesus by this saying, I thirst, telling us that he suffered bodily and the pains of hell. John also tells us plainly that Jesus's statement was fulfilling scripture. And you might ask yourself, what scriptures was he fulfilling here? Well, I want you to think. Think back to Psalm 22. Psalm 22. Both Matthew and Mark record Jesus's crying out and quoting the opening lines of that psalm. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And this invocation of Psalm 22 would have reminded us of the rest of the psalm where the psalmist says, my strength is dried up like a potsherd. And my tongue sticks to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death.

Or take Psalm 69, also by David, where the psalmist writes this. Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold. I've come into deep waters. and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary with my crying out. My throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. I look for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink."

You see, Jesus fulfills this psalm. as he actually drowns in the deep waters of God's wrath against sin, even our own sin that we have committed. How can we ever take sin lightly again when we see something like this?

And brothers and sisters, our Lord entered into the deepest experiences of human suffering so as to be made like us. Therefore, there is no one else who can sympathize with the sufferings we endure in this life like he can. There is no one else who sticks closer to his people throughout all their trials and tribulations like the Lamb of God who was slain for the sins of the world. Take comfort in that, that you have a Savior who knows exactly what you go through and He sympathizes with your suffering. And not only is He able to sympathize with it, but He is willing and able to help you at all times if you will but go to Him.

And so we have seen the sympathizing Savior. We have seen the suffering Savior. But finally, I want you to see the satisfying Savior here. Our Lord, having now given plain proof that he had endured intense bodily suffering, he proceeded now to utter one of his last and most solemn sayings, which I want to summarize as an indelibly complete salvation in the words, it is finished. This is the satisfying Savior. Look at verse 30 with me. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished. And he bowed his head and he gave up his spirit.

This remarkable expression, it is finished in the Greek, is one single word in a perfect tense to *telestai* and it means it has been completed and accomplished. It stands here in majestic simplicity without comment or explanation from John, and we are left entirely to conjecture what the full meaning of it is. You know, for 2,000 years, Christians have explained this as best they could, and perhaps some portion of its meaning has been elucidated from scholars. But beloved, in all likelihood, such a word spoken on such an occasion by such a person at such a moment just before death contains depths that no one has ever completely fathomed.

It is finished, is rich, it is full, it is overflowing with deep truths. So I want to try to explain what we know that it means.

First of all, when Jesus said it is finished, our Lord meant that his great work of redemption was accomplished and complete. You see, Jesus, as Daniel had foretold in Daniel 9.24, He had finished transgression. He had made an end of sin. He had made reconciliation for iniquity, and he had brought in everlasting righteousness. After 33 years, since the day when he was born in Bethlehem, Jesus had done all, paid all, performed all, and suffered all that was needed to save sinners and to satisfy the justice of God.

Listen to what F.F. Bruce says here. The entire purpose for which the father had sent the son into the world was now assured of fulfillment. And since that purpose included the salvation of the world and the procuring of eternal life for all believers, salvation and eternal life were henceforth freely available. In the consummating moment of death, Jesus declares this work to be finished.

You see, Jesus had fought the battle and won it. And in two days, He would give proof of it by rising again from the dead. And our Lord meant nothing less than that God's determinate counsel and forewill concerning His death was now accomplished and finished. All that had been appointed from all eternity that He should suffer, He had now suffered for you and for me. As Mack pointed out so gloriously this morning, The love of Christ for you as a believer has no beginning. He loved you from the beginning of eternity and there's no beginning to it. He has loved you from eternity past and he will love you for eternity future.

But secondly, when Jesus said it is finished, he meant that he had finished the work of keeping God's holy law. that law that we could not keep. You see, Jesus had kept the law to the uttermost as our federal head and representative, unlike Adam, our first head and representative who fell in the garden. Jesus had kept the law perfectly, every jot and tittle of it, and Satan had found nothing in him. Jesus had magnified the law and made it honorable by doing all of its requirements perfectly.

You remember what he said in the Sermon on the Mount earlier? Do not think that I have come to abolish the law of the prophets. I've not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished. And Jesus accomplished it and kept it all. He earned for us a righteousness. that we could never earn for ourselves.

Listen to what the commentator Burkitt says. Woe unto us if Christ had left but one farthing of our debt unpaid. If he had, we must have lain in hell insolvent to all eternity.

But thirdly, when Jesus says it is finished, he meant that he had finished and fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Testament. You see, He came to fulfill every prophecy that pointed forward to him. All the way back to Genesis 3.15, as the seed of the woman, he had now bruised the serpent's head and he had accomplished the work that the Messiah was engaged by covenant to come and perform for you and for me. Jesus fulfilled every prophecy of the Old Testament for us.

But finally, I want you to see that when Jesus says it is finished, he meant that his sufferings were finished. Like his apostles, he had finished his course. His long life of pain and contradiction from sinners, and above all, his intense sufferings as bearer of our sins on Gethsemane and Calvary, they were at last at an end.

We just sang it a minute ago. What was Jesus' life like? In summary, man of sorrows. What a name. For the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah, what a Savior.

As the prophet Isaiah writes in summary of his life, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and is one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised and we esteemed him not.

His life of suffering, I'm reminded of the words of the song by Fernando Ortega, which we will sing in just a moment, stricken, smitten, and afflicted. Tell me, ye who hear him groaning, was there ever grief like his? Friends through fear his cause disowning, foes insulting his distress. Many hands were raised to wound him. None would interpose to save. Yet the deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that justice gave. The deepest stroke was when the father laid his full wrath upon the son for our sins, for you and for me.

The storm was now over though, and the worst was past, and the cup of suffering for our sins was at last drained to its very dregs for all who would believe on him.

Martin Luther says of this phrase, in this word it is finished, will I comfort myself. I am forced to confess that all my finishing of the will of God is imperfect, piecemeal work, while yet the law urges on me that not so much as one tittle or jot of it must remain unaccomplished. Christ is the end of the law, and what it requires, Christ has performed. And he's done that for you and for me.

And so we have seen, brothers and sisters, the sympathizing Savior. We've seen the suffering Savior. We have seen the satisfying Savior. But above all, as we close tonight, let us never forget, as we read of Christ's death, that He died for our sins as our substitute. He was the substitutionary Savior.

You see, His death is our life. He died that we might live forever. We who believe on Christ shall live forevermore, sinners though we are, because Christ died for us, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust.

Brothers and sisters, if you believe, if you believe on what Christ has done for you here at Calvary, Satan can never drag you away into everlasting death in hell. The second death cannot harm us. And we may safely say, who can condemn me or slay my soul? I know well that I deserve death and that I ought to die because of my sins.

But then my blessed head and substitute died for me. And when he died, his poor, weak member was reckoned as dead also. Get thee behind me, Satan, for Christ was crucified and died. My debt is paid, and thou canst not demand it twice over. Jesus has paid it all for you and for me.

And forever let us bless God the Father that Christ gave up his spirit and really died upon the cross before myriads of witnesses. You see, that hinge, that giving up of the Spirit, it is the hinge, beloved, on which all our salvation turns. Christ's life and miracles in preaching are all in vain if Christ has not at last died for you and for me. You see,

we needed not merely a teacher. We needed an atonement. We needed the death of a substitute in our place. And the mightiest transaction that ever took place on earth since the fall of man was accomplished here when Jesus gave up his spirit.

You know, the careless crowd around the cross saw nothing but the common death of a common criminal. But in the eyes of God the Father, the promised payment for a world's sin was at last effected, and the kingdom of heaven was thrown wide open

To all believers, the kingdom of heaven is thrown open to all of us who will believe on him. And if you have never put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he calls on you to do so now. Now is the day of salvation. Now is the day of freedom.

You know, at Manchester, I teach. or I used to teach, I don't teach it any longer, I used to teach a class that Betty used to teach and that Joan King used to teach before us called Humanities. And in that class we study some of the finest architecture, music, and painting, and works that have ever been done in Western civilization up to the present point. And in that study we look at some of the pictures of the crucifixion done by some of the greatest masters who have ever lived in this world. And the finest pictures of the crucifixion that artists have ever painted give a miserably insufficient idea of what took place when Jesus died. They can show a man suffering on a cross, but they cannot convey the least notion of what was really transpiring.

the satisfaction of God's broken law, the payment of sinners' debt to God, and the complete atonement for a world's sin.

I want to read something to you as I close right here by J.C. Ryle. And he says this, and it goes back, Mac, to what you were speaking about, the incomprehensible love of Christ and how we should respond

What, after all, is the great secret of loving Christ? It is an inward sense of having received from him pardon and forgiveness of sins. Those love much who feel much forgiven. He that has come to Christ with his sins and tasted the blessedness of free and full absolution, he is the man whose heart will be full of love towards his Savior.

the more we realize that Christ has suffered for us and paid our debt to God and that we, we even now are washed and justified through his blood, the more we shall love him for having loved us and given himself for us. None shall ever be confounded who on him their hope have built.

And so I ask you this evening, is your eternal hope built upon the finished atonement of the cross.

Let's pray. Father God Almighty, these are wondrous things that Christ would devote that sacred head for people such as we are. Lord God, it is a wonderful thing to think that Christ sympathizes with his people in ways that we cannot even begin to imagine, that Christ suffered for his people in ways that we will never be able to grasp, and

that Christ has satisfied the law and all of the atonement for us on our behalf, for those who will believe in his precious name. He was our substitute, and he died that we might live. May we evermore now live forevermore to his honor and glory in gratitude to him. More love to thee, O Christ. More love to thee. And we ask it now in Jesus' precious name. Amen.