

Series: **Easter 2023 - Good Friday**

Today's Title: "The Last Words of Jesus"

April 7, 2023 - Selected Passages

OBJECTIVE: To help people see the love, forgiveness, and power of Jesus on the cross.

This service is created with 7 sections focusing on the 7 sayings of Jesus on the cross.

Each section incorporates a scripture passage with a corresponding video and/or drama, along with a 3–5-minute devotional.

Section 1:

Luke 23:34

And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Section 1 Details

- 1) Clip from "Passion of the Christ"
- 2) Scripture/Title slide up
- 3) Pastor Steve intro (*Behind the communion table*)

The truth that Jesus forgives sins is a controversial statement to many.

For the critics, they don't believe in the idea or concept of sin.

Possibly they doubt their own need of forgiveness.

They doubt their own sin.

Or a 3rd option is they mock the idea that a man can forgive sins – since to them, Jesus is a mere human, not the incarnate Son of God.

They have an innate sense that only God can forgive sins.

4) “The Paralytic” monologue

5) Pastor Steve devotional

Jesus and forgiveness of sins.

This is kind of the whole point, isn't it?

By His countless miracles, Jesus proved He had power over the physical world.

But He also demonstrated His power over the spiritual world by the many demons He cast out of people throughout His ministry.

Since He proved His power over the physical and spiritual realms, He certainly has the power to forgive sins.

As He hung on the cross, His words were full of love, mercy, and grace.

His first statement on the cross was one of forgiveness.

It wasn't a general statement about forgiveness, but a request to the Father in Heaven – to forgive those who were crucifying Him.

To forgive those who were dividing His clothing.

This first statement was personal in nature – not some theoretical concept – but intensely personal as He endured the severe pain of the scourging – and

now of crucifixion – He seeks the forgiveness of those who have tortured Him – those who are killing Him.

Many think Jesus said these words after his enemies were mocking Him by saying,

Matthew 27:42

“He saved others; He cannot save Himself.”

He could have saved Himself.

He told His disciples in the garden – when He was being arrested,

Matthew 26:53

“Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels?”

But saving Himself wasn't the point.

That wasn't the mission – it wasn't the reason He took on human flesh.

He became incarnate – lived and ministered – and was willingly going to the cross – to save us!!!

Being healed of physical pain, illness, disease, or disability is a huge deal.

Physical problems are part of everyday life.

Spiritual problems are also part of everyday life – but they are often unseen or unnoticed by us.

We may see and experience the troubles created by our spiritual problems, but we don't realize the cause is spiritual.

We don't realize our greatest need is spiritual – not physical or material.

The paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof to be with Jesus...

I always wonder what his reaction was when Jesus looked at him and said, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

(Mark 2:5).

The obvious need – and everyone in the room knew it – because his physical problem was clearly his inability to walk!!!

But Jesus knows our greatest need – which is spiritual – the forgiveness of our sins.

Our greatest need is to be reconciled to God.

Have you asked Jesus to forgive your sins – to be reconciled to God?

Section 2:

Luke 23:43

“...truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Section 2 Details

- 1) Clip from “Passion of the Christ”
- 2) Scripture/Title slide up
- 3) Pastor Steve intro (*Behind the communion table*)

What's more important to you?

This life... or the next?

Living with an eye toward heaven – or “paradise” can be difficult when the pleasures and blessings of this world become our priority and passion.

Jesus said, “You cannot serve both God and money.” (Matt. 6:24)

You cannot serve God – and keep a white-knuckled grip on this world.

Are you holding on too tightly to this world?

4) “The Rich Young Ruler” monologue

5) Pastor Steve devotional

Psalm 16:11

“...in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

John 15:11

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

Revelation 21:4

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

1 Corinthians 2:9

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him...”

These are just a few of the verses which speak of the wonder, joy, and glory of heaven.

We often fail to realize the blessings that await believers in heaven.

Some make the mistake of thinking heaven will be like a long – never-ending worship service.

Or we think it will be some sort of spiritual, out-of-body existence where we float around (on a cloud???) and simply exist in heavenly light.

The challenge is living in this world – our senses – our experiences are almost all physical or material experiences.

It's difficult to realize – to know – that the real world – the lasting, eternal world – is not physical, but the spiritual realm.

One day this world – the universe as we know it – will be destroyed.

But God will create a “new heaven and new earth” (Rev. 21:1)

In the account of the ‘Rich Young Ruler’ – this man valued heaven – at least enough to find Jesus and ask Him about it.

Jesus told him what to do.

Jesus even invites the man to come and follow Him!!

(Mark 10:21)

But the text says:

“Disheartened by the saying, he (the rich man) went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

I recently heard a pastor say – and this is probably correct – that Jesus was inviting this man to be one of His disciples.

But the man declined the offer – he said ‘no’.

We read this account and we don’t know the man’s name.

If he would have said ‘yes’ – we would know his name and like the other Apostles, he would have changed the world by sharing the good news about Jesus!

Interesting to think about.

We often compare this world and all it offers – with the spiritual world – the next life.

And we think of what we would miss out on – if we said ‘yes’ to Jesus.

But what if the more important question is:

‘Will we miss out on the greatest things if we say, ‘yes’ to the pleasures of this life?’

Section 3:

John 19:26-27

“Woman, here is your son. Here is your mother.”

Section 3 Details

- 1) Clip from “Passion of the Christ”
- 2) Scripture/Title slide up
- 3) Pastor Steve intro (*Behind the communion table*)

Can you imagine what it was like to be 1 of 2 people who were closest to Jesus?

Being Jesus' best friend – the “disciple Jesus loved” (John 13:23).

Being close to Jesus – His friend.

Relationship - with you – is what Jesus wants.

It's the desire of His heart.

Do you want to be that close to Jesus?

4) “John” monologue

5) Pastor Steve devotional

I can imagine being super close to Jesus – to be His best friend – was amazing – but also very challenging.

Close friends normally have a lot in common.

They have shared interests...

They like many of the same things...

They just like to hang out together and they just ‘click’.

John – “the disciple Jesus loved” (John 13:23) was likely Jesus' closest friend.

What if your closest friend was perfect – sinless – the One who created the universe – the One who created you!

That would be both amazing, and intimidating.

Friends are easier to come by when you're growing up – Jr. High, H.S., college.

But after college – when you start your career – time gets swallowed up by the responsibilities of life – and time for friends gets cut back.

In the adult world, a close friend is a rare commodity... it is a gift.

Proverbs 18:24

“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

Most people see God – and since Jesus is God – we see Jesus in light of our performance.

We think of God – and we think of how good we must be. *We think we have to perform the right way.*

Or we think of how we fall short of being good.

Most people don't realize that Jesus wants to bring us close to Himself.

So close that there is no space between us.

John 15:13-16

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

This certainly helps us see Jesus in a different light. Yes, He was / is God – the Creator - the Messiah – the Savior of the world.

But He's also our friend – and He loves us – and He proved it by dying for us – by dying in our place.

“You are My friends if you do what I command you.”

He doesn't ask us – His friends - to die for Him.

He asks us to live for Him – to live as He’s directed and commanded us to live.

In this moment on the cross – the 3rd thing Jesus says – in the midst of His agony – He tells His best friend to take care of His mom.

John 19:26-27

“Woman, here is your son. Here is your mother.”

This statement reveals 2 things about Jesus.

1) His love for His mother, Mary. Before He dies, He makes sure she will be provided for and taken care of.

2) His love for His closest friend – and the trust He had in John’s ability to care for His mom.

Both of these reveal how Jesus valued relationships – especially His family.

Relationships were important to Jesus – because people are important to Him.

You are important to Him!!

The night before He was crucified – on Thursday night – as they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told His disciples:

“You are My friends...”

You did not choose Me, but I chose you...” John 15:14,16

Do you realize that if you've put your faith in Jesus – if you're a follower of Jesus – He sees you as His friend – and He has chosen you!

If you've not put your faith in Jesus – He invites you to do that tonight.

He wants you to be His friend – and He wants to be your Savior.

Will you be His friend?

Will you ask Him to save you from your sins?

Section 4:

Mark 15:34

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Section 4 Details

1) Clip from “Passion of the Christ”

2) Scripture/Title slide up

3) Pastor Steve intro (*Behind the communion table*)

Have you ever felt alone – deserted by God?

Like He has turned His back on you...

He doesn't care – or doesn't have the time – is too busy to help?

This can be one of the most challenging thoughts and experiences we have.

To feel... and think... that God has abandoned us.

4) “Martha” monologue

5) Pastor Steve devotional

Many people have abandoned their faith – walked away from God – because they believe God has walked away from them.

It's ironic – that we do the very thing we accuse God of doing.

Sometimes we abandon God because He does something – or wants us to do something we don't like.

Jonah did that.

He fled from God. Went the opposite way – because He didn't like the assignment God gave him. He didn't like that God might be merciful and gracious to the people Jonah hated.

But what about when we feel as if God has abandoned us?

I say 'feel as if God has' done this – because this is really an issue of our perception – not reality.

Martha was frustrated because Jesus seemed to give more attention to strangers than one of His closest friends.

But again... that is what it seemed like to Martha.

God had a bigger plan than Martha had realized.

God wanted a bigger display of power – than a mere healing would provide.

God wanted to give a preview of what would happen to Jesus – a resurrection!

Our biggest challenge is we try and figure out God from our vantage point.

We try to figure out His motives – from the tiny speck of information we have – our point of view. But we don't know the big picture that God knows. We don't know what His plan is – and how He will use our situation for His glory – and someone else's benefit.

The truth is – our situation may not turn out 'good' for us personally.

But God will use it for something greater than our life.

And this is where the challenge lies.

The O.T. prophet Isaiah wrote about this:

Isaiah 40:28

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD.”

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Romans 11:34

“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?”

1 Corinthians 2:16

“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct Him?”

At first glance, we might say these verses – and many others in the Bible like them – don’t give us the answer we’re looking for.

And we would be right... because we’re usually asking the wrong question – and therefore, looking for the wrong answer.

Our question is usually: ‘God, what are you doing?’

‘God, why are you doing this?’

So, we’re looking for the answer to those questions. But this is where we get off-track and lost – and discouragement quickly sets in.

The truth is not in asking God questions – trying to figure out what He’s doing – so we can be on the same page and have a sense of peace with the circumstances we’re in and that are in our future. That’s trying to find peace in our circumstances.

The key is reminding ourselves of:

WHO God is...

WHAT God is...

WHAT God has promised.

Jesus didn't give Martha the answer she was hoping for.

He told her WHO and WHAT He is:

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.

Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)

The question still stands.

"Do you believe this?"

Do you believe in Jesus – in His resurrection and His life?

Section 5:

John 19:28

"I Am Thirsty"

Section 6 Details

- 1) Clip from "Passion of the Christ"
- 2) Scripture/Title slide up
- 3) Pastor Steve devotional

Jesus was not a fictional person.

He was a real person – with flesh and blood – with feelings – emotions.

He got tired – hungry – sore muscles – blisters on His feet – slivers in His hands as He worked as a carpenter.

Later, the Apostle John would write these words about Jesus...

1 John 1:1

“...whom we have heard and seen. We saw Him with our own eyes and touched Him with our own hands.”

He was human – just like you and me.

Hebrews 2:17

“...it was necessary for Him (Jesus) to be made in every respect like us...”

He was fully human – and at the same time fully divine.

100% of both.

Not 50/50.

100% human – 100% divine.

He was not some symbol of goodness.

He was not some ideal for us to aspire to.

He certainly was good... and we should aspire to live and love as He did.

But He was real – a real man – and on the cross His humanity was evident for all to see – as He bled from the scourging, from the crown of thorns smashed into His skull, and from the nails pounded through His wrists and feet.

In His humanity He cried out in His separation from the Heavenly Father – a separation caused by the sin Jesus was now taking onto Himself.

As He bore our sins, this caused – for the first time in eternity – a separation between the Father – and the 2nd person in the Triune Godhead.

The incarnate Son of God was now alone – due to our sin that was placed on Him.

At the same time as His humanity was fully exposed, His deity was just as evident.

- He sought forgiveness for those who were torturing Him.

- He promised paradise – heaven – to the repentant criminal next to Him.

- He provided for His mother – entrusting her to the care of His closest friend.

“I am thirsty” is a simple thing to say.

We say it all the time.

It’s a common – normal thing for us – especially living in the desert.

It’s a simple thing Jesus said – but it reveals so much about Him.

Philippians 2:7-8

“...He (Jesus) gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

When He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.”

Jesus loves you so much – that He became one of us.

He took on human flesh – with all its limitations, weaknesses, and pains.

He willingly gave His life – suffered – was tortured – to pay the price for your sin – the sins of humanity.

The **Psalmist** writes:

42:1-2

“As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for You, O God. I thirst for God, the living God.”

107:9

“For He (God) satisfies the thirsty...”

John 4:13-14

“Jesus replied...But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again.”

Are you thirsty for the Lord?

Revelation 22:17

“Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.”

Go ahead... tell Him you’re thirsty... ask Him for the living water of His Son – Jesus.

Section 6:

John 19:30

“It Is Finished”

Section 6 Details

- 1) Clip from “Passion of the Christ”
- 2) Scripture/Title slide up
- 3) Pastor Steve intro (*Behind the communion table*)

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you thought *“This is the end.”* *“I’m at the end of the line.”*

Only to realize that it’s not the end – you’re not defeated – but instead, it’s the beginning of something new?

A new start!

What seemed like the end was actually the beginning of something better – something restored beyond your expectations?

4) “The Adulteress” monologue

5) Pastor Steve devotional/prayer

Finishing the task – finishing a big job – it feels good.

A number of years ago – I ran the Sedona ½ marathon.

I certainly wasn’t running to win the race.

I was running to finish.

I don’t like when something is unfinished.

It bothers me – haunts me – in its unfinished state – calling out to me to *‘Finish what I started!’*

Over the centuries, Christians have referred to this 6th statement of Jesus on the cross as “The Battle Cry of the Cross”.

These words marked the deciding blow in the divine battle against Satan and his demonic forces.

When Jesus said, “It is finished.” Those words carried with them the power of a nuclear spiritual weapon.

We have a saying that *‘Words can’t hurt me.’*

Well... I think these 3 words hurt Satan – and his allies.

These 3 little words were like a sword piercing his evil heart.

Over the course of human history Satan had attempted numerous times to destroy the Messianic line.

Here are a few of the ways Satan attempted to do this.

- He tried to destroy the Jewish people through countless wars and battles.
- Through their slavery in Egypt.
- Through Haman’s wicked plan recorded in the O.T. book of Esther.
- Through the Slaughter of the Innocents – the murder of all the baby boys in Bethlehem around the time of Jesus’ birth.
- Through the temptation of Jesus.
- By Peter’s attempt to have Jesus avoid the cross.

The plan of salvation – which was planned before the creation of the world (Eph. 1:4) – was now at the finish line.

The plans of Satan to derail the plan of God – to ruin any chance of redemption from sin – had failed.

Let me read for you the 2 verses that come before these powerful 3 words spoken by Jesus.

John 19:28-30

Jesus knew that His mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture He said, “I am thirsty.” (Psalm 69:21)

A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to His lips.

When Jesus had tasted it, He said, “It is finished!”

Jesus knew exactly why He was born – exactly why He took on flesh.

His mission was clear from eternity past.

He was eager for this mission to begin – and to complete it.

Hebrews 12:2

“...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...”

I wonder... in the fullness of the pain and suffering – the agony Jesus endured on our behalf.

I wonder... if when He took that small drink to get some moisture in His mouth – if He didn't have a

feeling of joy and peace – and maybe a hint of a smile – when He finally was able to say:

“It is finished.”

Years later the Apostle Paul would write these words:

Colossians 2:13-15

“God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This He set aside, nailing it to the cross.

He (God) disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him (Jesus).”

The cosmic battle in the spiritual realm between the forces of evil and good – that so often spilled over into the human, physical, material world – was now decided.

The enemy is still fighting – and the followers of Christ must be alert – fighting against the enemy whose fate is sealed - but he continues to try and cause as much harm and damage to as many Christians as possible - before his final judgment is carried out.

But Christian... never be in doubt.

The end has been decided.

God has won over the powers of evil and darkness.

“It is finished.”

Section 7:

Luke 23:46

“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”

Section 5 Details

- 1) Clip from “Passion of the Christ”
- 2) Scripture/Title slide up
- 3) Pastor Steve devotional

We can see 2 wonderful truths in this final statement of Jesus on the cross.

2 wonderful realities that can encourage us tonight.

First, we can fully trust God with our life – our soul.

Jesus – is bearing the sins of human history – past, present, and future.

A short time ago He cried out – in a loud voice – “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Due to carrying the sin of the world – for the first time ever - there is a fracture in the fellowship – a separation in the union of the Triune Godhead – due to the justice and holiness of God.

A God who cannot be in the presence of sin.

He cannot have fellowship with sin.

He is holy – separate from sin.

So, He must judge sin – which is what the cross is all about.

In this fractured relationship – Jesus places His spirit into the hands of His Father.

- He knows the Father's love for Him.
- He knows the Father's will for Him was the cross.
- He knows the Father's justice has been satisfied.
- He knows He can trust the Father fully with His life – His spirit.

What Jesus says here is a quote from **Psalm 31:5** – which reads in full:

Psalm 31:5

“Into Your hand I commit My spirit; You have redeemed Me, O LORD, faithful God.”

The Second truth we can see in this statement is we can trust the Father with our life – our spirit – because Jesus gave Himself for us.

Look closely at this final statement of Jesus.

Jesus is in control of His own death.

He is giving up His life.

His life wasn't taken from Him.

He is giving up His life.

John 10:17-18

“I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father.”

Jesus – the incarnate Son of God – gave up His life – for you.

The mission is finished.

The job is done – completed.

Never forget... Jesus willingly did this for you.

With you on His mind – He endured the cross and all its shame... for me... for you.

Galatians 2:20b

“And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

The cross is the greatest expression of love in human history.

Jesus proved – and demonstrated His love for us by giving His life for ours.

He tasted death so we could have His life.

This final statement reveals the trust Jesus had in the Father’s love and forgiveness.

It also reveals the control Jesus had over His life – and His death.

He would decide when He would die.

He gave up His spirit – to the loving hands of the Heavenly Father.

Will you do the same?

Will you trust the Father with your life?

Prayer

Song: “The Power of the Cross” [Praise Team]

Communion (Pastor Steve from Communion Table)

Song: “Son of Suffering” [CDOBC (Good Friday 2022) in G]
Includes Scripture reading.

Scripture reading (Amanda, Chris, Megan)

33 chimes (Keyboard)

Dismissal in silence to crosses in the courtyard