



Hard Sayings of Jesus

Lesson 12: Words from a Hard Place (Jesus' Speaking from the Cross)

Opening Prayer

Introduction

1.) Among the many moving scenes in *Saving Private Ryan*, is the final scene where Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks) is dying and tells private Ryan, "Earn it. Earn this." What did Miller mean? What is your reaction to it?

2.) How is that different from the words Jesus speaks to us?

Studying God's Word

Jesus sacrificed his life for us. As he did so, he spoke "seven words"—seven statements from the cross that tell us so much about his love for us and his will for us. Some of them are hard to understand; some, hard to believe; some, hard to put into practice. Yet in all of them we can find God's amazing love. Today, we'll take a brief look at those words.

Luke 23:32-34 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

1. What's so difficult about these words?
2. What makes this difficult for you to believe?
3. Jesus calls us to love and forgive as he does. Identify the difficult implication(s) this has for the way God calls us to live.

Luke 23:38-43 There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

4. Often we point to these words as words of comfort. Yet, explain why these words to this dying criminal can be hard for us to understand.
5. Give some examples of why these words can be hard to believe or practice in our own lives.

John 19:25-27 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

6. Identify what makes these words hard to hear.
7. How do they help you understand some amazing truths about your Savior?

Matthew 27:45-48 ⁴⁵ From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

8. List as many things as possible that make these words hard to understand.
9. What was Jesus expressing?
10. How do these hard words help you better understand God's love for you?

John 19:28-29 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

11. Perhaps it's hard to understand why words like this would be recorded for us. What key things do they tell you about your Savior's suffering and death?
12. When are words like this a comfort to you?

John 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

13. These words are simple and straightforward. Sometimes the real challenge is *to believe them*. Explain why that is.
14. How does the rest of the verse help show that the price for sins truly was paid for?

Luke 23:44-47 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

15. It's a beautiful end to a total self-sacrifice. How might these words encourage you as you approach your own departure?

16. How might you incorporate Jesus' words from the cross into daily life and prayers?

Summary

- Jesus' words from the cross bring us face-to-face with how terrible God's anger over sin is.
- Jesus' words from the cross bring us face-to-face with the love of God that's so deep, it's almost unbelievable!