

**In the Name of Jesus**  
**Good Friday – April 18, 2025**

**Meditations on Jesus' Seven Words from the Cross**

Adapted from Paul E. Kretzmann's *Popular Commentary*

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**1. Forgiveness at the Cross – Luke 23:33-34**

*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. Jesus said, **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."** And they divided up His clothes by casting lots.*

At the same time that Jesus was led out of the city to be crucified, and in accordance with the word of prophecy, two others were taken to the same place. But these men were really criminals. They had done something wicked, which merited death. Jesus was placed on the same level with them, as Isaiah wrote: **"He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12)**. They came to the place called Calvary, the Place of The Skull. There they crucified the Lord in the midst between the two criminals. They stretched out His arms on the cross-pieces, pierced His hands and feet with nails to hold His body in place. Thus did Christ suffer the punishment we deserved for our sins. In this way He bore our sins in His own body on the cross. **"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)**. And still there was no bitterness or resentment in Jesus' heart, not even against those who were carrying out the sentence (and none too gently, if the usual cruelty was practiced). With His Savior-heart going out to them in the blindness of their crime, He calls out over the heads of His tormentors: **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing!"** He prays for the criminals, for His enemies who were causing His death. His first word from the cross is full of comfort for all of us sinners. **"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7)**.

## 2. Salvation on the Cross – Luke 23:39-43

*One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: "Aren't You the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus answered him, **"I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise."***

During the first hour of the excruciating agony of the crucifixion, both criminals had joined the surging throngs in taunting, cursing and mocking the Man hanging on the cross between them. But the example of wonderful patience, together with the words that fell from the lips of the Sufferer, gradually caused one of the criminals to fall silent. His heart was pierced by thoughts of sorrow and repentance. He acknowledged Jesus as his Savior. When, therefore, the other criminal continued, the man on the right hand rebuked him. He reminded the other that they both were suffering justly, receiving payment in full for the sins they had committed, exactly what their deeds were worth. But they were the only ones in that category, for this Man, this Jesus, had done nothing out of place, nothing wrong or wicked. So this criminal acknowledged his great guilt before God. He was sorry for his sins. And this sorrow was supplemented and completed by faith. Turning to Jesus, he implored Him: **"Remember me when You come into Your kingdom."** The poor outcast thus made a splendid confession of Christ. He recognized Him as the King of heaven. And Jesus bestowed on this criminal the very fullness of His divine pardon. He gave him the assurance, with solemn emphasis, that he would be with Him in Paradise *that very day*. He would not need to wait for heaven's glory to be his. The glory and happiness of Paradise would be his as soon as he had closed his eyes in death. For all sinners in the whole world the Lord has opened the doors of Paradise by His life, suffering, and death. Whoever believes in Him has complete salvation the moment he dies. That is the glorious fruit of the Passion of Christ: Forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

### 3. Remembrance at the Cross – John 19:25-27

*Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 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,**" and to the disciple, "**Here is your mother.**" From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.*

What a beautiful evidence of the Savior's filial love and care! In the midst of the excruciating agonies of the body and still more horrible tortures of the soul He finds time to think about His mother and the duties He owed her in return for her mother's devotion. Jesus turned first to His mother, encouraging her to look upon John as her son, who would take the place of Him that was about to be removed from His position of dutiful Son. In a similar manner He encouraged John look upon Mary as his mother, to show her all the kindness and care which a son owes his mother in her old age. The provision of Jesus for His aged mother is an example of the proper fulfillment of the Fourth Commandment. This active obedience of Christ serves for our salvation. He has kept the Law in our place. It may have seemed a trivial matter at a time when the redemption of millions hung in the balance, but it characterizes the Savior's love. This Jesus, who died on the cross for us, to save our souls from damnation, will care also for our bodies. He will make proper provision for their protection and keeping.

#### 4. Anguish of Soul at the Cross – Matthew 27:45-47

*From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. 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?”** When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”*

It was now high noon, the brightest time of day. All of a sudden the rays of the sun were cut off by a miracle of God. It was an extraordinary phenomenon, associated with the death of Jesus in the most intimate and mysterious manner. Over the whole world this darkness extended, shrouding all things in its mysterious obscurity. During these three hours the Son of God was obliged to taste and endure the full force, the full horror of the divine wrath over the sins of mankind. Here the Substitute of mankind was in prison and judgment. Abandoned and rejected by God. That is the torture of hell. What deep humiliation for the eternal Son of God to enter into the depths of everlasting death and torment! But by His enduring the torments of hell, we have been liberated, for in the midst of this most terrible Passion Jesus remained obedient to God and thus conquered wrath, hell, and damnation for us. When He uttered His cry of extreme pain and terror, in the Aramaic tongue, some of the bystanders again took occasion to ridicule Him. All this taunting mockery was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Not one word of the Lord regarding the Passion of the Savior fell to the ground unfulfilled.

## 5. Suffering at the Cross – John 19:28-29

*Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “**I am thirsty.**” 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.*

Again and again the evangelists bring out this fact that the suffering and death of Jesus took place in accordance with the will and counsel of God and with the sayings of the prophets, through whom the Messiah spoke. It was about three o’clock in the afternoon. During the darkness that covered the land Jesus had drunk the cup of the wrath of God over the sins of the world to the very dregs. It was during those hours that He felt the most acute and piercing suffering. But now it was over. He had remained victor in the terrible battle. But there was still a word of Old Testament prophecy which hadn't yet found its fulfillment. Therefore Jesus, whose thirst had been intensified by the agony of soul He had just endured, cried out: **“I thirst!”** And just as God had foretold in Old Testament Scripture it happened. There was a vessel there containing vinegar. One of the soldiers took a sponge, dipped it into the vinegar, attached it to a reed of hyssop, and held it up to the mouth of the Savior, thus relieving, at least in a small measure, the burning thirst attending the crucifixion. Thus were fulfilled the words King David penned in Psalm 69:21: **“They put gall in My food and gave Me vinegar for my thirst.”**

## 6. Victory at the Cross – 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.*

Now, the great work having been accomplished and even the last passage of Old Testament Scripture fulfilled, Jesus Himself made the announcement of our redemption’s completion by calling out: **“It is finished!”** He had conquered all the enemies of mankind. He had accomplished all things, brought them to a successful close. He had gained the salvation of mankind. Here is a world of wonderful comfort for all believers, especially in those hours when the attacks of doubt are directed against the assurance of salvation. The redemption of mankind is complete. Nothing more remains to be done. On these words we can with full confidence place an unwavering trust in our Savior. All that the Messiah was to endure and suffer, everything that belongs to the work of our salvation, was finished! The great worth of the Life which was given on Calvary makes it more than equivalent in value and ransom to all the sin and guilt of all men since the beginning of time and till the everlasting day begins!

## 7. Confidence on the Cross – Luke 23:44-46

*It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, **“Father, into your hands I commit My spirit.”** When He had said this, He breathed His last.*

Thus Jesus fulfilled the great work of atonement for the sins of the world. Thus He died for us. Christ lay down His life in death, in His own power, of His own volition. He now bowed His head and gave up the spirit, commended His soul into the hands of His heavenly Father. All this He did in His own power. For He did not die of exhaustion, as all the external circumstances of the story clearly indicate. Jesus died because He wanted to. His death was His own voluntary deed. In His own power He laid down His life. He sacrificed Himself to God. In the case of the ordinary human being, death is an unpleasant, disagreeable, terrible experience, from which man shrinks and flees. But Jesus wanted to die. He wanted to fulfill the word which He Himself had spoken: **“I lay down My life for the sheep ... The reason My Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again” (John 10:15,17)**. The factor of willingness in the death of Jesus gives to it its value, makes it a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. Mark it well: The Man who died on the cross is not a mere man, but the Son of God, God Himself. Jesus (disposing of His own life as He willed it) Himself is God. This fact erases the guilt of the world. In dying, He, as our supremely strong Savior, vanquished death and took it captive forever. Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. He was delivered over for our offenses. By His death He destroyed him who had the power of death, the devil, and delivered us from death and the devil!

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