

# THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BIBLE OUTREACH

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## DAILY DEVOTION

### JESUS' FINAL WORDS FROM THE CROSS, PART 1

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The last words of a dying loved one are remembered and treasured as some of the most important words spoken.

On Good Friday, the Gospels record seven final sayings of Christ from the cross that believers have both cherished and been challenged with in processing their own struggles.

No one Gospel contains all the last words of Christ from the cross. But a comparison of the narratives reveals seven powerful statements that express Jesus' humanity, love, and grace.

Let's review Christ's final words together this week and discover what truths they reveal for us today.

Here are the first two:

1. (Luke 23:34, NIV), "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

What a striking expression for one so unfairly treated. Falsely accused, wrongfully sentenced to die, and cruelly beaten, Jesus first words from the cross are: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

It's unimaginable to me that Jesus could offer a word of forgiveness to those who were crucifying Him. It's also difficult to believe what Jesus said about those who were behind it all; that they did not know what they were doing. It appeared that they knew exactly what they were doing and didn't really seem to care about it.

Yet as one pastor put it, "His words are probably the most descriptive truth about all human sin.... Even when sin is calculated, planned thoroughly, conceived carefully, and executed efficiently, no one really

understands the depth or dimension of sin's destructiveness or the degree of its horrible damage to people. In a very real sense, every sin is a sin of ignorance." With that truth in mind and Calvary's love in my heart, I can learn the grace of forgiveness as well.

In a real sense, it was our sin that put Him on the cross. He died for each one of us so that we could be forgiven and reconciled to God.

As we consider Jesus first words from Calvary, we are convicted to forgive just as we have been forgiven.

2. (Luke 23:43, NLT), "I assure you, today you will be with Me in paradise."

Jesus first words did not go unnoticed by the two thieves crucified next to Him. At least one of them sought that forgiveness he so desperately needed. Imagine the comfort those words brought to the dying thief suspended on a cross next to Jesus. Luke records the exchange between the thieves on either side of Christ and the heart cry of one of them in Luke 23:39-42.

I love the response that Jesus gave this dying thief. He said, "I assure you, today you will be with Me in paradise." Luke 23:43.

It's never too late to seek God! His grace looks beyond all our faults and failures into our hearts as He accepts us just as we are; then He offers us fellowship with Him! "... today you will be with Me in paradise."

His acceptance assures us of forgiveness. That's the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! You can be forgiven!

Celebrate your forgiveness in Christ and share it with someone else as you invite them to an Easter retreat/service in your Church.

Or tell someone about the love of Jesus Christ during this Easter period.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, let your words of forgiveness work in my life and give me grace to forgive those who offend me in Jesus name, Amen!