



Seven Sayings of Christ from the Cross

Daily Devotionals for Holy Week 2018

**“There is more to be learned at the foot of the
Cross than anywhere else in the world.”**

J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

*First Presbyterian Church (EPC)
Starkville, MS*

This little booklet is dedicated to the members
of FPC Starkville with hopes that it will bring us
closer to the cross of Jesus, closer to Him as our
Savior while we contemplate His final sayings
from the cross as He suffered in our place and
gave Himself to die so that we may have
everlasting life.

Allen Johnson

March 4, 2018

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Starkville, Mississippi (EPC)

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Introduction to The Seven Sayings of Christ from the Cross

Friday, March 23

The Passion Narrative contains several events leading up to the Crucifixion. Included but not limited to, are the Passover meal (or Last Supper), Jesus' washing the feet of the disciples, the going out and across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives, entering the Garden of Gethsemane (Olive Press) and Jesus' prayer while Peter, James and John fall asleep (three times). Greatly disturbed, in agony, with sweat like great drops of blood, He prays "...that this cup may pass from Me, but not My will, but Your will be done." The anticipated "cup" of course, is the horrible death and the wrath of God that Jesus knows He is facing. He then announces "The hour has come that the Son of Man is given over into the hands of sinners." Matt 26:45b

He is betrayed by Judas and is arrested by a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards. He is questioned by Caiaphas the High Priest and Annas the ex officio High Priest on false charges of blasphemy at an illegal Jewish "Trial" before the Sanhedrin. He is taken before Pilate, Prefect of Judaea, who questions Him, can find no wrong in Him, and sends Him to Herod Agrippa (grandson of Herod the Great) who just happens to be in Jerusalem for Passover. Herod also finds no wrong in Jesus and sends Him back to Pilate.

The crowd shouts "Crucify Him, crucify Him" and Pilate capitulates to them and finds him guilty of sedition, a political decision on his part, and sentences Him to be crucified. Many of those who cried "Crucify Him" had just a few days before shouted "Hosanna!" (Hebrew for "O save now!") when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey colt.

Pilate turns Jesus over to the Roman soldiers. He is stripped, mocked, flogged, spit upon, slapped in the face and paraded around in a robe and crown of thorns. He is finally led to the hill called Golgotha, "The Skull" (we refer to it as Calvary) just outside Jerusalem, nailed to the cross and lifted up between two evil doers.

The crowd of onlookers includes Chief Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, Roman soldiers, Jews and passersby. They revile and mock Him and wag their heads in scorn and contempt. His disciples, for the most part, have fled and deserted Him (as He predicted). The women, however, who were His disciples stood at a distance, but close enough to see what was going on. The crowd shouts "If He is the Messiah, let Him come down from the cross! He saved others, Himself, He cannot save." "Come down from the cross and we will believe!" The Broadman Bible Commentary on Luke/John states: "A redemptive life is not sufficient proof to the leaders that Jesus is the Messiah. If he is the Christ, he must prove it by using his power on

his own behalf. They cannot conceive of power or position not being used for self. Nor do they understand that saving one's self is incompatible with saving others... Their God is a projection of their own self-interests and ideas so they assume that he would act in the same way that they would in such circumstances." So, "Himself, He cannot save."

With this last statement, no truer words were ever uttered. Actually, He **could** have saved Himself; He could have called legions of angels to come take Him from the cross. But! If He saved Himself, there would be no saving of anyone else, no salvation for His people! No salvation for you, and for me. So, the cup would not, truly **must** not pass from Him. And Jesus obeyed the Father's will unswervingly to the bitter end.

In 1 Cor 1:22-25, Paul reminds us "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

Pray: Holy, holy, holy art Thou, oh God! You are great and greatly to be praised, for you are the Creator and Sustainer of all things. You are the Author of salvation, the Giver of Your own Son to save us from our sins. Oh Lord Jesus, our hearts and minds bow to You in thanksgiving for You were "...wounded for our transgressions and by Your stripes we are healed." In your Name, oh Lord, amen.

Personal Reflections

Saying 1 – The Word of Forgiveness

Saturday, March 24

This saying is found in Luke 23: v33. “And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary (or Golgotha, or The Skull,), there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34. Then said Jesus, ‘**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.**’ And they parted His raiment, and cast lots.” (KJV)

This first saying of Jesus from the cross is a prayer; A prayer for those who were killing Him. He could have shouted curses on them, but no, He prayed for forgiveness for them. Paraphrasing Matthew Henry: As soon as He was fastened to the cross, or while they were nailing him, he prayed this petition: *Father, forgive them*. One would think that He should have prayed, “Father, consume them, the Lord look upon it and requite it.” No, He prayed particularly for those who acted against Him. He made intercession for transgressors as was foretold in Isaiah 53:12, and it is to be added to His High Priestly prayer in John 17, to complete His intercession: both for His disciples, and for these who revile and persecute Him: “*Father forgive them*, not only these but all that shall repent, and believe the gospel.”

Note this hill was just outside the city of Jerusalem, on the north side (probably) and near a highly travelled roadway so many passersby would see Roman “justice” being meted to criminals. The threat itself of crucifixion was very likely a deterrent to any uprisings by the Jews against the Roman government.

Father, forgive them... In the past, during Jesus’ ministry He Himself “forgave” sinners as He healed the sick, cured the lame and cast out demons. Here, however, He is praying that the Father would forgive. He came to bring forgiveness to sinners and had the authority to do so. Why not now, couldn’t He just say “I forgive you because you don’t know what you are doing”? The most probable answer is that He gave up His divine prerogative while on the cross as the representative of His people. Jesus, bearing the sins of His people, is identified with them. Isaiah 53:12 tells us “He was numbered with the transgressors.” He therefore is not in the position to forgive sins but in that of a suppliant, identified with His people. He took our place. He who knew no sin was made sin and suffered the penalty of sin which we deserve. He was a substitute for us before the wrath of God! So here He makes “intercession for the transgressors” in accordance with prophecy and in keeping with Luke 6:28: “..bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” (ESV)

JC Ryle in his *Commentary on Luke* says: “It is worthy of remark that as soon as the blood of the Great Sacrifice began to flow, the Great High Priest began to intercede.”

For whom did He intercede? “Them” could mean the Roman soldiers, the Temple guards, the Chief Priests, Scribes, members of the Sanhedrin, the crowd gathered and gawking at Him, any, a few, or all. While there is much debate among theologians concerning this point, we can assuredly admit they all needed forgiveness. Don’t we all? As A.W. Pink has written, “Man’s greatest need is forgiveness.”

God’s forgiveness comes from His mercy and grace through the atoning sacrifice of His Son which turns away His anger and wrath against sin. God’s mercy and justice, His love and wrath converge on the cross!

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” How strange this last part sounds. Surely, they knew that they were killing Jesus! But what did Jesus really mean by this? Was He right? Of course He was. They knew they were killing Jesus, but they didn’t realize the enormity of what they did. Nor did they realize the full implications of Jesus’ death. In other words, they did not know that God’s plan of salvation included the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. Jack B. Scott in his book *God’s Plan Unfolded* comments: “God was not pleased with the act of sinful men who put His Servant to death but He was pleased to ordain Christ’s death as a substitute for our own death which we deserved. In the death of Christ we see in one act both God’s judgment (wrath) on sin and His grace (love) toward His children whom He spared through the death of His Servant.”

Forgiveness flows from the cross. We don’t deserve it. We can’t earn it. We can’t buy it. It’s free...a gift from our Savior, Jesus Christ, by grace alone, when we believe in Him.

Pray: Thanks be to God!

Personal Reflections

Saying 2 – The Word of Salvation

Sunday, March 25

The second saying of Christ from the cross follows several mockings that were hurled at Him from those who were crucifying Him. Also mocking Him were two co-crucified criminals. Surprisingly, one of the criminals repents, and prays to Jesus for “remembrance”:

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 And he said to him, **“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”** (ESV)

The wrongdoers have been tried, convicted, sentenced and are now receiving their just punishment. It is unknown if they had ever heard of Jesus. Both were present, saw and heard all that happened as they and Jesus were crucified. Yet, one died in his sins, as he had lived. The other repented, believed in Christ, called on him for mercy and went to paradise. This can be accounted for only by the sovereignty of God.

The impenitent malefactor demands to be saved from the cross. Matthew Henry in his commentary on Luke writes: “Though he was now in pain and agony, and in the valley of the shadow of death, yet this did not humble his proud spirit, nor teach him to give good language, no, not to his fellow-sufferer. No troubles will of themselves work a change in a wicked heart, but sometimes they *irritate* the corruption which one would think they should *mortify*. He challenges Christ to *save both himself and them*.”

The penitent thief is here declaring Jesus’ innocence: “...this man has done nothing wrong.” And he is declaring his and his companion’s guilt. This is an implicit contrast of what Pilate affirmed in Luke 23:15 about Jesus- “There is nothing worthy of death that has been done by him”

After rebuking his companion, the other wrongdoer speaks to Jesus. This is stunning! He says: “Jesus, remember me...” Nowhere else in the Gospel does anyone directly address Jesus simply by his name without a specifying or reverential qualification. Beyond that it reflects irony. The first person with confidence to be so familiar was a convicted criminal who is also the last person on earth to speak to Jesus before Jesus dies. The familiarity is not irreverent, for the wrongdoer assumes that Jesus has the kingly power to dispense royal benefits at any

time. It reminds us of the spontaneity of Jesus' disciples when he called them to "Follow me". And, it tells the world that it is never too late to say: "Jesus, remember me."

"Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise"

Pray: Praise be to You, O God, for salvation flows from Your grace by the work of Your Son on that terrible cross! Soli Deo Gloria

Personal Reflections

Saying 3 – The Word of Affection

Monday, March 26

After the soldiers crucified Jesus and divided His clothing, we read in John 19:25: “...but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, **‘Woman, behold, your son!’** 27 **Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’** And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” (ESV)

Almost all the disciples had fled Jesus, lest they should be found guilty as His associates. John did return, as we will see and there were other women there also, with Mary. Although Jesus’ male followers would be endangered, it wasn’t unusual at that time for the women not to draw attention. John Calvin writes: “...praise [should be] bestowed on the women and actually, if they had not been there the proclamation of salvation would have been impeded” ...as the women’s witness was used in proclaiming the Gospel in this portion of history. (John Calvin, *The Gospel of John*) paraphrased.

Mary’s heart must be broken as she sees the mocking, the jeering of the elders and priests, even the thieves taunting Him. His friends have left Him. Simeon had predicted the piercing sword her heart would bear. (Lk 2:29-32) Here she is certainly suffering that. Does she fall into demonstrable sorrow? Wailing? Crying? No. She stands by the cross, quietly, not wailing, sobbing or retching. Not a word fell from her lips. She suffered in unbroken silence, in profound desolation of spirit. What unmatched fortitude! What transcendent courage! “Was it not reverence for the LORD which kept her from disturbing His last moments?” (A.W. Pink) She has few supporters with her, no husband to comfort her, none of her children to soothe her. Joseph had apparently died before Jesus’ ministry began. The few women who are with her can’t remove the sorrow of her heart. The greatest of all privileges has brought her the greatest of all sorrows. She is alone; she is a widow; her oldest son is dying; who will take care of her?

This from Wm. Barclay:... Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby... Notice that John has returned to Jesus’ side. The other disciples remain at a distance or perhaps are even scattered and in hiding. But “The disciple whom Jesus loved” has come back. John had a double qualification for the service Jesus entrusted to him – he was Jesus’ cousin, because he was Salome’s son, and he was the disciple whom Jesus loved. So Jesus committed Mary to the care of John, and John to the care of Mary, that these two should comfort each other’s loneliness when He was gone. Barclay, *The Gospel of John* (Paraphrased)

“This was an honor put upon John, and a testimony both to his prudence and to his fidelity. If He who knows all things had not known that John loved Him, He would not have made him Mary’s guardian. It is a great honor to be employed for Christ and to be entrusted with any of His interest in the world.” Matthew Henry *Commentary*

When Jesus said, “Behold, your mother!” there was an immediate response from John as “...from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.”

Jesus honored His mother and was true to her as a son. Remember, when approached by His parents in Jerusalem after Passover when he was 12 He immediately obeyed and went with them back to their home in Nazareth. Now we see Him honoring His mother, thinking of her and her future rather than His agony, pain and suffering. This is His example to us to “Honor thy father and mother” with love, gratitude, affection and respect, not only in childhood, but also in adulthood.

Pray: Lord Jesus, we lift up our hearts and minds and hands to you to honor you and praise you. You are our perfect example of a loving, caring son. Help us by your Holy Spirit to follow you and imitate you in our familial relationships. In Your Name, amen.

Personal Reflections

Saying 4 – The Word of Anguish

Tuesday, March 27

Matt 27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "***My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***"

The darkness began at noon and lasted until 3:00 pm. It was as if God had removed the Light of the world. In His cry, Jesus was not calling to Elijah for help as some thought but was praying to His God. Matthew Henry writes: "... our Lord Jesus, even when he was thus forsaken of his Father, kept hold of him as his God, notwithstanding; *My God, my God*; though forsaking me, yet *mine*." As God's Servant, He was doing God's will. (Isa. 49:5-9) Even in the depth of His sufferings, God was His God.

Jesus used the address "My God" rather than Father or Abba in his cry to his Father. He uses the formal address because he no longer fit within the intimacy of the Trinity. As our representative, or surety, he was considered a sinner. Our sins and those of all his people were on him.

He was forsaken –abandoned, deserted, reproached by God the Father, separated from God (a definition of Hell), and it is an expression of desolation and suffering while He was receiving the wrath of God that we deserve. He was not merely feeling lonely! Martin Luther is reported to have said: "God forsaken of God? ... no man can understand that!"

Why? For what reason? For what purpose?

He was forsaken for us, to fulfill the covenants of works and grace, to complete God's plan of salvation, to bring about the death of death, to defeat Satan, and to be a propitiation for the sins of His people. He gave Himself for that purpose. Wow!

"He was forsaken of God because He was made to be sin for us! Reproach has broken His heart! This is a cry arising from depths of infinite anguish no mere human being can know. This cry no mortal mind can comprehend. This mystery no creature can fathom!" Don Fortner, *Seven Words from the Cross*

John Calvin writes: "Not only did he offer his body as the price of our reconciliation with God, but in his soul also he endured the punishments due to us; and thus he became, as Isaiah speaks, *a man of sorrows* (53:3). Those interpreters are widely mistaken who, laying aside this part of redemption, attended solely to the outward punishment of the flesh; for in order that

Christ might satisfy for us, it was necessary that he should be placed as a guilty person at the judgment seat of God.”

Philip Yancey in *The Jesus I Never Knew* wrote: “We are not told what God the Father cried out at that moment. We can only imagine. The Son became ‘a curse for us’ said Paul in Galatians, and ‘God made him Who had no sin to be sin for us’ he wrote the Corinthians. We know how God feels about sin; the sense of abandonment likely cut both ways.”

How awful it is to be abandoned, forsaken by a parent, or spouse, or a good friend. Loneliness, depression and broken hearts are surely the result. But, how much worse to be abandoned by God! How thankful we must be that we will never be forsaken by our God and Savior!

Pray: Holy God, how great You are! We praise and thank You for Your everlasting love that never will fade, Your promises that never will fail and the surety of salvation through the Cross of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. In His Name, amen.

Personal Reflections

Saying 5 – The Word of Suffering

Wednesday, March 28

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, (or completed) said (to fulfill the Scripture), "***I thirst.***" 29 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. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

A.W. Pink in *Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross* says: "I thirst." What a text for a sermon! A short one it is true, yet how comprehensive, how expressive, and how tragic! The Maker of heaven and earth with parched lips! The Lord of glory in need of a drink!

More than likely Jesus has been thinking about all of the prophecies found in Scripture which point to His earthly work. He's mulled them over, one by one, remembering when and how they were fulfilled. All are complete. Wait. There is one more. Jesus hasn't thought of himself at all during the first few hours of his crucifixion, but only of others. Now, after almost six hours on the cross he finally responds to his own pain and suffering with the words "I thirst". And He is also knowingly fulfilling Scripture by receiving the sour wine mentioned in Ps 69 and 22. And lest we forget, after being separated from the Father, He thirsts for the eternal, loving relationship of the Trinity.

Scripture speaks of two kinds of thirst:

1. absolutely, to suffer thirst; suffer from thirst: properly a thirst for hydration.
2. figuratively, those are said to thirst who painfully feel their want of, and eagerly long for, those things by which the soul is refreshed, supported, strengthened.

So the one who offered living water, which would mean never thirsting again, the one who cried out on the last day of the feast, 'if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink' (Jn7:37-39), he now cries, *I am thirsty*. This thirst is real thirst, demonstrating Jesus' human nature. He is suffering and in great agony. But He is in control. By taking the vinegar, He completes all that is necessary to fulfill prophecy and provide salvation for His own.

A.W. Pink writes: "I thirst" - "Here we see the enunciation of an abiding principle. There is a sense, a real one, in which Christ still thirsts. He is thirsting for the love and devotion of his own. He is yearning for fellowship with his blood-bought people. Here is one of the great marvels of grace - a redeemed sinner can offer that which satisfies the heart of Christ! I can understand how I ought to appreciate his love, but how wonderful that he - the all-sufficient one - should appreciate my love! I have learned how blessed to my own soul is communion

with him, but who would have supposed that my communion was blessed to Christ! Yet it is. For this he still 'thirsts'. Grace enables us to offer that which refreshes him. Wondrous thought!"

Do we thirst, not just for water but for eternal communion with our Savior? For the living Water? Love is never satisfied till there is a response and love in return! So with Christ. Here is the key to Rev. 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any one hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me".

Pray: Thank You, Lord Jesus for loving us and thirsting for our communion with You. In Your Name, Amen.

Personal Reflections

Saying 6 – The Word of victory

Thursday, March 29

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

"It is Finished." One word in Greek, tetelestai, means it is finished or completed, but more importantly, it is accomplished! And it is the cry of the victor who has accomplished his goal. He has won the battle, the race, the Olympic game, etc. Jesus has accomplished His goal.

It would need all the other words that ever were spoken, or ever can be spoken, to explain this one word. It is deep; I cannot fathom it. –Charles Spurgeon, Christ's Dying Word for His Church, Sermons on the Gospel of John, p. 170.

This was not the despairing cry of a helpless martyr; it was not an expression of satisfaction that the termination of his sufferings was now reached; it was not the last gasp of a worn-out life. No, rather was it the declaration on the part of the Divine Redeemer that all for which he came from heaven to earth to do, was now done; that all that was needed to reveal the full character of God had been accomplished; that all that was required by the law before sinners could be saved had now been performed; that the full price of our redemption was now paid –
AW Pink, from "Seven Sayings –"

John Calvin writes: As Jesus spoke, "(He) had not yet died, and had not yet risen; but he saw that nothing now remained to hinder him from going forward to death and resurrection." Redemption was accomplished.

Calvin continues: "This word (tetelestai) shows that the whole accomplishment of our salvation and all the parts in it are contained in his death. We must keep our faith fixed on Christ alone and not to allow it to turn aside in any other direction whatsoever. The perfection of salvation is contained only in him... *It is finished.*"

John R.W. Stott, commenting on the Cross of Christ wrote: "At the cross in holy love God through Christ paid the full penalty of our disobedience of himself. He bore the judgment we deserve in order to bring us the forgiveness we do not deserve. On the cross, God's mercy and justice were equally expressed and eternally reconciled. God's holy love was 'satisfied'."

Jesus has completed the fulfillment of the Covenant of Works that Adam failed to keep. And He has completed His portion of The Covenant of Grace that before the creation of the world

was set among the Trinity. He has been obedient unto the Father to the very end regardless of the pain and suffering. Phil 2:7-8 reminds us: “He emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” so that all was accomplished. “It is finished!”

Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, it overwhelms us when we realize the enormity of what you have done to accomplish our salvation. May all praise and thanksgiving be to you from the depths of our hearts! In your name, Lord Jesus, Amen

Personal Reflections

Saying 7 – The Word of Contentment

Good Friday, March 30

Luke 23:44-47 It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!**" And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"

Jesus calls out with a loud voice – Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!

Notice this is a loud cry, not a weak, feeble gasp. Jesus is still strong enough to hold up his head and speak with authority. He is very much alive. He is still in control. He knows all is completed and it is time for his death. His loud shout is heard by all or at least most of the bystanders. Was it God's plan all along for Jesus to be lifted up on the cross in order to have his voice heard by them? Later, Luke tells us in Acts Ch 2 that about three thousand souls were added to the church at Pentecost. Some of those undoubtedly were here, near the cross of Christ when he gave up his spirit.

Jesus begins his cry with "Father" - When Jesus was forsaken of God, his cry was "My God, My God..." Now, he is back in communion with the Father, so his cry begins "Father..." indicating his recovered intimate relationship. A.W. Pink in *Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross* writes: "This is exceedingly precious. For a while that communion was broken - broken outwardly - as the light of God's holy countenance was hidden from the Sin-Bearer, but now the darkness had passed and was ended forever."

"His first cross-utterance then, was 'Father forgive' and now his last word is, 'Father into thy hands I commend my spirit'. But between those utterances he had hung there for six hours: three spent in sufferings at the hands of man and Satan; three spent in suffering at the hand of God, as the sword of divine justice was 'awakened' to smite Jehovah's Fellow. During those last three hours, God had withdrawn from the Saviour, evoking that terrible cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But now all is done. The cup is drained: the storm of wrath has spent itself: the darkness is past, and the Saviour is seen once more in communion with the Father - never more to be broken." A.W. Pink

"And as he had lived, so he died - yielding himself into the hands of the Father. This was the last act of the dying Savior. And how exquisitely beautiful. How thoroughly in keeping with the whole of his life! It manifested his perfect confidence in the Father. It revealed the blessed

intimacy there was between them. It exhibited his absolute dependency upon God. Truly, in all things he has left us an example.” A.W. Pink

Jesus died. Rather, He gave up His Spirit into the hands of the Father. Phil 2:9-11: “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians he reminds us that we “were chosen from before the foundation of the world to be in Christ. That we should be holy and without blame before Him.” (1:4) In Christ, we died to sin and in Him we were born again into everlasting life. Blessed be the God of our salvation, to Him be the glory for ever and ever, amen!

Pray: Thanks be to God.

Personal Reflections

Afterword

Saturday, March 31

Joel Beeke in *Table Talk*, Ligonier Ministries, March 2013 comments:

“With Jesus as our substitute, God’s wrath is satisfied and God can justify those who believe in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). Christ’s penal suffering, therefore, is vicarious — He suffered on our behalf. He did not simply share our forsakenness, but He saved us from it. He endured it for us, not with us. You are immune to condemnation (Rom. 8:1) and to God’s anathema (Gal. 3:13) because Christ bore it for you in that outer darkness. Golgotha secured our immunity, not mere sympathy. We come out of darkness, confessing, “Because Immanuel has descended into the lowest hell for us, God is with us in the darkness, under the darkness, through the darkness — and we are not consumed!” How stupendous is the love of God! Indeed, our hearts so overflow with love that we respond, ‘We love him, because he first loved us’ (1 John 4:19)”.

Brothers and sisters, what did Jesus do? He suffered the wrath of God and the hell that we deserve in order that we will not have to. As the Scripture teaches us: He who knew no sin was made sin for us; Anyone who comes to him will by no means be turned away; No one can snatch you (us) from the hands of God; No one comes to the Father except by Jesus; Jesus’ sheep hear and know his voice, the voice of the Savior; If you are in Christ, you are a new creation; This is the love of God, that while we were still Sinners, Christ died for us.

Putting it all together

Jesus expressed his compassion for sinners when he prayed to his Father to forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. Of course they knew that they were killing Jesus but they didn’t know the implications of carrying out God’s plan of salvation and that Jesus was truly the Messiah. He continues to intercede and pray for us.

Jesus expressed his love, kindness, consideration and duty to his mother when he commended her to his beloved disciple, John, an example for all to honor our parents.

Jesus expressed his saving grace when he brought the penitent thief into salvation and Paradise, showing that salvation is for all who repent and believe on him.

Jesus expressed his grief and abandonment when he shouted “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” when he was forsaken for us, suffering the wrath of God in our place.

Jesus expressed his bodily agony, deprivation and pain when he said “I thirst”. And, He expressed His longing for the communion of the Trinity.

Jesus expressed satisfaction with his job assignment when he said “It is finished.” He had completed all that he came to do. All was accomplished!

Jesus expressed contentment with his very last words: ” Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” as he breathed his last and came back into communion with the Father.

And He invites us to sup with Him and He with us in an everlasting relationship.

Pray: Thanks be to God.

Allen Johnson
March 4, 2018
Soli Deo Gloria

Personal Reflections