

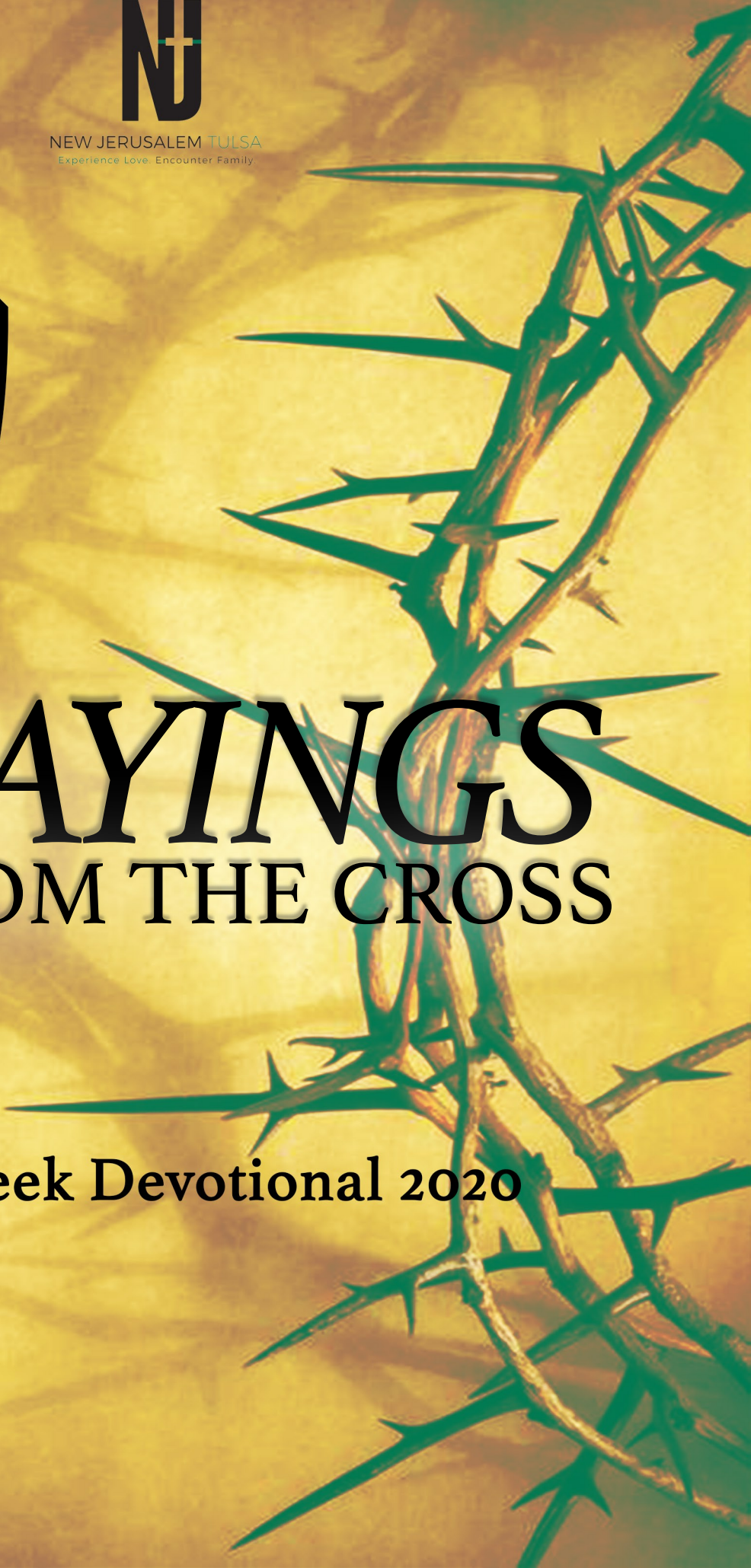


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SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS

A Holy Week Devotional 2020



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PREFACE

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are two of the most important tenets of Christian faith. The faith claims that Jesus' heinous execution on a Friday and death-defying resurrection on Sunday continue to provide hope, life, light and salvation to a sin plagued world is central to Christian identity. Commemorated on Easter, it is our affirmation and belief in these convictions that permit us to describe the commemoration of Christ's unjust execution as Good Friday. It is Good Friday, not because of what was done to Christ, but because of Jesus' willing submission to undergo such an experience on behalf of an ungrateful world of which we are a part. Upon the cross, Jesus modeled true love. Upon the cross, Jesus became our advocate. Through the cross, Christ became our sibling, champion, and biggest cheerleader.

For almost two thousand years, Christians have sought various ways to study the actions of Jesus' passion, humbly appreciate his sacrifice, and reflect on his Calvary experience and its meaning for our Christian walk. The Seven Sayings of the Cross, sometimes referred to as Jesus' seven last words, is one such tradition that has grown over the centuries. Drawn from the canonical Gospels, the Seven Sayings of the Cross are seven phrases or statements attributed to Jesus while he was nailed to the cross:

FIRST SAYING

Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. (Luke 23:34)

SECOND SAYING

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit! (Luke 23:43)

THIRD SAYING

Woman, behold, your son! Behold, your mother! (John 19:26-27)

FOURTH SAYING

"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34)

FIFTH SAYING

I thirst. (John 19:28)

SIXTH SAYING

It Is finished. (John 19:30)

SEVENTH SAYING

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit! (Luke 23:46)

The study and proclamation of these sayings as the collective Sayings from the Cross has and continues to provide Christians with a thematic lens to celebrate the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion. From Bible study to sermon series to Seven Last Word services (often a church program where seven speakers each use one of the sayings to preach a short sermon/homily back-to-back), Jesus' Seven Sayings from the Cross are a cherished and useful medium for Christian contemplation, particularly during Holy Week.

It is in this tradition that the present devotional has been compiled under the direction of Rev. Sean A. Jarrett of New Jerusalem Baptist Church, Tulsa for Holy Week 2020. Each contributor used one of the seven sayings of the cross to compose a short devotional reading for your prayer and reflection. As a Holy Week devotional, readers have the freedom to utilize these reflections in several ways. It is possible to reflect on a single entry each day of Holy Week or read all seven in a single sitting (no entry is more than 800 words). Likewise, because the contributors serve in different contexts and have varying ministerial experiences and gifts, each approached their task uniquely. As a result, readers will find words of exhortation and affirmation, pastoral insights for Christian living, and theologically informed interpretations to aid in future Bible study. Within these authors' differences, they share a common love for the Gospel as devoted servants with a true love of Christ. Out of this commonality, it is their truest desire that this devotional be an aid to you wherever your current walk finds you.

In such days as today, it is in Christ that these contributors enter Holy Week reminding us that Jesus Christ is our model (Morris) and that despite the obstacles or naysayers surrounding you, if you are in Christ, you can both sustain your walk and finish your divinely appointed tasks (Webb). The cross is a testimony to the seemingly paradoxical strength of Christ (McDaniel); thus, it is through the believer's constant meditation that we ought to trust in the most secure and unfailing hands that exist, those of our Lord (Pitts-Murdock). Rooted in this faith, the Christian believer must look inward to recall and reflect on Christ's sacrifice (Scott) and the debt paid on our behalves (Webb) while also looking outward to see ourselves and neighbors newly as community (Carter) bearing our own crosses beside Christ (Morris). May this small collection be of service. Attribute all errors or confusion to the fault of the editors or authors. But, to God be the glory for any aid, hope, or gift received.

Amen.

1st saying

And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Luke 23:34

FORGIVE THEM

Rev. C. Ramont Morris, M.Div.

Senior Pastor, Bethel Baptist Church

Brooklyn, NY

The catch phrase just before the reality show Dirty Jobs started was, “It’s a tough, dirty, nasty, job. But somebody’s gotta do it.”¹ Dirty Jobs was introduced weekly with these famous words. In each show, the cast was responsible for relegating the dirty work to somebody. However, when it comes to forgiveness, the dirty job is the responsibility of everybody, especially those who call themselves Christians. This powerful lesson on forgiveness is tucked in the first saying of Christ on the Cross. When we locate persons in passages of Scripture, we are either looking at models or mirrors for our lives. When we see Christ in the first saying, it is clear that He models for us how to forgive, showing us the principle, place, point, and premise of forgiveness.

First, in His modeling, Jesus answers the question of what the proper response is when one has offended you. Therein, Jesus gives us the principle: forgive. The rule that guides us and governs us in the aftermath of an offense is that we forgive. There is also the place of forgiveness. Jesus did not wait until He had escaped the tomb, standing victoriously in the cemetery to forgive His enemies. He forgave while hanging on the cross. Many want to escape the place where the offense occurs as if another place has some mystical powers to heal. The ever-present reality is that you can’t get away from yourself. Even when you escape, you take yourself and your pain everywhere you go. If you really want to get past it, if you really want to get on with your life, forgive your enemies wherever the offense occurs. Do not wait until you are in some other space. Forgive in that same place.

Thirdly, Christ models the point of forgiveness. Many Christians erroneously and subconsciously support the notion that it’s ok to take as long as you want before you forgive. Jesus, our example, forgave them immediately on Friday, not eventually on Sunday. Forgive them when they offend you, not in the distant future after you have allowed the injury to turn first to bitterness then to hate then to revenge then to stress and ultimately to ulcers and et cetera. Do yourself a favor and forgive them, immediately. But what makes this task even more difficult is the pain of forgiveness. It is a bad train of thought for one to think that it is necessary to wait for the pain to subside before forgiving. Is it not necessary to pull the thorn out of the throbbing finger before the pain of its entry can cease? Why do some think they can heal with unforgiveness suppressed within? When the thorn of unforgiveness is extracted, the pain will subside. An important insight to this first saying is that Jesus did not have this luxury! He forgave while He was being crucified. While He was hanging in pain, while the nails were in His hands and feet, while the thorns pierced His brow, with a wound in His side and rough wood up His back, Jesus forgave.

Jesus models to people how to become the people of forgiveness. He said, “Father, forgive them.” While this seems an oversimplification, this designation forces us to identify who we should forgive. Many times, we do not want to forgive the ones who have hurt us, but Jesus plainly says they are precisely who we should forgive: the “them.” There they are. Jesus did not ignore or cowardly cower away from those who had hurt Him. Guards were supposed to protect and maintain order, but they had done the opposite to Jesus. Sometimes we are hurt by the very hands that were supposed to help, but Jesus says resolutely, it was them. “Them” are they who you need to forgive be they mother, father, friend, coworker, or whoever. Forgive, them. This dirty job is the responsibility of everybody, especially those who call themselves Christians.

¹ Faith No More, “We Care a Lot,” recorded ca 1985, theme song to Dirty Jobs TV Series, 2005-2012. Discovery Channel.

Finally, the premise of forgiveness is found at the cross. Even though the offenders were mentally aware of what they were doing; they were not cognitively enlightened on what they were doing. Arrogant ignorance is blinding to the offender. Little did his executioners know that the one they were intentionally hurting was the only one that could save them. Reciprocity and probability say that those who hurt you may need you. Who knows, they may need you, if nothing more than to be an example of how to forgive.



2nd saying

Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me
in paradise.

Luke 23:43

LIVING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE CROSS

Rev. George L. Parks, Jr., D.Min.

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Fannie Crosby (1820-1915), the great hymn writer, became blind at the tender age of six weeks old; she was tremendously influenced by the cross. On November 20, 1850 at the Thirtieth Street Methodist Church, she went to the altar and found Christ. The congregation was singing a great hymn about the cross:

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light and the burdens of my heart rolled away. It was there by faith I received my sight and now I'm happy all the day.

After her experience, she turned her poetic skills to hymn writing. Many of her hymns focused around the theme of the cross. One such example is her legendary piece, "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross." Crosby's hymns highlighted the cross as a place of peace, the center of transformation, and, of greatest importance, available to all people. Crosby's perspective of the cross to this day is promising and refreshing.

In Jesus' day, the cross was a tool of execution and a symbol of shame. The scene of Calvary is far from a magazine cover, yet it is a sobering headline for our hearts. The cross of Christ is a reminder of our salvation. The cross for the believer is the headquarters of hope. The three crosses on Calvary are worth a repeated look. Often in my travel, my eyes have been arrested by crosses on the grounds of churches: three crosses side-by-side with the middle cross typically standing taller than the other two its sides. The three crosses of Calvary remind and represent the unredeemed on one side, the redeemed on the other side and the Redeemer in the center.

The second saying of Christ offers us a chance to be a part of the cast at Calvary. There are two robbers, two requests, and two results. Jesus, while dying was engaged in life giving conversation with the second criminal. This man's request was simple yet piercing, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." This should be our request. The challenge before us is to survey our lives daily and see on which side of the cross we are living: the unredeemed or the redeemed.

3rd saying

Thus, the soldiers actually did these things, yet they had stood beside Jesus' cross: his mother, her sister, Mary wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. So, when Jesus saw [his] mother and standing nearby was the disciple whom he loved, he told [his] mother, "Woman see, your son." Then he spoke to the disciple, "See, your mother." And from that hour, the disciple received her as his own.

John 19.24c-27 (Carter's translation)

So, the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

John 19.24c-27 (ESV)

A CHARGE TO SEE DIFFERENTLY

Min. Arthur F. Carter, Jr., Ph.D.

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Only in Jesus' third saying from the cross does he command a family member or disciple. Separated by two millennia, Jesus' exhortation to his mother and the beloved disciple to "see" one another as family is a model for Christians who find themselves navigating a turbulent world bombarded by the wreckage of sin. Translators often render Jesus' imperative command as "behold" or "look". Regardless of translation, the text depicts Jesus charging two loved ones first to acknowledge one another's presence and then to recognize— e.g. see—one another as family, in transformed relationship. Mother-son relationships in antiquity, whether natural born or adoptive, were important, having economic, class, legal, cultural, and emotional dimensions. Jesus' command to "see" pointed this new mother-son duo towards a transformative vision that would impact the very fabric of their identities and daily being.

Traditional readings suggest this new mother-son relationship only benefitted Mary, the disciple rescuing her from certain destitution and loneliness by becoming her financial guarantor and social redeemer. Such readings imply that the money, not the relationship, facilitates her saving. In opposition to negative stereotypes that presume "helpless" women and "saving" men, John's Gospel depicts Jesus' mother at the cross already standing in community alongside her sister and two other Marys. Even before considering Jesus' absent siblings, Mary has established a support system. Closer readings of John's Gospel envision Mother Mary as more than a financial dependent, but Jesus' ready travel companion, wedding escort, and intercessor-advocate. Might we "see" her in the light of her gifts and resources? Mother Mary can provide too.

It is the beloved disciple for whom we lack information. Age? Class? Occupation? Family? At the foot of Calvary, he stands among the crowd, alone. Can we see glimpses of ourselves in this adoptive son, alone in the middle of a crowd: excluded financially in economies structured for the powerful; abandoned educationally in a nation of elite universities; discarded by health systems that bankroll science's great advancements. Tagged, followed, and friended across social media, we can still find ourselves in crowds isolated by grief, injustice, and abandonment. Yet, Christ's exhortation, "Woman see, your son... [Beloved] see, your mother," transformed this disciple's isolation into family and Mother Mary's desolation into solace. In Jesus' call to "see" differently, this adoptive mother-son duo found divine provision with one another.

It is by seeing differently that the beloved disciple foreshadows reversal on Golgotha. "[Christ] came to his own, and his own did not receive him" (1.11). Yet, this disciple stood at the cross and embodied his reception of Christ. He saw differently, and from that hour received Christ's mother as his own.

Born neither by blood nor physical will, his trust in Christ granted him the privilege to become a child of God... born of God (cf. 1.11-13). us into our own transformative relationships, peering through the world's darkness with the light of Christ. Neither immunizing us from hurt nor grief, Jesus' third word charges us to foster transformative relationships as children of God, reflecting the life-giving light of Christ into the world. The depths of hopelessness, the pain of loss, nor the tyranny of injustice can overcome Christ's light. As we commemorate Holy Week, seek the isolated, abandoned, and forgotten amongst us; then, see differently. May we be family, comforted at Calvary, transformed by Christ.

4th saying

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?” After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”

Matt 27.45-46

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Mark 15.33-34

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

Psalms 22:1

TRANSACTIONS BY A HOMELESS MAN

Rev. Anthony Scott

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Christ Jesus died on the cross to redeem mankind and to save us from our sins because of His great love for us. As recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Jesus Christ was mocked, scorned, and tortured in the praetorium. He carried His cross up the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem to Calvary, was nailed to a cross, and hung between two common criminals. He suffered an indescribable death that the Church recalls on Good Friday of Holy Week. One may meditate on the Passion of Christ by reflecting on His Seven Words from the Cross or by a devotion known as the Way of the Cross. Our devotion for today focuses on the Fourth Saying of Christ from the Cross.

John Owen, in his classic book, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, asked a very probing question, “What was accomplished in the death of Christ?” Reconciliation was accomplished! Justification was accomplished! Sanctification was accomplished! Adoption was accomplished! In fact, even our eternity was accomplished! These affirmations confirm the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:14, that we are a “purchased possession”.

What was accomplished in the death of Christ, at its basic core, deals with means and ends. We must understand the end of something before we can properly grasp the means. The cross was merely a means to an end, and we really can't comprehend the means to the end because we don't really know what it means to die.

We have confused death with the destruction or decomposition of the body. Death is not about the decomposition of the body; it is about an experience in the soul. So much so that Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:3, “Christ died for our sins.” This begs an even more provocative question, “What do we mean by the Savior's death?” His death was more than the cross, more than a crucified body, more than quivering flesh, more than dripping blood, and even more than the cessation of life; it was an experience in His soul.

What did Jesus come to redeem? What did He die for? It was not the body but the soul of man that was lost. In Mark 13:34, Jesus said, “My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death.” This homeless man bartered under the cover of darkness. During these three hours of darkness, Jesus was saying, through his sacrificial actions, my soul is fatherless. As our Savior cried the words of Old Testament scripture, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” His soul was homeless.

As a homeless man He made some transactions on our behalf under the cover of darkness and amid heavenly silence. Christ's death was not just an atonement for sins, but it was the cancellation of death as sins' wages. The fourth century theologian Athanasius of Alexandria aptly stated, “the death of the Incarnate Logos was the death of death.”

All three synoptic writers record the fact of the darkness. These are central verses in the story of the cross. Three hours He spent in the darkness, three hours of silence, and three hours of transactions. Now, having come out of the darkness, He cries to the Father, “why did you forsake me?” At this point we must note that the tense of Christ's

words is different than the tense of the Psalmist. The Psalmist spoke prior to the darkness. The Son first speaks during the darkness and then cries out when He emerges from the darkness.

The Bible declares that, “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not,” (Jn 1.5, KJV). Stating it in a better way: apprehended it not. This does not just mean that the darkness could not understand the light; it also means that it could not extinguish the light.

With the passing of the darkness, our Lord’s cry was an expression of backward thought; He had come out of the darkness. And having come out, Christ Jesus realized He was out of the darkness and asked, “Why did you forsake me?” This is the call of Jesus of Nazareth as He emerged from the darkness. The Bible further declares that those who, “sat in darkness have seen a great light,” (Matt 4.16; cf Isa 9.2, KJV). There were some transactions that took place in the darkness. You were reconciled, you were justified, you were sanctified, and you became His eternal possession. Take time during this week to mediate on the supreme price He paid!



5th saying

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture),

“I thirst.”

John 19.28

I THIRST

Rev. David McDaniel, M.Div.

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It was 3:00 in the afternoon as the eastern sun relentlessly pounded on Jesus' withered body. He had hung on the cross for six agonizing hours. The previous night His soul wrestled in the garden where His only companion was blood that fell from His brow like sweat. The next day's events included a flogging, thorns puncturing His scalp as a mocking crown, and iron spikes driven into His wrist and feet. No food was offered to His malnourished body. The blood He lost was more than His body could replenish. His dried tongue felt like shards of glass on the roof of His mouth. And knowing the ending was here, with a final push, Jesus muttered through a gasp, "I...thirst." Someone at the base of the cross deciphered the mumbled request and found a jar of soured wine. The man grabbed a sponge, lapped up as much wine as the sponge could hold, tied it to a hyssop branch, and extended the wine-filled sponge to the mouth of the Lord.

But wait, that doesn't make sense. Have you seen a hyssop plant? It is weak and flimsy. Hyssop has the strength akin to parsley. It just wouldn't hold up. In no space nor universe could a hyssop branch ever hold the weight of a wine-soaked sponge as it was extended feet into the air. Why is John offering this bewildering detail of a hyssop branch?

I believe this is a literary clue that John offers as a way to theologically connect the crucifixion of Jesus with the Exodus of the Israelites. John is recalling imagery from the Passover when the children of Israel used branches of hyssop as a paintbrush to smear their doorframes with the blood of lambs (Ex. 12:22). In this way, the angel of death would pass over the homes of the captive Israelites. And just as Israel's God had rescued them from the stranglehold of Pharaoh, John is now saying that God is acting again to redeem them and all of the world, through the One who now thirsts.

Of course, this is not the first time that Jesus has asked for something to drink in John's Gospel. Earlier, Jesus waited by a well as that same scorching eastern sun beat down on His brow. A Samaritan woman then appeared and breaking all racial and societal norms, Jesus disrupted her life by asking for a drink. "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life," (John 4:13, NASB).

A hyssop branch that does not have the strength to lift a soak-filled sponge, yet whose might can save a whole nation. A quench-filled thirst that tears down all racial, economic, and societal barriers. A man who thirsts while suffering a state execution, yet it is through that thirst and execution that all of creation is redeemed. This is the paradoxical strength of the Christ. This is the saving power of God.



6th saying

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” 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. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:28 – 30

YOU CAN FINISH

Rev. Kadri J. Webb, D.Min.

Pastor/Teacher, St. John Church

Oceanside, CA

After what had to be an arduous journey up Calvary's hill and hanging on an old rugged cross for what seemed like eternity, Jesus made a statement that people often glaze over or miss altogether. He said:

IT...IS...FINISHED.

In the context of Jesus' crucifixion, what this meant was simply that the debt we owed to God for sin was paid in full by our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ. Sin was a huge debt, and we all know that big debts typically aren't paid off quickly. Big debts take time. Big debts can be a headache. Big debts can seem insurmountable. Our debt was no exception. Yet, despite the weight of our debt, Jesus was committed to settling our debt.

How many of us have left something undone or incomplete because of the difficulty of the task? All of us are guilty. At some point or another, we have all shirked responsibility because of the inconvenience that responsibility places upon us. On Golgotha's hill, Jesus gave us an example of obedience and perseverance to finish and to satisfy one's spiritual responsibility. Think about all that it took for Jesus to finish His assignment. Now think about all the excuses we offer about why we can't finish our assignments. Our challenges pale in comparison to the horrors of Jesus' crucifixion, but He remained committed to His God-given task.

Today, Jesus is calling you to a new level of commitment. I don't know what you have in front of you. Maybe you have the hardest assignment of your life before you. Maybe you have prayed a prayer like Jesus did just hours earlier saying, "Let this cup pass from me," (Matt 26:39; cf. Mk 14:36; Luke 22:42). and God has not given you relief. Nevertheless, you can finish.

The question of introspection is this:

CAN GOD TRUST YOU TO FINISH?

Perhaps you have given up. Regardless, the entire impetus behind this devotional is to shift you from complacency to activity:

Jesus didn't finish His assignment and commute your death sentence for you to die!

He didn't finish, for you to throw in the white flag of surrender, crying that you can't go on!

He didn't finish for you to give up!

He didn't finish for you to be defeated!

CHRIST DIED SO THAT YOU MIGHT LIVE!

HE FINISHED SO THAT YOU CAN FINISH!

Your assignment is different than Jesus'. His was to die. Your assignment is to live. And, you can finish! I understand that the finish line seems far away. It may even be in view, but you feel as though you have no strength to cross that line. I understand that the pain of getting there has exhausted you and overshadows any momentum at this point on your journey.

But Jesus finished and you can too!

YOU CAN FINISH! NOW FINISH STRONG!



7th saying

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said,
“Father, into your hands I commend my
spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last.

Luke 23:46 (NRSV)

THESE HANDS

Rev. Janae Pitts-Murdock, M.Div.

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Before the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, locking hands was a symbol of unity and solidarity. Moments of communal prayer were initiated by the interlocking of hands across the sanctuary. Hymns of benediction were affirmed through the gentle squeeze of a neighbor's hand. Beyond the sanctuary, loved ones could be seen ministering at the bedside of the ill gently holding a hand as a sign of presence, affirmation, and deep connection.

Now that COVID-19 has claimed thousands of lives across the globe in every generation, what used to be a symbol of care is now a symbol of risk. What used to be a symbol of trust is now a symbol of threat. What used to be a symbol of kindness is now a symbol of danger. Reaching for someone's hand after COVID-19 will likely generate rejection than embrace.

We cannot escape the paradox that God's hands continue to be the safest hands for our weary bodies and souls. Human hands destroy life; God's hands create life. Human hands abuse the earth; God's hands replenish the earth. Human hands take what is not ours; God's hands give what is not earned. Human hands are feeble; God's hands are faithful. It is as true now as it was more than 2,000 years ago on Golgotha's hill; God's hands are the safest hands for us.

Jesus knew this full well. As Jesus prepared to breathe his last breath while hanging on his bloody cross, Jesus longed for his father's hands. Up to this point, Jesus had been betrayed, denied, and abandoned by human hands. Jesus had been mistreated and beaten by human hands. What Jesus longed for were the strong loving hands of his father because God's hands are the safest hands for us. As you reflect upon his earthly journey, consider that when the earth had given and taken all that it could, Jesus's desire was for God's strong loving hands. These same hands are available to you. God's hands welcome your troubles, worries, concerns, and problems. God's hands reach to us offering what human hands cannot – an embrace of peace, love, and care. These hands were just what Jesus needed and they are available to you.

PRAYER:

Great and kind God, thank you for hearing my prayer. Thank you for drawing close to me. Thank you for reaching your hands toward me. My heart is overwhelmed with the uncertainties of these times. My mind races with questions and sufficient answers escape me. I know that Your hands have everything I need. Jesus found just what he needed in his moment of greatest desperation. I know that in You is exactly what I need. Therefore, I release my preoccupation and obsession with control. I lay all things in your hands.

In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

EPILOGUE

Rev. Sean A. Jarrett

*Senior Pastor, New Jerusalem Baptist Church
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For more than 20 years I have had the unique privilege of being encouraged, sharpened, and inspired by preachers across cultural, racial, and denominational lines. This collection of the Seven Sayings from the Cross is presented by a diverse group of colleagues that have made an impact upon my life and ministry from both up close and a from distance. While they serve the Church in various ways, they all clearly communicate the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that resonates from His lips during the crucifixion.

Special thanks to each contributor:

Rev. C. Ramont Morris; Rev. Dr. George L. Parks, Jr.; Min. Arthur F. Carter, Jr.; Rev. Anthony Scott; Rev. David McDaniel; Rev. Dr. Kadri J. Webb; and Rev. Janae Pitts-Murdock.

Upon your completion of reading this work, I hope that you will reflect over the hope and enduring love that resonates for a broken humanity from the cross! Also, may the signature work of Jesus at Calvary inspire you to live a purpose-filled life that seeks to demonstrate Christ-like compassion in the world.



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