

7 Meditations on Christ's Last Sayings

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Date: 25 March 2016

[0 : 00] These meditations are not sermons. They are meditations. And the whole idea is for us to listen to aspects of the cross in a way that would be a prayer that our hearts are affected.

I pray that the same effect that many of us experience, and hopefully all of us experience as we sang this morning, we will experience as we hear these meditations.

Bringing the meditations this morning are David and I, and three of the members of the Eldership Advisory Board, Brother Clarence, Brother Lyndon, and Brother William.

And Tim Seeley and Sean Bigadet were supposed to share in this, but because of work demands and other commitments, they aren't able to do so. But again, I pray that we would all be blessed by these meditations.

I pray that they will fuel our affections for the Savior, and that they would increase our gratitude for his sacrifice. So let's open our hearts and meditate on the words of Jesus as he hung on the cross.

[1 : 30] And the first person who's going to bring our meditations is Brother Lyndon. For a brief while, I will consider the first of the last sayings of Jesus while he was on the cross, as recorded in Luke chapter 23 and verse 34.

Kind of listen to the words of Jesus. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, and they cast lots to divide his garments.

The message of the first sayings of Jesus is best understood and appreciated within its proper context.

And that proper context is best understood when we consider the communicator, the circumstances, and the choices that he made. Let's now consider the communicator.

His name was Jesus. Without him was nothing made that was made. He was Emmanuel, God with us. He was fully God and fully man.

[2 : 41] He was without sin. He came to save the world. And what were the circumstances under which those words were said? The circumstances that gave rise to those words would be excruciating if they happened to a mere man, but infinitely worse, because the victim was Jesus.

Judged by men he came to save. They hated him. They ridiculed him. Mocked and ridiculed by those who days earlier shouted Hosanna to the king.

Considered less deserving of pardon than a known criminal. One close to him betrayed him, while another, even closer, denied knowing him.

A crown of thorns thrust upon his head, no doubt leaving blood in its wake. His body riddled with perhaps as many as 39 lashes, each ripping through his skin, and the anticipation of another inflicting unimaginable emotional pain.

Stripped to his undergarment as he stretched high on a cross, unworthy even for Roman citizens. Nails smashed through his hands and feet into a cross from which he hung.

[4 : 03] But what were the choices that lay before him? Despite his infinite power and superiority, he chose to show unfathomable grace in response.

He would have been justified had he chosen to strike back, but he chose to forgive. He would have been justified had he chosen to speak to the crowd of their lack of gratitude for the works he did among them, but he chose to speak of forgiveness.

He would have been justified had he chosen to walk away from the cross, but he chose to be humiliated instead so that we might be forgiven. History has never recorded, nor will it ever see, such a miscarriage of justice perpetrated on one so undeserving of punishment.

As we consider Christ's message of forgiveness, when he was at his lowest point, we reminded ourselves to be forgiven, forgiving. We are also reminded to walk in humility and love.

Yes, on the cross, Jesus lived out two of the most important and hardest messages that he himself preached, the message of forgiveness and love.

[5 : 19] I pray today that as we consider what Jesus Christ did for us, that we will embrace and exhibit the characteristics of forgiveness and love.

God bless you. In the book of Luke, chapter 23, verse 43, it reads, And he said to him, Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

Now, one of the criminals who was crucified with Jesus, he joined with the crowd, he joined with members of the Sanhedrin Council and the soldiers in mocking and insulting Jesus.

The sayings were, He saved others, let him save himself. If you are the Messiah, God's chosen king, come down from the cross and spare yourself from this torturous ordeal.

However, as the hours of suffering passed by, something happened to one of the criminals who was crucified with Jesus. Something pricked his conscience and he repented.

[6 : 38] And this is where we see the mercy of God touching the heart of a hardened criminal because he rebuked his fellow criminal for his disrespect of God and testified to the innocence of Jesus.

God opened the eyes of the heart of this hardened criminal and this man realized that he was guilty of sin before a holy God.

He realized that Jesus was truly the king who reigns over the souls of men in this life and the next. His request was simple.

He asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. This was a plea for mercy. This man understood that he had no hope but the divine grace of God and that Jesus was the one who would be able to dispense this grace, this forgiveness.

This account demonstrates the genuine faith on the part of this dying criminal and we see Jesus Christ graciously affirming the salvation of this criminal.

[7 : 56] I want you to remember two criminals same situation same circumstances and the circumstances were not good. What we see here is the hand of God.

One of the things that I came to realize as I was preparing for these meditations is God is always the one behind the scenes orchestrating and making things happen.

We know people they're in similar situations just like us but they do not recognize Jesus as King or Lord. You see God is the one who has to touch a person's heart.

God is the one that makes the difference. God is the one that changes the hearts of people and it really has nothing to do with the circumstances that you're in. These were terrible torturous demonizing situations.

but here we see one man acknowledging Jesus as the Christ as Savior and Lord. Just like this criminal you and I are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

[9 : 14] Jesus Christ is our only means and end to salvation. You see when sin entered this world we were distanced from God. Our intimacy with him was destroyed our fellowship with him was broken but through the cross of Christ we have been reconciled to God.

The paradise or the garden experience has been restored because we can now have an intimate relationship a loving fellowship with God through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We can experience the same forgiveness as this crucified criminal. every single one of us are in need of mercy and grace because as sinners we all stand guilty before a holy God.

We deserve judgment and wrath but however God is the one who gave us mercy and grace. So like the criminal on the cross we need to thank God for his gifts because we did nothing to earn this mercy and grace.

we just merely have to accept it by faith. Amen. Many of us are used to the horrors of social media and we often receive things on our smartphones and other devices that are gruesome.

[10 : 43] Myself I know of things that have gone around like stabbings and gunshot wounds showing men and sometimes women lying on the ground and dying.

As we heard in the study of Ecclesiastes a few weeks ago there is nothing new under the sun and there were also horrific scenes in Jesus' time.

In volume 8 of the Expositors Bible Commentary a doctor C. Truman Davis gave an account of what a crucifixion looked like from a medical perspective. And he described the nails going into hands and feet and he described someone not being able to get air and gasping and later on he says this Hours of this limitless pain cycles of twisting joint rending cramps intermittent partial asphyxiation searing pain as tissue is torn from lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber then another agony begins a deep crushing pain in the chest as the pericardium

slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart and he goes on and on describing in detail how horrific the crucifixion was.

Jesus was experiencing all this and yet during his suffering Christ's thoughts were occupied by his love for others.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby he said to his mother woman behold your son and he said to the disciple behold your mother and from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

[12 : 38] With these words we see Jesus caring for his mother Mary. He simultaneously made provisions for her emotionally and her physical welfare.

Emotionally Mary no doubt was in turmoil. Imagine her anguish at seeing the child that she had carried in her womb languish on a tree. The woman who received the glad tidings of great joy who heard her son would save his people from their sin who treasured all these things up in her heart. She now had to witness this and perhaps did not even understand that Jesus really had come for this moment to die. But in the midst of his own affliction Christ addresses Mary's torment and directs Mary to comfort.

He leaves her in the care of John knowing that John would care for his own mother. And it's a startling statement when we consider that Mary had other children besides Jesus.

He could have entrusted her to their care. But in placing her in John's care he also shows us the power of our spiritual relationships. How Christ binds us together and knits our hearts together in a spiritual family.

[13 : 59] Sometimes our spiritual relationships take even precedence over our earthly ones. And this is a picture of the adoption into God's family.

Even in his darkest hour in the midst of his greatest pain Christ is still saving others. He is demonstrating love and care for others in this case Mary.

The compassion that Christ displayed throughout his ministry did not fall away because he was in pain on the cross. We still see him on the cross now being seated in heaven he still is showing his love for us.

So we don't have to doubt that Christ cares for us. And if you doubt that he grieves When we are depressed when life turns against us then we should remember these words that he gave to Mary. He cares for you just as he cared for Mary enduring the agony and shame of the cross for you and for me. We have a Savior who is able to sympathize with our weakness.

[15 : 20] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need. disciple John to care for her Jesus experienced the worst aspect of the crucifixion and indeed the darkest moment of his life.

In Mark's Gospel chapter 15 verses 33 through 34 we read the following and when the sixth hour had come there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

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?

This false saying of Jesus is the most unusual of all the sayings and it is the most unusual of all the sayings because it is more than a saying it is an anguished cry and naturally we should ask why? Why did the Son of God in the midst of unusual darkness cry out my God my God why have you forsaken me?

[16 : 51] Why did he not cry out when the Romans were torturing and crucifying him? Here's why he cried out Jesus cried out because in that three hour period of time when darkness engulfed the land he was experiencing what was far more horrific than what the Romans had done to him in that moment Jesus cried out because at the brightest hour of the day from twelve noon to three p.m.

utter darkness fell over the land and in the midst of that darkness the unrelenting and righteous wrath of God was being poured out on him for sin for sinners in the darkness Jesus was experiencing God's justice God was pouring out his furious wrath against sin while at the same time expressing his gracious love for sinners Jesus hung on the cross as our substitute so what happened to him should have happened to us he took our place he bore our sins he absorbed our punishment the atmosphere of darkness reflected the spiritual reality of the darkness of sin and the separation of Jesus from his father as he took our place on the cross some believe Jesus cried out because of the excruciating pain of the cruel crucifixion had gotten to him but this is unlikely because it would mean that Jesus would have died less honorably than the two thieves

side by side and countless others who had been crucified some say that Jesus cried because he felt forsaken but brothers and sisters Jesus didn't cry just because he felt forsaken he cried because he was forsaken and he had to be forsaken on the cross because Jesus was our substitute God had to deal with him exactly the way he needed to deal with us he died the death that you and I and all sinners deserve to die and so

God forsook him because he was standing in the place of sinners and Jesus cried out after experiencing God's judgment and wrath and he cried our cry and here brothers and sisters we do not appreciate the grace of God until we understand the wrath of God it was necessary for God's wrath to be poured out on Jesus so that God's grace can be extended to us friends Jesus experienced utter darkness and separation from God so that every sinner who puts his or her trust in Jesus will never know utter darkness and will never know eternal separation from God there may be times in our lives when we may feel forsaken and we may feel separated but because Jesus experienced real forsakenness and he experienced real separation from God we never will he cried out in untold agony so that sinners like us on this good

Friday can sing out with unbounded joy and thank God that instead of darkness we can know light instead of tears of deep sorrow we can experience tears of great joy we come once again as many have come for over 2,000 years to the foot of the cross we come again to Calvary the place where we first received a place marked with suffering and joy for a few minutes allow me to speak with you about the fifth saying from the cross and that's found in John 19 verse 28 after this Jesus knowing that all was now finished said to fulfill the scripture I thirst thirst is one of the most powerful spiritual symbols in the Bible it refers to the sensation of dryness in the mouth and throat caused by a lack of fluids which results in the desire to drink

[22 : 02] I thirst are words that we can all identify with words we can relate to and no doubt a sensation that we all would have experienced at one time or another Jesus' expression I thirst was more than just an ordinary thirst so I would like you to explore with me the significance about Jesus saying I thirst first of all these words showed the very human nature of Jesus they showed that Jesus was not only divine but he was human the words I thirst tells of a human need it is human to thirst the irony however is that Jesus who created the oceans and the seas said I thirst how is it that on the cross suspended between heaven and earth Jesus the son of God who sent rain from the sky to water the plants and the trees said I thirst on the cross was the son of God who made it rain for 40 days and nights he who caused water to cover the entire earth how could he say

I thirst this Jesus whose father has a rib of water of life as clear as crystal flowing from his throne into the streets said I thirst and yes suspended on the cross was Jesus who told the woman at the well that whoever drinks of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again Jesus went through 12 hours of torture in the garden of Gethsemane his sweat was like great drops of blood he was arrested in the middle of the night like a thief his his last drink may have been some wine during the last supper with his disciple no doubt he was suffering from sleep deprivation he was pushed and slapped around he was whipped continuously and with every stroke ripped through his flesh he carried a heavy wooden cross a crown of thorn was pressed into his head his hands and his feet were nailed to that cross he had lost a great deal of blood and hung on the cross for six hours but through it all he never complained his first words that described the brutal crucifixion were I thirst if ever there were understanding errors into which we should speak our hurt and cries for grace and mercy is in those errors when Jesus said I thirst he fulfilled scripture despite this most brutal horrific and historical punishment Jesus was still in control of his faculties he demonstrated his awareness and knowledge of the scriptures he demonstrated his willingness to fulfill them to the letter Psalm 22 and 15 predicted the thirst of Christ when it said my strength is dried up like a pork shred!

and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth Psalm 69 and 21 says they put gall in my food and give me vinegar for my thirst while these Psalms began with the suffering of David their full meanings are in the suffering of Christ he removed any doubt that he was the Christ I thirst confirmed Jesus' promise that in Jerusalem everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished in addition to Jesus' physical thirst thirst he also experienced another kind of thirst a spiritual thirst people of almost any language use the word thirst as a synonym for a strong desire or longing I believe that at this stage Jesus felt an emptiness a void and a longing for his father because at that moment he was not in communion with God in fact he uttered the words my God my God why have you forsaken me yes Jesus' thirst was also spiritual

I believe that Jesus' spiritual thirst on the cross was not only for fellowship with his father I strongly believe that there was a yearning for intimacy with us you see as Jesus hung on the cross and he surveyed the soldiers who mocked and whipped him he regarded the thieves who were on his left and his right and he hungered for a relationship with them and by extension us the words thirst or thirsty can be found five times in the gospel of John all refers to spiritual thirst Psalm 42 1-2 says as the day of pants for the water brooks so my soul pants for thee O God my soul thirsts for God for the living water Matthew 5 and 6 says blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they should be satisfied Revelation 7 16-17 says they should hunger no more neither thirst any more neither shall the sun be down on them nor any heat for the lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd and should guide them to springs of the water of life and [27 : 23] God should wipe every tear from their eyes Based on the references of the word thirst We can see that Jesus' spiritual thirst Is for us to have sweet communion with him This is a call for us to look away from the other fountains in the world And turn to him Because only he can quench our thirst And I'm also glad that Jesus stayed on the cross that day Because when he stayed on the cross The blood that flowed from his side cleansed us He stayed on the cross and was whipped And with those stripes he healed us He stayed on the cross and his thirst saved us He stayed on the cross and his thirst redeemed us He stayed on the cross and thirsted So that we may never thirst again And I thank God that over 2,000 years ago Jesus stayed on the cross for our sins And there's great power in the cross For in the power of the cross Christ became sin for us He took the blame He bore the rod And today brothers and sisters

We stand forgiven at the cross Thank you Meditation number 6 Is taken from John 19 Verse 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine He said It is finished And he bowed his head And gave up his spirit Jesus received the sour wine And probably it was because As brother William indicated His throat was parched But what Jesus was really doing Jesus was really preparing His vocal cords At this last utterance For a cry of triumph It is finished Translated sometimes It is accomplished From the Greek word Teterelaste Talks about One's filling And completing

A task Or an obligation Now Some people may have thought That Jesus was saying Well This ministry Of three years Has ended And nothing else Is going to happen This is just the end of it But you see What Jesus was doing Jesus was fulfilling The redemption plan Of God Thousands of years In the making Jesus' death Completes The plan of God God's purpose Is finished In Jesus' act The entire work Of redemption Is now brought To completion The sacrifice of Christ On the cross Was the ransom payment For sinners The full payment Of our sin debt Was satisfied How do you feel When you have a Significant debt

And you're able To pay it off This is the imagery This is the Root of the word This full payment Of our sin debt When the apostle Paul Wrote to the church At Colossae He had this Finished work of Christ Concerning sin In mine And he refers To the fulfillment Of scripture And he states it Like this And you Who were dead In your trespasses On the uncircumcision Of your flesh God made alive Together with him Having forgiven us All of trespasses By canceling The record of debt That stood against us With its legal demands This he set aside Nailing it To the cross So we see That the debt The payment of sin Was satisfied By Jesus Christ On the cross At Calvary We are people Who have been forgiven

Of our sins We are people Who could live A life Not burdened By the guilt And the debt Of sin In our hearts No one took Jesus' life Jesus gave his life Voluntarily And willingly You see Jesus freely chose To rescue us At the cost Of his life That's a demonstration Of unconditional love You see No one can say It is finished Or it is being accomplished At the end of their life Unless their life Has been one Of total commitment Toward A purpose Of God Remember Jesus said He came into the world To die And at that moment On the cross His life was fulfilled Jesus accomplished His purpose For living And the question I would like You to ask yourself What about you?

[32 : 29] Are you Fulfilling The purpose Of your life? Are you Going to allow The distractions The obstacles The hardships The difficulties Of life To cause you To give up And not finish The assignments That God has Ordained for you To do?

You see I don't know The assignments That some of you have God knows them And in some instances God has spoken To your hearts There are things You know God has ordained For you to do But we have to look At Jesus Who was focused Who was determined And who was committed To the cause of God When we come To the last words Of our life Will we be able To say Like Christ The work that you Gave me Is finished Completed Or Can you say it This way You've fought The

good fight You've finished The race And you've kept The faith This is the attitude This is the heart
 This is the mindset Of those of us Who follow Christ When we say It is finished We have to be
 certain That we've done All in our power To do what God
 Has demanded And requested Of us to do Amen It is finished Those are glorious words And the
 glorious Because they communicate That the price Had been paid In full for sin And sinners Could
 now be Reconciled to God Now we come To the seventh And final saying Of Jesus Luke records it
 In Luke 23 Verse 46 As follows 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 Those final words Of Jesus
 Stand in direct Contrast To his earlier Cry When he cried
 Out to God Asking why God had forsaken Him But now It's all finished Jesus has finished The work
 of redemption That the father Had given to him And he could Have simply Hung his head And died
 But he doesn't Do that Instead Jesus looks To his father The one Who had earlier Poured out His
 wrath Upon him And he is now At peace With his father And he says To him Father Into your hands
 I commit My spirit Brothers and sisters In these words We find A hopeful Example Of what death Is
 like For the believer For those Of us Who have put Our faith In Jesus Christ If we are Conscious In
 the moment Of our death And aware That we are Going to die We too Can Die in peace
 Knowing that Our redemption Is finished Knowing that The price For salvation Is paid In full And
 because Of that We do not Need to fear God's judgment We do not Need to fear Condemnation For
 our sins Jesus Was judged And condemned In our place For all of our sins Every past sin Every
 present sin And every future sin And I think For some of us It's easy to understand How he can
 Forgive us And have paid the price For our past sins And our present sins But we wonder about
 Our future sins Friends If Jesus did not die For our future sins Then who will Who will pay the price
 But he said It is finished And he spoke In past Present And In Future tense
 [36 : 54] So we don't need To wonder About If we are Righteous enough To stand before God And
 make it Into heaven Jesus lived A perfect life That we never Could live And God credits That perfect
 life To all sinners Who put their faith In Jesus And so these Final words of Jesus As he died Assure
 all of us Who have trusted In Jesus That we can die In peace With God As Jesus died We too Can
 commit Our spirits Into His just And gracious Hands But not only Do these words Of Jesus Assure
 us That we can die In peace With God They also Assure us That we can die With confidence About
 our destiny Those of us Who have trusted In Jesus Christ Don't have to Wonder about
 What happens To us When we die Jesus helps Us to see That when we die We leave our bodies
 On the earth And our spirits Ascend to God Jesus said Father Into your hands I commit My spirit
 Those words Assure us That we can die With confidence About our destiny After death Our spirits
 Don't die And go to Purgatory As the Roman Catholics teach Our spirits Don't die And sleep In the
 grave As the Seventh-day Adventists Teach No Instead Our spirits Will be Absent From our Bodies
 And present With the Lord As scripture Teaches And so Even as we Think About Christ's Death On
 this Good Friday Let us Think also About our Own death And if you Have trusted In Jesus As savior
 And lord Allow these Final words
 To remove Any fear And any Uncertainty About your Death But if you're Here and you Have not yet
 Trusted In Jesus Christ As savior And lord You have Every reason To be Concerned About How
 you Would stand Before god And where You would Spend Eternity Because what Scripture teaches
 Is that only Those who are Found in christ Will have Peace in That moment With god And only They
 Have the Promise Of eternal Life With him But this Morning What Better day After hearing The
 meditations We've heard Saying the Songs that we Have sung To remind us That jesus Came To
 give his Life As a ransom For many He came To be a Substitute For sinners And all Who put Their
 faith In him
 All Every Woman Every man Every girl Every boy Without exception Will know For no For
 forgiveness And reconciliation Back to god So i pray This morning That if you Stand outside Of
 jesus christ That you Would today Surrender Your life To him You today Would turn From sin And
 trust In christ And you Today Would join The rest Of us Who because Of jesus Can die having
 peace with God and confidence about where we will spend eternity.
 Let's pray together.