

The Seven Statements of the Cross

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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Let me encourage you whether here on campus or on the other side of the camera, if you have a Bible with you to turn to Luke 23. Tonight, we are going to address a very unique section of Scripture known as the seven statements of Jesus Christ from the cross. Now I want to address these somewhat in general and then we're going to talk about them in specific.

Now tonight's going to feel a little different for multiple reasons. The first reason is this: typically when we gather together whether it's Sunday morning, Sunday night, even on Wednesday night, the "style or approach" that we have to Scripture is what we formally call expository. It means taking a section of Scripture, a chapter of Scripture, whatever it may be and just kind of walking through it and just allowing the Scripture to speak. Rarely, and tonight is one of those rare occurrences, we deal with what we might call a topical message. A topical message is when you address an issue, a subject or a theme or whatever it may be, and at times one of the, shall I say, the faults of a topical approach is that you can remove it from it's context. We talked about this morning when Jesus overturned the tables, if you took that story and you removed it from what we know as Palm Sunday, if you remove it from him weeping over Jerusalem, then it doesn't mean the same thing. Well, tonight even though it is somewhat topical because we're just going to look at the seven statements that Jesus made from the cross, we're not violating any kind of contextual arrangement because we know where we are in all seven of them. We know we're in that time period, in that window where he hung on that cross anywhere from about six to nine hours on that crucifixion day. So the context is not slanted just because we're looking at them individually apart from their respective contents.

The third thing that I want to call to your attention and hopefully you'll see this on the screen, those of you online maybe a tad bit difficult, is you'll notice that I've placed the statements in a very interesting order. In fact, you may think somehow that our space bar spasmed out on us tonight. Why does it look the way that it does? The arrangement that you see before you is what we would formally call a chiasm or chiastic, and what that means is and you see this a lot through the Scriptures whether it's the seven statements of Jesus referring to "I am" in the gospel of John, or whether it's walking through the Proverbs and the Psalms in other places, that a lot of times in the Scriptures when we're dealing with a subject matter collectively like the seven statements, you will notice that

the first and the last statement are correlated to each other, in this case, the second and the sixth, the third and the fifth, and that fourth statement serves kind of as a tent post. You know, if you see these large what we used to call circus tents or revival tents, there was that one single post that was in the middle that held the rest up even though they had their respective places, and it is oftentimes that that center piece of the "chiasm" is actually what the first three statements are building up to, and what in this case the final three statements are coming out of.

Now you'll notice that that fourth statement, that center statement is not actually from the gospel of Luke. It's from Mark and it happens to be one of the most controversial statements that Jesus makes from the cross. And so tonight, I just want to walk through these seven statements though independent, absolutely connected in the context of what we know as the crucifixion scene there on Mount Calvary.

Now for the sake of context, though, if you have your Bible open to Luke 23, you'll notice in verse 34 it says,

34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.
And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Here in the gospel of Luke we have the first of the seven statements. Three of the seven are contained within the gospel of Luke and so let's just address how Jesus begins his communication. You'll notice in every single one of these statements they are very brief in nature and there's a reason for that. When you look back at the teaching and the preaching of Jesus' earthly ministry, brevity was not always his operational means. In fact, the Sermon on the Mount is three chapters in length. Oftentimes, parables would span 10 to 20 verses. But here everything we're going to study is going to be brief and here's why it's important, because when one is physically placed on a cross as we know it as Jesus was, the typical means of death, now I say typical because Jesus' case was not typical, the typical means of death was asphyxiation and if you've ever done any kind of study of what crucifixion does to the body physically, you know that death did not happen because of the hands being pierced or the feet being pierced, that death in a typical sense when one was allowed to suffer for the entirety of the experience, happened because the individual on the cross was unable to continue to lift themselves up to allow air to expand in their lungs.

Now why is that important? Well, specifically to Jesus Christ, we know that he did not die of asphyxiation, in fact, we're going to read here in the gospel of Luke that he fulfills what he said in the gospel of John when he says, "No one takes my life lest I give it." But we also discover that because he was physically on a cross, his access or ability to communicate would have been very brief. You can't in one breath communicate what we know as two chapters of Scripture. You don't have the ability to carry on a conversation. In fact, when one would open their mouth and verbalize during a crucifixion experience, that exertion of energy would be exhausting to them. And so now we understand why over the course of hours there's only very few things that are said, and every one of these items that are spoken, every statement is a message in and of itself.

If we could pull it off tonight, if you were willing, we could be here until about 3 in the morning talking about these seven statements. We could exhaust each and every one of them because every single word, every single phrase is that critical.

So beginning with statement 1. Notice the first word, "Father," Father, "forgive them." Why is this so important? Because the very last statement that he makes begins with, "Father." Now I don't want to elaborate on that, just kind of keep that in the back of your mind for just a moment.

"Father, forgive them." If you think about all that Jesus Christ had endured in the moments, hours, and days prior to this event beginning with that famous triumphal entry, a trial that was illegal by all means known to man, one of his own disciples betraying him in the garden of Gethsemane, 500 soldiers coming, Peter denying him three times, even claiming he didn't know who the man was, and yet his first statement is, "forgive them."

Now think about the collectiveness of that pronoun. He didn't say forgive the disciples. He didn't say forgive the Romans. He didn't say forgive the Jews. He didn't say forgive the Pharisees. When he says, "Father, forgive them," it's much like in John 3:16 when he says, "For God so loved the world." It is the totality. "Father, forgive them."

The book of Hebrews 12:1-2, it talks about that Jesus Christ, he's the author, he is the finisher of our faith, and for the joy that was set before him, he went to the cross. You go back to John 17, the garden of Gethsemane, that high priestly prayer, one of the things that Jesus communicates so clearly is he says, "Father, I've done all that you've asked me to do. Now it is time for that which we've purposed to do." When we study what we know as the Christmas story, this was the reason. When we study him in the temple at 12 years of age, this is the reason. When we study him turning water into wine, healing the sick and the lame, everything that he spoke and everything that he did was to get to the point where he's saying, "Father, forgive them."

His purpose was to come and forgive. Notice why, "they know not what they're doing." If that is not an indictment of humanity, I do not know what is. We did not know what we were doing when we chose Barabbas over him. Pilate did not know what he was doing when he would not listen to his wife about her dream. We knew not what we were doing when we allowed the one that was right to suffer the punishment of the wrong. 2 Corinthians 5 says, "He who knew no sin became sin for us."

"For they know not what they're doing." Later in the book of Acts 7, whom we know as Stephen will be the very first martyr and his prayer is eerily similar to this when he looks up into heaven and he asks for the Lord to forgive those who beat upon him not only with their words but with their fists, and they gnawed upon him and he communicated the same thing, that they knew not what they were doing. In fact, when you read the famous sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2, the Bible says that all the Jews from every nation had gathered themselves together, and if I were to summarize Peter's sermon, this would be its summary statement, "You killed the wrong guy."

"They knew not what they were doing." We could extrapolate for hours the reasons why. The words that they heard from others, the influence from others, the excuses that they might have had, but he begins his entire crucifixion experience with, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they're doing."

If you'll fast forward with me to verse 43, we have the second of the seven statements and this is where it could get a little interesting and intriguing.

43 ... Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Now let me set the scene. Jesus was on Mount Calvary with two other individuals, both of them deemed as criminals worthy of death. I'm assuming that you're probably familiar with the story that as they began to communicate with each other, one of them began to rail upon Jesus, began to join the mockery, began to "blaspheme" against him. The other one said, can I quote Southernese here? "Have you lost your mind? This, this, this is God in flesh." He turns to Jesus and he says, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus' response was, "To day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

Now I want to take that statement and address two issues that Jesus is communicating. Let's begin with the word "today." It may not seem that significant but this is that time where you kind of have to look into the text and I want to share with you some of the options that we have before us. As you look down at your Bible or whether electronically or on paper, some of you will notice that the word "today" in some of your Bible is capitalized. It has a capital letter. Now that's interesting because we typically capitalize that which is a person, a place or a thing. In other words, when Jesus makes the commentary that, "To day you will be with me in paradise," that's not a simple phrase like, "Oh, okay, we'll go do that tomorrow, or that took place yesterday." Jesus is being very specific, in fact, you go back to the book of Genesis 1 when it talks about that, "Let there be light," and he separated the day and the night, in that context you know the word day and night are actually capitalized as well. So when we see a capitalization, not all translations do so but many of them capitalize the word "To day," to signify that there's something more than just a 24 hour time period.

Now let's drill down a little bit deeper. This is where it gets even more intriguing and some of y'all know this little skit that I do, I have plagiarized from the great comedian Johnny Carson. Y'all remember when he did Carnac the magician? Yeah, we remember Carnac the magician. Remember what he would do and held the envelope to his head and then he'd make a funny statement and they'd all correlate? So here's where I get to plagiarize the great Johnny Carson. If you look down at verse 43 of Luke 23 and the word "To day" is not only capitalized but there's a space between the o and the d, then you, my friends, have what we used to call the Authorized Version commonly referred to as the King James Bible today. So what we discover is that when we translated this verse, there's actually three ways of doing it. One is just to call it today just like you would tomorrow or yesterday. Many versions actually capitalize the word to set it apart, and one

in particular actually separates the letters, the o and the d, and you look at that and say, "That is odd. That is interesting. Why would we do such a thing?"

Well, to answer that question, we've got to talk about paradise for just a moment. What is paradise? Where is paradise? When does one enter paradise? Several things that I want to call your attention to in regards to paradise is that paradise today is not the same place as paradise in Luke 23. 2 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul talks about the fact that he was caught up into the third heaven, and unfortunately we have some individuals who tend to live in the Western US, primarily Utah, that claim there's actually three different kinds of heaven. That's not what the Apostle Paul meant. He meant that there is the heavens that the birds fly in, there are the heavens that the stars and the planets reside, and then there is the heavens of the throne room of God himself. He talks about there in 2 Corinthians 12, "I don't know if I was in the body, out of the body," in other words, "I don't know if I physically was raptured up or it was just a trance or a dream, but I found myself in the third heaven. I found myself in the throne room of God," and he calls it paradise. He claims that he entered "paradise."

Now why is that important? Because you and I know that we cannot be in the throne room of the Lord until the blood of the perfect Lamb has been shed. In Luke 23, the blood is being shed, he will give himself as an atonement for our sins, but in Matthew 27 those who had preceded Jesus Christ in death living in faith did not come out of the graves until his resurrection, not his death upon the cross. And so when he makes this statement, "To day you will be with me in paradise," there are multiple layers there. The first layer is this, that because of his confession and/or we might call profession of faith, that he would be in a place that the Bible describes as paradise when he breathed his last breath. By the way, his last breath didn't take place much after Jesus'. Remember preparing for the Sabbath day, what did they do to the two criminals? They broke their legs so that they could no longer rise up and breathe. We know from a few chapters earlier in Luke 16 at the story of the rich man and Lazarus which we studied last Sunday night, that when Lazarus died, the Bible formally called it Abraham's bosom, other places refer to it, you guessed it, as paradise.

So Jesus is declaring to this man that on this day that you breathe your last breath, you will be in a place that we refer to as paradise. The second thing I want you to notice is he claims, "you'll be with me." Now that's a whole message and study in and of itself. In fact, when you go later into the letters that the Lord inspired through the person of Peter, you discover that in that time period that Matthew 12 talked about three days and three nights, that he even went, Jesus, and he preached to the spirits that were in prison. So this day when he breathes his last breath, the Lord will take care of him because of his profession, "you will be with me," but when you look at the word "To day" and it is capitalized or it is separated, it even goes beyond what we know as a 24 hour time period.

"To day you will be with me in paradise." When we look at that concept of that day being capitalized, when we look at even possibly being separated, it means more than 24 hours, it means more than just on this day, and one of the things that we can see not only from this statement from Jesus is that this thief's presence in paradise was not a three day and

two night stay, that it was an eternal stay, it was one that would last without end. It's not just, "This day you will be with me in paradise," but it means, "From this day and all days forever you will be with me in paradise."

When Jesus speaks his third statement, it's not contained in the gospel of Luke, in fact, it's contained in the gospel of John and it makes perfect sense what we find in the gospel of John because he actually addresses whom we know as John the apostle. It's found in John 19:26. It's immediately thereafter the verse that I alluded to this morning where we talked about that there were five individuals that were there at the foot of the cross as what we might call believers, those who were in favor of, those who were not mocking and not making fun of, not ridiculing, and not questioning. Verse 26, Jesus makes this statement, by the way it's verse 26 and 27 technically. He says,

"Woman, behold thy son. Son, behold thy mother."

It's an interesting set of statements. Let's begin with that first word, "Woman." It was not a term of disrespect. In today's culture, in fact, allow me to go to my own home. If my children were having a conversation with my wife and my wife asked them a question and their response was, "Woman," oh, it's about to be on, if you know what I mean. In fact, I don't mind sharing with you that I only had to have this conversation one time in my home and it's because the person who I had the conversation with was being observed by the other two critical parties in our home, is when I had this conversation very strategically that, "You are not going to talk to my wife that way." They haven't done it since. You know, sometimes you've just got to let them believe you're a little bit crazy, but nonetheless, that's a whole other message.

"Woman." It's not a term of disrespect, it's a term of discernment. Today 2,000 years on this side of the empty tomb, there are millions upon millions of people who have so venerated the person of Mary that they not only pray to her, they put statues of her in their yard. Can you imagine if Jesus actually had called her mother? He referred to her as woman. In fact, we go back to John 2, that famous story of Jesus turning water into wine, it is whom we know as Mary who comes to Jesus and says, "They've run out of wine. What are we going to do?" You remember his response? "Woman, my hour has not yet come." One of the terms that has been used throughout time and I promise this is an actual terminology, it's called theotokos which means "the mother of God." Mary was not the mother of God, she was the vessel by which God was incarnated here on earth.

That being said, he says, "Woman," again the same term he used every single time to refer to who she was in his life, "behold thy son." It's important that the Apostle John is going to be referred to as her son because you may or may not know that John and James of Zebedee were actually in the flesh cousins of Jesus. They were related to him, somewhat distantly but nonetheless they were. Why is this important? All the way back in the book of Ruth we have this understanding or this teaching, what we refer to as the kinsman redeemer. The kinsman redeemer was that whoever was closest in relationship to somebody else, when they died or in some cases according to the book of

Deuteronomy even divorced, it was their opportunity, their responsibility to redeem them, to care for them.

Let me give you a very practical example. My wife and her sister did something very unique. You know, we've heard of people that are twins that marry twins and such. My wife and her sister both married only children. It's kind of unique that my brother-in-law, I'm his only brother-in-law and he's my only brother-in-law. That being said, just for the sake of discussion, okay, just hypothetical, if something tragic were to happen to my brother-in-law and he were to die and he were to perish, that in the Old Testament my sister-in-law and two of her three daughters because one of them is married, would now be my responsibility. It is my opportunity to care for them. I would be the kinsman redeemer, the closest of kin that would now bear the responsibility.

Let me give you one of the stories in the gospels where what we know as the Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection, remember they came to Jesus and said, "Let's just imagine that there's a woman that marries a man and he dies, and then she marries his brother and his brother and his brother, works through all seven brothers, whose husband is she?" Now we always focus on this whole topic about in verse 30 where it says we'll be as the angels, we will not marry, but one of the questions nobody ever asks is, "Why would she marry all the brothers?" It's because those brothers would have been the kinsman redeemer. It would have begun immediately with, if they obviously were married, but then it would have gone to their biological father, their own earthly brothers, and then we begin to work out.

You do know according to Matthew 1, Jesus Christ is called the firstborn of Mary. Unlike what others might advocate, Jesus Christ in the flesh, now he was conceived of the Holy Spirit but Joseph and Mary had a normal family together and there were brothers and there were sisters, in fact, so much that they came to Jesus one day and said, "Hey, your brothers and sisters are out there, oh, and your mom." And he said, "Who is my brother? Who is my sister? Who is my mother? He that does the will of my Father."

Why is this important? Because those "half-brothers" as we would call them in our vernacular, they weren't believers either. I mean, can you imagine growing up in a home where your parents consistently said, "Why can't you just be a little more like Jesus?" It would be tough, would it not? And yet when we get to the end of the New Testament, we discover that at least if not more of those individuals did come to believe in faith that the Jesus of Nazareth who they shared a home with was also the one that they were going to trust their eternity with.

So he, John, was the closest in the kinsman line to be the caretaker of whom we know as Mary. Joseph obviously would have been deceased, none of his brothers were believers, and technically he was the oldest son. That is why John of Zebedee takes her according to tradition in history to what we know as Ephesus as he pastored there, and that would be the place that she would meet her earthly end.

"Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." Do you see how Jesus changes it? Jesus refers to her as woman but he tells John, "She is your mother." Jesus was very careful whether at the beginning of his ministry with his miracles, or whether here at the end on the cross, in excruciating physical pain he still never broke with a proper discerning title of who she was in his life but made sure she was cared for and entrusted her to what he claims later in the gospel of John as what we know as the beloved apostle.

Now we find ourselves in the middle, that fourth statement. Some of you have had the opportunity over the course of time to do a great study about this statement. We've addressed it several times on Wednesday night during our regular question and answer time, but it's the only one of the seven statements that comes from the gospel of Mark. Now why is that important? Because the gospel of Mark is the shortest of the gospels and yet it's the fastest. Sixty-three times in the gospel of Mark it says, "And immediately. And immediately." I mean, you really have to pay attention when you're reading the gospel of Mark because he'll cover in two verses what other gospels cover in 20. I mean, it is fast paced and I'm of the belief, and this isn't the time or the conversation, I'm of the belief that the person who the Lord inspired to give us the gospel of Mark was the youngest of all the New Testament writers because there in chapter 15 when he's in the garden of Gethsemane, it says that he took off without his cloak into the night. There is a confession of who the author is and he talks about how young he was, and you and I all know that that sounds just like something a teenager would do, just running off in the night whether they've got their clothes on or not.

But nonetheless, why is that important? Because it is the gospel of Mark, the only statement of the cross that he records is the one statement that causes so much grief,

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Let's admit it, it's tough, isn't it? You hear that and just there's something about it that just doesn't sit right. Why would he make that statement? Why would those words come out of his mouth? Let me put a little context to it and then I think we can work through it.

As you begin to look at an actual chronology of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, now I'm going to be very brief and vague here so if you go tonight and do a little more in-depth search, don't hold it against me if I'm 30-45 minutes off here. But Jesus Christ would have been placed on his cross approximately 9 in the morning. Approximately. From noon to 3, there was total darkness. The first three statements were made between 9 and noon, the last 4 were made between 3 o'clock and the sun setting. There is nothing that is spoken between noon and 3. Why is that important? Because between noon and 3, according to the Bible as prophesied in the book of Amos, that the earth had gone pitch dark. Not only was it silent from the cross but it had been dark for three hours.

This statement, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me," is the first statement that's made after the darkness. Secondly, it is the only statement that is made while shouting. I mean, think about it, we're talking about asphyxiation, we're talking about having difficult breathing. He has now been on the cross for six hours and, by the way,

you realize he'd been beaten within an inch of his life in the days prior to, and this statement he shouts. I mean, he declares it with volume. It's also the only statement from the cross that is an exact quotation of the Old Testament. In fact, hopefully you have your Bibles open, turn to Psalm 22. I want you to see that when Jesus makes this statement, he does not do it arbitrarily, he does not do it coincidentally. He has been subject to crucifixion for six hours. He has been mocked. He has been made fun of. He has been ridiculed. He has been beaten. He has been spit upon. It has been total darkness for three hours and then he shouts, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Push pause for just a moment. You do realize that every time Jesus Christ was attacked by whom we know as Satan, he always responded with Scripture. Every single time. "It is written." The only time from the cross that he quotes Scripture is immediately following three hours of darkness. As we walk through Psalm 22 and for the sake of time tonight we're not going to do so, this is the most saturated Psalm that we have, the most saturated chapter in the Old Testament about what we know as the crucifixion. The life, the ministry, the death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there are 48 prophecies involved in the totality. Eight of them are in this chapter.

Now let me just draw your attention to a couple of these. Go to verse 16, "The dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they have pierced my hands and my feet." Go to verse 18, "They have parted my garments." Do you see the parallels here? A lot of what we know as that crucifixion scene was actually prophesied in Psalm 22. Could it be or is it possible that Jesus wasn't making this doctrinal statement about a struggle with the Father as much as he is referring to the most saturated chapter we have got in the entire Old Testament about what was taking place on Mount Calvary?

Additionally, let me draw your attention to the last couple verses of Psalm 22. I want to begin in verse 28. It says, "For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this." When you hear the statement, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It sounds like defeat, does it not? It sounds like this didn't go well. But if he's quoting Psalm 22, it's not only an expose of what's happening, it's actually a declaration of victory. The last part of Psalm 22 is that all the nations will come before him. The last part of Psalm 22 is that all of the seeds of the earth will worship him, listen, because he hath done this. It's the only statement that he shouts. It's the only statement that is a quotation of Scripture and it immediately follows what we know of three hours of pitch darkness not just there in the Middle East but according to the book of Amos, around the world. Why would that be in that center position? I daresay it's that last phrase of Psalm 22, because he has done this.

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. To day you will be with me in paradise. Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." All of that is building up to the fact that he is taking upon himself everything that is due to us so that we, the

nations, the people, will one day forever be able to worship him. That is the crux. That is that center post. That is the climax of it all.

Then we work our way back. Now remember, it's 3 o'clock in the afternoon and if you've been in the Middle East in the time of year that Passover takes place, what we know as the sunset or what we know as the beginning of the Sabbath, it's going to happen quickly. Usually we call the Sabbath about 6 PM but more likely it would have been about 5 o'clock or so. So within two hours, things start moving pretty quickly. He not only makes this statement but we discover that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea have got to get him off the cross and put him in the tomb in a very expeditious manner.

So what's the fifth statement?

"I thirst."

That's a fascinating statement and the reason that that's fascinating not just because it's recorded in John 19, is we would expect it to be recorded in Luke. You say, "Why would we expect it in Luke?" Because Luke, the beloved physician who gives us the most incredible details of what we know as the virgin birth, Luke gives us most of the details about that Passion Week more than anybody else, you would think if we're going to deal with physical crucifixion, if we're going to deal with physical attributes, surely the physician is going to recognize it.

I think it's more than just the fact he was thirsty which he was. Remember 48 prophecies? The life, the ministry, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you do realize that when Jesus hung on that cross mid-afternoon that crucifixion day, that technically 47 out of the 48 prophecies had been fulfilled but there was one that was left. It was the prophesy that he would experience thirst and he would reject the physical solution.

My friends, two very simple words, "I thirst." I believe immediately followed by the sixth statement there in John 19 because it's two verses later,

"It is finished."

Now this may sound like a very simple almost rhetorical question but we have to ask ourselves what is "it"? Now let me tell you what the standard answer is. The standard answer is that is the moment, that is the time that Jesus Christ bore the sins of humanity. The problem is the wages or the result of sin is death and he's still alive and he's got one statement still to make. So oftentimes we look at that sixth statement and we say, "Aha, that's when our sin was transferred. That's when he bore our transgressions." The only problem is if the wages of our sin is death, then why did death not take place? Allow me to propose what I believe "it" is. "It" is all of the prophecies. It's finished. Everything that was spoken that Jesus Christ would be has been completed. There's nothing left. The place that he was born. The place that he would live. The manner of which he would teach and preach. Even the means by which he would die. They've parted his garments.

They've pierced his hands. They've mocked him without a reason. And yes, they even offered him a balm for thirst that he rejected.

"It is finished." Let me remind you in John 17, Jesus made this statement in the garden of Gethsemane, "I have come to do all that you asked me to do." At this point, there is only one thing left. The prophecies have been fulfilled. The only thing left is that he must bear the burden of our sins. Now this is why the last statement is so important and it's found in Luke 23. The first, the second, and the last of the statements are found in Luke 23 and I want to call your attention to verse 46,

46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

I want you to notice that first word, "Father." There's an old hymn of our faith that I love to sing and I love it, but it talks about in there that the Father turned his back on him. If the Father turned his back on him, then why did he refer to him as Father? Father. There's been no breach in the Trinity. There's been no lapse in his deity. He says, "Father." That's important because look at the first statement, "Father." Remember the correlations here? "Father, forgive them they know not what they do. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." This is important because it was just hours earlier in Matthew 26 he said, "Not my will but yours be done," not once, not twice, but three times.

"Into your hands I commend my spirit." I mentioned earlier in the gospel of John it says that when Jesus was arguing with those as he often did that struggled with who he was, he said, "No one takes my life lest I give it." Now I want to bring up a very interesting theological, I guess, prospectus here and then we'll wrap this up. Have you ever wondered how Jesus Christ ever made it through the Passion Week physically? I mean, think about it. The beating that he took. The scourging that he took. The horrific nature of things. According to Isaiah 52, he was beaten worse than any other man had ever been beaten and he did not even have the appearance of a man. Can I ask you a very interesting theological question? This is just my little question: can you kill a sinless man? Now just percolate on that tonight. Can you kill a sinless man? Because the last time I checked, the only thing that causes death is what? Sin. So if you're sinless, how can you experience death? We don't know how bad the beating actually was. We know it was horrific. But I've seen many studies by those who are medical professionals that marvel of how the blood was still circulating in his body because I wonder can you take the life of a sinless man? What did he say in John? "Nobody takes my life lest," what? "I give it."

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." He gives his life and I want you to notice the last statement in verse 46, "and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." Death didn't occur by asphyxiation. Death didn't occur by complete blood loss. Death did not occur for any of the physical means that we know as crucifixion. Death took place for one and only one reason, because I believe that it's at that point where your sins and mine were transferred to him and he gave up the ghost. Death took place not because he couldn't withstand crucifixion, not because his body had had enough. Death took place because I

believe his body was in such physical peril that the moment he bore our sins, there was only one option and that was for death to take place.

When you look at these seven statements, there's a whole lot more there than even we addressed tonight but I want to conclude with the first one. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." As we look at our world today collectively, as we look at it individually, unfortunately there is malice, misintent, ignorance, defiance, and a whole lot of other adjectives that I could use. There's a whole lot of people today that are suggesting a whole lot of solutions for how to fix this and fix that. What we need is some Luke 23:34, we need, "Father, forgive us for what we have done." Jesus Christ came, lived, died, and rose again so all of our misapplied intents could be forgiven by him.