

Famous last words
Good Friday 2023

1. Prayer for illumination

2. Introduction

- a. You can learn a lot about someone by recounting their dying words. Here are some famous dying words.
 - i. "I must go in, the fog is rising."– Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)
 - ii. "It is very beautiful over there."– Thomas Edison (1847-1931)
 - iii. "Money can't buy life."– Bob Marley (1945-1981)
 - iv. "Behold, O monks, this is my advice to you. All component things in the world are unsettled. They are not lasting. Work hard to gain your own redemption."– Buddha (circa 563 BC – circa 483 BC)
 - v. Go on, get out – last words are for fools who have not yet said enough!"– Karl Marx (1818-1883)
 - vi. "Friends applaud, the comedy is finished."– Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
 - vii. "I should have never switched from Scotch to Martinis."– Actor Humphrey Bogart (1899-1957)
 - viii. "I'm bored with it all."-Winston Churchill (1874-1965)
- b. Again, you can learn a lot about someone based on their dying words.
 - i. Jesus is no different.
 - ii.

We can learn much about Jesus Christ and his extravagant love for sinners by studying his dying words.
 - iii. According to the gospels, Jesus spoke seven last words or phrases. We will meditate briefly on each phrase.

1. A word of forgiveness

- a. **Luke 23:34 (ESV) — 34** And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.
 - i. Exposition
 1. These words were spoken as Christ was hanging from the cross, experiencing excruciating pain.
 - a. His back was a bruised and bloody mess.
 - b. He was being held to the cross by spikes driven through his hands and feet.
 2. In that moment of intense pain, Jesus asks the father to forgive those responsible for his unjust death (both the Jews and the Romans).
 3. When Jesus uttered the words, "They know not what they do" he is not absolving the Jews or the Romans of their responsibility for his death, he is

simply indicating that they had no clue of the horrible evil that they were doing in crucifying the son of God.

ii. Application

1. Here is the point—Jesus is asking God to forgive his enemies.
2. Jesus is asking God to forgive murderers, corrupt politicians, and religious hypocrites.
3. Ironically, his death was providing the very basis upon which those who crucified him could be forgiven (see Isa. 53:12).
4. If God can forgive them, God can forgive anyone who begs him for mercy.
5. God can forgive you... no matter what you have done.
6. And by the way, God asks us to forgive our enemies, just like Christ forgave his.

2. A word of grace

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

i. Exposition

1. Jesus spoke these astounding words of grace to one of the criminals who was hanging on a cross next to him.
2. This criminal just finished defending Christ, then he begged Christ for grace and mercy.
3. Christ is so willing and able to grant grace.
4. Christ assured him that, that very day he would be in paradise/heaven.
5. How? Grace...

ii. Application:

1. Notice that this criminal did not perform any righteous deeds.
 - a. He did not go to church.
 - b. He did not read his Bible.
 - c. He did not fast and tithe.
 - d. He did not nothing but believe.
2. If he did not perform any righteous deeds, how could he get into heaven.
 - a. Christ performed all the righteous deeds necessary.
 - b. Then Christ died for all his unrighteous deeds.
 - c. As a result, God would see him as perfect.
 - d. Therefore, the moment he died he would be ushered into heaven.
 - e. This is grace.
 - f. It can't be earned.
3. Are you trusting in God's grace alone? You and I have just as much merit, or lack thereof, as the thief on the cross.

3. A word of Love

- a. **John 19:26–27 (ESV) — 26** When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” **27** Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.
- i. Exposition
 1. In keeping with biblical commands to honor one’s parents (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16), Jesus made provision for his mother, who was almost certainly widowed and probably in her late 40s or early 50s, with little or no personal income. (ESVSB)
 2. Why did Christ call her “woman” and not mother? Some speculate that it was probably to protect her from the soldiers. If they knew that she was Christ’s mother, they may have done bad things to her.
 - ii. Application
 1. Here is the point—In his hour of greatest need Christ considers the needs of others as more important than his own needs.
 2. The cross tells us that Christ considered your needs more important than his own needs.
 3. He was willing to endure intense pain to make you eternally happy.
 4. Don’t doubt his love for you for a second!

4. A word of abandonment

- a. **Matthew 27:46 (ESV) — 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?”
- i. Exposition
 1. Jesus’ cry of anguish is a fulfillment of Ps. 22:1, showing the depth of His distress as He suffers separation from His Father.
 2. This cry is one of many striking parallels between Psalm 22 and the specific events of the Crucifixion. Look it up later.
 3. Why did Christ cry out in such agony?
 - a. We must not forget that before this moment Jesus had known perfect fellowship with his father.
 - b. This perfect fellowship led to perfect joy.
 - c. Instead of perfect fellowship with the father, he experienced wrath followed by abandonment.
 - d. But Why? Why did the father forsake his own perfect son? Because in that moment on the cross, all the guilt for all the sins of all those who would trust in Christ was credited to Christ (cf. Isa. 53:6, 10; Hab. 1:13; Rom. 3:25; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 John 2:2).
 - e. The guilt for the sins of the...

- i. Murderer
- ii. The rapist
- iii. The liar
- iv. The thief
- v. The child abuser
- vi. The drug dealer
- vii. The prostitute
- viii. The proud
- ix. The hypocrite
- x. And the war lord
- xi. Was imputed to Christ (i.e., credited to his account).

- f. Then he paid the penalty for those sins.
- g. As a result, he was abandoned by his own Father.

ii. Application

- 1. As a result, Christian, you will never be abandoned by God the father.
- 2. No matter what you do, the father will never hide his face from you, since he hid his face from his son on the cross.
- 3. He sees you as perfect, so he has no reason to abandon you. Wow!!!
- 4. If and only if you are a Christian, God is always with you to comfort, encourage, and strengthen you.

5. A word of suffering

- a. **John 19:28 (ESV) — 28** After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”

i. Exposition

- 1. Why did he thirst? He was human.
 - a. He was fully human and fully God.
 - b. Two distinct natures in one person.
 - c. He truly suffered in his human nature.
 - d. He thirsted because his body was shutting down.

ii. Application

- 1. What does this mean for us?
- 2. Christ thirsted so that we would never need to thirst.
- 3. What do I mean? We learn in John that Jesus offers living water to everyone who asks.
- 4. This living water will satisfy us both now and for all eternity.

6. A word of finality

- a. **John 19:30 (ESV) — 30** When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

b. Exposition

- i. The phrase “It is finished” is one word in Greek.
 1. It is the word (Taitelistai).
 2. It has been called, “the greatest single word ever uttered.”
- ii. What is finished?
 1. All the work that he had to do to save us.
 2. He came to earth, he lived a perfect life, then he suffered on the cross in our place.
 3. There is now nothing more for him to do.
 4. Every single thing has been done.
 5. He has fully satisfied the love and justice of God.
- iii. Illustration:
 1. The single Greek word here (translated “it is finished”) has been found written on papyri receipts for taxes, meaning “paid in full” (see Col. 3:13, 14). (MSB)
 2. Christ has paid in full.
 3. There is nothing left for you to pay.
- iv. Application:
 1. This means that there is nothing more for us to do.
 2. Nothing....
 - a. We don’t need to go to a certain place.
 - b. We don’t need to perform specific rituals.
 - c. We don’t need to chant something.
 - d. We don’t need to embrace a new philosophy.
 - e. We don’t need to do any work, since it has all been done.
 3. All we need to do is rest in Christ’s finished work.
 4. Are you resting in his finished work this evening? Or constantly striving?

7. A word of trust

- a. **Luke 23:46 (ESV) — 46** 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.
- b. Exposition
 - i. Jesus trusted the father to the very end.
 - ii. Throughout the whole process, he never sinned.
 - iii. Which means that he trusted God his heavenly father from beginning to end.
- c. Application:
 - i. Some of us wonder if we trust God enough.
 - ii. Is my faith good enough.
 - iii. I know God saves Christians, but have I believed or trusted enough to be a Christian?
 - iv. What about the days when I don’t trust God.
 - v. Here is the good news—Jesus trusted God perfectly for you, even in the very last minutes of his spectacular life.

8. conclusion

- a. you can learn a lot about someone from their dying words.

- b. Christ spoke seven dying words.
 - i. A word of forgiveness—You can be forgiven.
 - ii. A word of grace—You are saved by grace.
 - iii. A word of love—You are loved by God.
 - iv. A word of abandonment— You will never be abandoned by God.
 - v. A word of suffering—You will receive living water through Christ’s suffering.
 - vi. A word of finality—You don’t have to do anything to get to heaven.
 - vii. A word of trust—Your imperfect trust can be forgiven.

- c. These seven words are cause for great rejoicing. Let’s pray...