

# Jesus' Seven Last Sayings

## Part 1

What people say before they die is usually pretty important. The words of a dying man should be taken to heart. In the next couple of devotions I want to look at the final words of Jesus spoken by him while on the cross. The Gospels record seven sayings spoken by Jesus on the cross: one in Matthew and Mark, three in Luke, and three also in John. I have tried to put them in the order in which they may have occurred.

*First, Jesus spoke a word of forgiveness.* Jesus was falsely accused and unjustly crucified; nevertheless, he prayed for his enemies and persecutors. He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23.34). Jesus did not ask for revenge or judgment on his enemies; rather, he prayed that God would forgive them. Jesus taught us to do the same. He said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5.44). I know this is hard, yet Jesus is our example and we must follow in his steps. And what you'll find out is: by loving your enemies you will be set free from the deadly grip of hate and bitterness.

*Secondly, Jesus spoke a word of grace and hope.* To the thief on the cross, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23.43). Unlike Jesus, the thief deserved the judgment he was facing. Yet, when he asked Jesus to remember him (i.e. to have mercy on him), Jesus assured him that he would be with him in paradise. Now some want to read this as "Truly, I say to you today, you..." rather than "Truly, I say to you, today..." Yet, the latter is what Jesus was saying; he was saying that the thief would be in paradise that very day. As Paul said, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (see 2 Cor 5.8). When we die as Christians we go immediately into the presence of the Lord.

*Thirdly, Jesus uttered a word of loving concern.* Jesus said to his mother, Mary, "Woman, behold, your son," and to John the beloved, "Behold, your mother" (John 19.26-27). Jesus entrusted his mother into John's care. This shows that his father Joseph had died. Yet, what about Jesus' brothers who were also sons of Mary? Evidently, Jesus did not want to put her in their care because they were not part of God's family yet. Only after the resurrection did his brothers come to believe. This shows the importance of the church. Jesus wanted his mother to be in the company of believers. We too need to stay connected with a church family (see Heb 10.24-25).