

Seven Sayings from the Cross

By Rev. R. Scott Brown

This Lenten season we want to focus our attention on the cross. The Bible records seven things that Jesus uttered while being crucified. I will forewarn you-- this is going to take you to some uncomfortable places in your life. The good news is that we know the final revelation of the cross and rejoice in the victory of resurrection. However, I think by meditating on these sayings, we can have an even greater appreciation for who we are in Christ.

Each week we will focus on one of the sayings of Jesus. You will be asked to read and reflect on the passage that contains the particular saying and then be given instructions for each day of the week. Our goal is to try and empathize with Jesus as He suffered and to apply His heart to our own lives and circumstances.

If you are new to the experience of Lent, don't worry! The booklet will lead you each step of the way. Our prayer is that you will find a deeper understanding of Jesus then and now. Be blessed as you begin your journey toward Easter.

Blessings,

Pastor Scott

Grayson United Methodist Church
Lenten Devotional

Week 1

"From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli Eli, lema sabachthani? (which means 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me')"

Matthew 27:45-46

For the first time in all of eternity God the Father had to turn from His only Son. The weight of sin was fully upon Jesus and He felt the separation from God like a cold bitter wind. He knew this would come, but can you imagine the horror of feeling abandoned for even a moment? Sin pulls us from God's presence and seeks to keep us in a place of abandonment.

Read this week's passage out loud each day. Then spend time reflecting on the times and places in your life that you feel alone or have felt alone in the past.

Secondly, realize that because of Jesus nothing can ever separate us from God again. Take a moment each day and invite Him into those places of abandonment.

This booklet is in journal form. Feel free to write your thoughts and feelings down at every stage of reflection.

Reflections for the Week:

[illegible]

Week 2

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Luke 23:34

This drama had to play out according to the history God had called out in prophesy. As harsh as the actions of the Romans were and as hard as the hearts of the Jewish leaders were, Jesus never lost sight of the fact that this is the reason He came. Sin makes every person less than they were created to be.

In the fullness of what He was doing, Jesus acted out the very thing He was bringing to the world. Forgiveness of sin.

Read the passage out loud each day. Spend time reflecting on those people or institutions that you have struggled to forgive. Even if you have forgiven, reflect on how difficult this can be.

As these moments and people come to your mind, remember that Jesus died for all people. Remember also He died for you and me and for all our sins. Work toward forgiveness in your heart for others.

Reflections for the Week:

[illegible]

Week 3

Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise".

Luke 23:43

Here is our first picture of salvation. In these words, we see our first glimpse of the hope offered to each of us. This thief, who was by his own admission guilty, asked for grace. The wonderful miracle is now, for the first time in history, it could be offered without reservation. It may have looked like Jesus was dying, but really it was sin and its hold on humankind that was being obliterated.

This week read the passage out loud each day. Spend time reflecting on God's Grace in your life. Write down a few times that you were aware of His Grace.

Remember that Grace belongs to everyone.

Spend time each day in moments of praise and worship that you have a place in paradise because of His wonderful Grace.

Reflections for the Week:

[illegible]

Week 4

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "here is your mother."

John 19:26-27

I am reminded of the old saying that says we can be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good. Jesus was given to Mary in a miraculous manner. She chose to accept the gift as God's and took great care to raise His son. Jesus in His dying moments returns the gift to Mary. He turns her care over to His closest friend and is able to leave His earthly body with no lingering responsibilities or worries.

Jesus does not neglect the administration of His common duties, even in this tremendous moment. What are the daily things that God calls us to do? Are we doing them with great care and passion?

Write down the mundane things that must be done in your life each week.

Pray that God gives you a new understanding of their importance and impact.

Reflections for the Week:

[illegible]

Week 5

Later, knowing that everything has now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

John 19:28

Why is such a small thing recorded in our scriptures? I believe that these simple words are vital. It reminds us that in this moment where He is taking on our greatest enemy and winning as the Son of God, He also gave Himself to this moment as fully human. We get a wonderful reminder of the full weight of His sacrifice when we remember that the torture and pain were very real to Him.

We find joy in a God who can relate to us on every level in all circumstances because He walked in our skin.

Read the passage aloud each day.

Reflect on the things that you struggle the most with in life.

Find peace in knowing that God can fully relate to those struggles.

Reflections for the Week:

[illegible]

Week 6

Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Luke 23:46

The moment of abandonment was now over. Victory was at hand. There was only one place, one phrase, one direction for Jesus. Back into the hands of the one who had sent him. He was sent by the Father, He was one with the Father, He was committed to the fulfillment of the Father's will. Jesus' victory came not only on the cross, but in His complete obedience to the Father from the beginning of time.

We live in constant tension over who will be King of our lives. The battle is always God vs. Ourselves.

Read the passage out loud each day.

Reflect on the places in your life in which you struggle turning things over to God's control.

Reflections for the Week:

[illegible]

Week 7

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:30

The words "it is finished" are more accurately translated to mean "it is completed". In other words, everything that God set out to do from the moment Adam and Eve sinned was now brought into full realization. The plan was perfect, and the plan was now complete. Salvation was now available and sin had lost all of its power.

This final week of Lent leads us into Easter and our celebration of His Resurrection.

Read the passage out loud each day.

Take time to thank God for your salvation. Reflect on what salvation means to you.

Write words of thanks to God this week for what He has offered you.

Reflections for the Week:

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