

A large, weathered wooden cross is the central focus, set against a dramatic, cloudy sky. The cross is made of two thick, dark wooden beams. The text is overlaid on the cross and sky.

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORDS OF CHRIST FROM THE CROSS

COMMUNITY
BAPTIST CHURCH

Meditations on the Words of Christ from the Cross

Compiled for

Community Baptist Church

Scripture quotations are taken from the NASB95 and KJV in the body of the quoted text.
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1. "Father, forgive them..."

*But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.
— Luke 23:34*

Mark how closely the word with which our text opens: 'Then.' The verse which immediately precedes it reads thus, 'And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.' *Then*, said Jesus, Father, forgive them. 'Then'. When man had done his worst. 'Then' - when the vileness of the human heart was displayed in climacteric devilry. 'Then' - when with wicked hands the creature had dared to crucify the Lord of Glory. He might have uttered awful maledictions over them. He might have let loose the thunderbolts of righteous wrath and slain them. He might have caused the earth to open her mouth so that they had gone down alive into the Pit. But no.

Though subjected to unspeakable shame, though suffering excruciating pain, though despised, rejected, hated, nevertheless, He cries, 'Father, forgive them.' That was the triumph of redeeming love. 'Love suffers long and is kind...bears all things... endures all things.' (1 Cor. 13) Thus it was shown at the Cross.

- *AW Pink*
The Seven Sayings of the Savior on the Cross

2. "Today you shall be with Me..."

And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

— Luke 23:42-43

Here I would have you notice the condescension of our Lord's choice. The comrade of the Lord of Glory for whom the cherub turns aside his sword of fire is no great one, but a newly-converted malefactor. And why? I think the Savior took him with Him as a specimen of what He meant to do. He seemed to say to all the heavenly powers, "I bring a sinner with Me; he is a sample of the rest."

Have you ever heard of him who dreamed that he stood outside the gate of heaven and while there he heard sweet music from a band of venerable persons who were on their way to Glory? Inquiring "What are these?" he was told that they were the goodly fellowship of the prophets. He sighed and said, "Alas, I am not one of those." He waited a while and another band of shining ones drew near, who also entered heaven with hallelujahs and when he inquired, "Who are these and from where have they come?" the answer was, "These are the glorious company of the apostles." Again he sighed and said, "I cannot enter with them." Then came another body of men, white-robed and bearing palms in their hands who marched amid great acclamation into the golden city. These he learned were the noble army of martyrs. And again he wept and said, "I cannot enter with these." In the end he heard the voices of much people and saw a greater multitude advancing among whom he perceived Rahab and Mary Magdalene, David and Peter, Manasseh and Saul of Tarsus, and he espied especially the thief who died at the right hand of Jesus. These all entered in a strange company. Then he eagerly inquired, "Who are these?" and they answered, "This is the host of sinners saved by divine grace." Then was he exceedingly glad, and said, "I can go in with these." But he thought there would be no shouting at the approach of this company, and that they would enter heaven without song; instead of which there seemed to rise a seven-fold hallelujah of praise unto the Lord of love, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over sinners that repent!

I invite any poor soul here that can neither aspire to serve Christ, nor to suffer for Him as yet, nevertheless to come in with other believing sinners—in the company of Jesus who now sets before us an open door.

- C.H. Spurgeon
"The Believing Thief"

3. “Woman, behold, your son”

When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.
— John 19:26-27

The incident recorded in these two verses is wonderfully touching and affecting. Even in this trying season of bodily and mental agony, our blessed Lord did not forget others. He had not forgotten His brutal murderers; but had prayed for them: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” He had not forgotten His fellow-sufferers by His side. When one of the crucified malefactors cried to Him, ‘Lord, remember me,’ He had at once answered him, and promised him a speedy entrance into Paradise. And now He did not forget His mother.

He saw her standing by the cross, and knew well her distress, and felt tenderly for her desolate condition, left alone in a wicked world, after having lost such a Son. He therefore commended her to the care of John, His most loving and tender-hearted and faithful disciple. He told John to look on her as the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who lay in His bosom at the last supper. No one could be so suitable to Mary, as the home of one who was, according to the view maintained above, son to her own sister Salome...

We should mark the depth and width of our Lord’s sympathies and affections. The Savior on whom we are bid to repose the weight of our sinful souls is one whose love passes knowledge. Shallow, skin—deep feelings in others, we all know, continually chill and disappoint us on every side in this world. But there is one whose mighty heart-affection knows no bottom. That one is Christ.

- J.C. Ryle
Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John

4. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

— Mark 15:34

To the believer, this cry is a revelation of the deep suffering and anguish our Saviour bore, and a proof of His infinite love for sinners. It challenges us, with all the saints, to be strong to comprehend "what is the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God which passeth knowledge" ...

If the Cross is the central Truth of the New Testament, this cry is the heart of this truth and its deepest expression. This is the holy of holies to the reverent reader of the story of the passion...

Without the belief that JESUS bore our sins in His body on the tree, without the acceptance of the vicarious element in His death, the cry on the Cross is inexplicable. But if JESUS was the Lamb of GOD and GOD laid on Him the iniquity of us all, we have a key to the mystery of such suffering. If the death of CHRIST was only that of a great martyr for the truth the cry is strangely out of place. But if He died, the just for the unjust, if "He was made sin for us," then our own sins and the sins of the whole world wrung from our Saviour the cry of anguish and loneliness. What is the Atonement? "It is the satisfaction rendered to the justice of GOD for man's sin by the substituted penal suffering of His well-beloved SON."

If we dislike such a theological definition, we may find the same great truth expressed in the liturgies of the Church used at the Lord's Supper, when we commemorate His death. What could be more beautiful than the interpretation of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands: "We believe that He suffered His blessed body to be nailed on the Cross that He might affix thereon the handwriting of our sins; that He also took upon Himself the curse due to us that He might fill us with His blessings. And humbled Himself unto the deepest reproach and pains of hell, both in body and soul, on the tree of the Cross when He cried out with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?' that we might be accepted of GOD and never be forsaken of Him."

- *Samuel Zwemer*
The Glory of the Cross

5. "I am thirsty."

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty."

— John 19:28

Let us consider the time when he thus complained. "When all things were now accomplished," says the text, that is when all things were even ready to be accomplished in his death. A little, a very little while before his expiration, when the pangs of death began to be strong upon him: and so it was both a sign of death at hand, and of his love to us, which was stronger than death, that would not complain sooner, because he would admit of no relief, nor take the least refreshment, until he had done his work.

Take notice of the design and end of his complaint: "that the scripture might be fulfilled, he says, I thirst;" that is that it might appear, for the satisfaction of our faith, that whatever had been predicted by the prophets, was exactly accomplished, even to a circumstance in him.

How horrid a thing is sin! How great is to that evil of evils, which deserves that all this should be inflicted and suffered for the expiation of it! The sufferings of Christ for sin give us the true account, and fullest representation of its evil.

Suppose the bars of the bottomless pit were broken up; and damned spirits should ascend from thence, and come up among us, with the chains of darkness rattling at their heels, and we should hear the groans, and see the ghastly paleness and trembling of those poor creatures upon whom the righteous God has impressed his fury and indignation, if we could hear how their consciences are lashed by the fearful scourge of guilt, and how they shriek at every lash the arm of justice gives them.

If we should see and hear all this, it is not so much as what we may see in this text, where the Son of God, under his sufferings for it, cries out, I thirst. For, as I showed you before, Christ's sufferings, in divers respects, were beyond theirs. O then, let not your vain heart slight sin, as if it were but a small thing! If ever God show you the face of sin in this glass, you will say, there is not such another horrid representation to be made to a man in all the world. Fools make a mock at sin, but wise men tremble at it.

- *John Flavel*

The Fifth Excellent Saying of Christ Upon the Cross

5. "It is finished!"

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

— John 19:30

He said, it is finished; that is, the whole will of God; as that He should be incarnate, be exposed to shame and reproach, and suffer much, and die; the whole work his Father gave Him to do, which was to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and obtain eternal salvation for His people, all which were now done, or as good as done.

The whole righteousness of the law was fulfilled, an holy nature assumed, perfect obedience yielded to it, and the penalty of death endured; hence a perfect righteousness was finished agreeably to the law, which was magnified and made honourable by it, and redemption from its curse and condemnation secured. Sin was made an end of, full atonement and satisfaction for it were given. Complete pardon procured, peace made, and redemption from all iniquity obtained. All enemies were conquered. All types, promises, and prophecies were fulfilled, and His own course of life ended. The reason of His saying so was, because all this was near being done, just upon finishing, and was as good as done; and was sure and certain, and so complete, that nothing need, or could be added to it.

And it was done entirely without the help of man, and cannot be undone; all which since has more clearly appeared by Christ's resurrection from the dead, his entrance into heaven, His session at God's right hand, the declaration of the Gospel, and the application of salvation to particular persons: and He bowed his head; as one dying, and freely submitting to His Father's will, and the stroke of death: and gave up the ghost; His spirit or soul into the hands of His Father; freely laying down that precious life of His which no man could take away from Him.

- *John Gill*
Gill's Exposition

6. "Father, into Your hands..."

*And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last.
— Luke 23:46*

Having made God the guardian of His soul, He rejoices that it is safe from all danger; and, at the same time, prepares to meet death with confidence, whenever it shall please God, because the Lord guards the souls of His people even in death...

Let us now remember that it was not in reference to Himself alone that Christ committed His soul to the Father, but that He included, as it were, in one bundle all the souls of those who believe in Him, that they might be preserved along with His own; and not only so, but by this prayer He obtained authority to save all souls, so that not only does the Heavenly Father, for His sake, deign to take them into His custody, but, giving up the authority into His hands, commits them to Him to be protected...

Everyone who, when he comes to die, following this example, shall believe in Christ, will not breathe his soul at random into the air, but will resort to a faithful guardian, who keeps in safety whatever has been delivered to Him, by the Father.

The cry shows also the intensity of the feeling; for there can be no doubt that Christ, out of the sharpness of the temptations by which He was beset, not without a painful and strenuous effort, broke out into this cry. And yet He likewise intended, by this loud and piercing exclamation, to assure us that His soul would be safe and uninjured by death, in order that we, supported by the same confidence, may cheerfully depart from the frail hovel of our flesh.

- *John Calvin*
Harmony of the Gospels