

**Good Friday
April 2, 2021
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church**

The 7 Last Words of Jesus



1

FORGIVE

“³²Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [[³⁴**Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’**]] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!’ ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’” Luke 23:32-38

Meditation and Reflection Questions:

(A note page is provided on the back)

They do not know what they are doing.

Wounds are inflicted on us. We inflict wounds on others.

So much is not known and unrealized.

What pain have we endured? What pain have we caused?

What pain is Christ enduring as the cross is lifted up?

How much love did it take to offer forgiveness in this moment of pain,
of shame and of mockery?

Forgive them!

Let this forgiveness wash over you, right now.

Value its cost.

And then consider any hardness of your heart.

Who do you need to forgive, regardless of the wounds inflicted on you?

Prayer “Savior of the world, what have you done to deserve this? And what have we done to deserve you? Strung up between criminals, cursed and spat upon, you wait for death, and look for us, for us whose sin has crucified you. To the mystery of underserved suffering, you bring the deeper mystery of unmerited love. Forgive us for not knowing what we have done; open our eyes to what we are doing now, as, through wood and nails, you disempower our depravity and transform us by your grace.” (Stages on the Way, page 141).

Action:

After you ponder and pray, take a pen and write your name on the cross. Claiming Christ’s forgiveness for you. And claiming Jesus’ call to forgive others, even those who have caused deep pain.

2

PARADISE

“One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, ‘Are you not the Messiah? 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 have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.’⁴² Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’⁴³ He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’” Luke 23:39-43

Meditation and Reflection Questions:

Two criminals meet Jesus as they are placed beside one another on their own crosses. One calls him out joining the mockers and daring him to save himself and those hanging with him. The other names the fear of God, in the face of his own mortality. He then admits his own sin. Then he turns to Jesus asking to be remembered. Those few words, are a conversion and Jesus’ work of saving is still going on, he tells him that TODAY, today you will be with me in Paradise!

In your lowest moments and/or when you face sin, how do you meet Jesus?

Do you taunt Jesus, asking *Do you want to save even this?*

Or do you turn to Jesus, place God above us, admit your sin and just condemnation while claiming Christ’s innocence and then letting your cry be your prayer – Jesus Remember me.

Here in the lowest point, Jesus points and promises the highest point – Paradise! May we turn our eyes towards God’s paradise as well.

Action:

What are characteristics of God’s paradise? _____

How can you live into one of these characteristics, in the Easter season ahead? _____

Write this on the paradise poster on the wall. Let us follow Jesus living into His Paradise, even here and now.

3

Here Is Your Mother

*“Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, ‘**Here is your mother.**’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.” John 19:25b–27*

Meditation:

The ones we love feel our pain.

The ones we love see our pain.

The ones we love are affected by the beginning and ending of our lives.

We see this reality at the foot of the cross.

Mary, laboring to bring him to life, and weeping as he takes his last breaths.

Yet, she is not alone.

She is surrounded by a family formed by her son.

They are joined together by their love for Jesus.

In his last hours, Jesus sees his mother, he sees the disciple whom he loves and he gives them one another. He gives them a new relationship, of mother and a son.

What is lost, remains in a new way. This relationship is a gift, for they need one another. Even at the last, in love, Jesus provides.

Reflection:

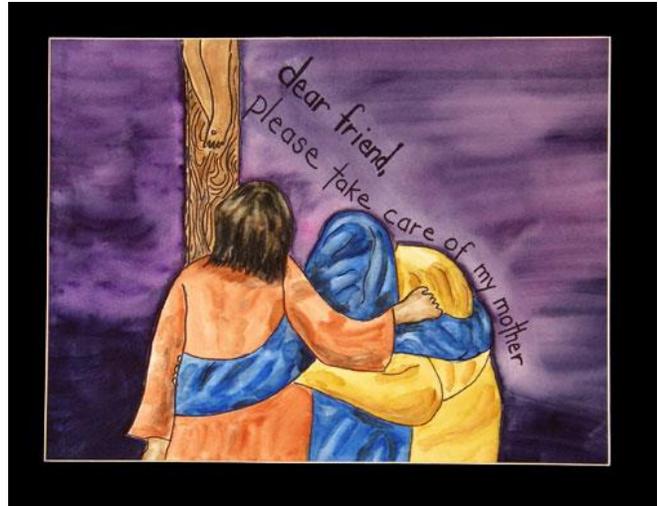
Who are the people that God has given you in your life?

Is there someone, or even many, that through your connection to Christ have become family?

Name them here:

Action:

Take a moment and write a prayer of thanksgiving for those God has given you, to remind you of the love of Jesus. _____



“Someday someone will write a story set in a place called The Skull, and it will tell, among other things, of a parting between mother and son, of how she wandered off, of how he vanished in air. But before that happens, it will describe how their faces shone with a feeble light and how the son was moved to say, ‘Woman, look at your son,’ then to a friend nearby, ‘Son, look at your mother.’ At which point the writer will put down his pen and imagine that while those words were spoken something else happened, something unusual like a purpose revealed, a secret exchanged, a truth to which they, the mother and son, would be bound, but what it was no one would know. Not even the writer.”

Mark Strand, *The Seven Last Words*

4

FORSAKEN

“From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

Matthew 27:45-46

Meditation:

Some say this is the moment, even Jesus was separated from God, because of our sin that he held. Some say that here Jesus experienced profound aloneness and darkness. What we know for sure is this cry came from Psalm 22. A Psalm of lament that let the few words he could speak echo so much more.

Reflect:

If you are at church, slowly read through the verses of Psalm 22 on the table before you. ***Notice, underline or circle the images that connect to Jesus on the cross.*** (If you are at home, use your Bible).

Action:

Open your heart to this lament, to Jesus’ lament and realize your own lament.

What do you need to pour out as you draw near the cross?

For the cross can hold the laments of all the world, even yours.

Draw or write your lament (this is just between you and God).

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, in your mercy hear my cry.



“Lord Jesus,
by your cry of desperate honesty,
rid us of superficial faith
which is afraid of the dark.

Not so that we might be justified pessimists,
but so that we might discover profound joy;
give us, when we need it,
the courage to doubt,
 to rage,
 to question,
 to rail against heaven
until we know we are heard.

We do not ask for easy answers to hard times;
there are many who can offer these.

We ask for a sense of your solidarity,
that will be enough
to let us know
that we do not walk or cry alone;
that will enable us to go through the dark
and find light again in the morning.
AMEN.”

5

THIRST

“After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), ‘I am thirsty.’²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.”

John 19:28-29

Meditation:

Let these words from Mother Theresa, written from Jesus’ perspective speak to you.

“I know what is in your heart, I know your loneliness and all your wounds, the rejections, the judgments, the humiliations, I carried it all before you. And I carried it all for you, so you could share My strength and My victory. I know, above all, your need for love, how much you are thirsting for love and tenderness. Yet, how many times have you desired to satisfy your thirst in vain, seeking that love with selfishness, trying to fill the void within you with passing pleasures, with the even greater emptiness of sin.

Do you thirst for love?

“Come to Me all you who thirst ... ” (John 7:37). I will satisfy you and fill you.

Do you thirst to be loved?

I love you more than you can imagine ... to the point of dying on a cross for you....

I THIRST FOR YOU – just you, as you are.

You don’t need to change to believe in My love, for it will be your confidence in that love that will make you change. You forget Me, and yet I am seeking you every moment of the day – standing before the doors of your heart and calling.

Do you find this difficult to believe? If so, look at the Cross, look at My Heart that was pierced for you. Have you not understood My Cross? Then listen again to the words I spoke there, for they tell you clearly why I endured all this for you:

....I THIRST (John 19: 28)

....Jesus is God, therefore His Love and His Thirst are infinite. He, the Creator of the universe, asked for the love of his creatures. He thirsts for our love ... These words: “I THIRST” ... Do they echo in our soul?”

Reflection:

On the next page, consider, imagine all that Christ thirsts for.

Then, consider what it is you thirst for. Let all your thoughts tumble onto the page.

Action:

Take a bottle of water. Write down what time it is. Wait 1 hour before drinking the water. In this hour continue pondering what you thirst for, and how Jesus thirsted.

Prayer:

O Lord, you thirsted in body and soul. As I confront your thirst, reveal to me, what I thirst for and how it effects my body and my soul. Amen.



What does Jesus thirst for?

What do you thirst for?

6

FINISHED

“When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” John 19:30

Meditation:

It is finished. Done. Over. What is finished? Jesus’ mission was complete and with it the redemption of creation. N.T. Wright elaborates saying:

Now, on Friday, the sixth day of the week, Jesus has completed the work of redeeming the world. With his shameful, chaotic, horrible death he has gone to the very bottom, to the darkest and deepest place of ruin, and has planted there the sign that says 'Rescued'. It is the sign of love, the love of the creator for his ruined creation, the love of the savior for his ruined people. Yes, of course, it all has to be worked out. The victory has to be implemented. But it's done; it's completed; it's finished.

Reflection:

Stop and look up at the cross.

This is the symbol that your redemption is finished.

You are saved. You are rescued.

How does this feel? _____

How does this change how you live? _____

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

By Isaac Watts

*When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

*See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all*



Jesus is finished, now we can begin freely.

“He who thinks that he is finished, is finished. How true. Those who think that they have arrived, have lost their way. Those who think they have reached their goal, have missed it. Those who think they are saints, are demons.”

— Henri Nouwen, *The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery*

Action: Reflect. Write. Pray.

Your life is not finished.

What work has God given to you?

What is before you in the days God has formed for you?

(If you don't know let these questions guide your prayer...)

7

COMMIT

*“It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**’ Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent.’ ⁴⁸And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. ⁴⁹But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.” Luke 23:44-49*

Meditation:

When speaking to a family for a funeral, I always share with them the committal liturgy, where we intentionally commit (give) their loved one, both body and soul, to God. This is so important as we let them go. We entrust those we love to God, who loves them more than we do. Here near the end of Luke, we find Jesus committing himself, body and soul back to God, where he came from and where he goes as the work is done. We began Lent with the imposition of ashes, saying: *Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.* Jesus also lies in the dust of the tomb, he also lets go of life knowing he will be taken into God’s hands.

Reflect:

Consider what it means to let Jesus go, to grieve Jesus and to commit him to God.

Prayer & Committal:

*You only are immortal, the creator and maker of all...
Into your hands, O God
We commit, we commend, your servant Jesus.
Acknowledge, we humbly pray,
Your own son.
Receive him into the arms of your mercy,
Into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,
And into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.*

Go and ponder all these things in your heart. Amen.

For Tomorrow:

*It was on the Saturday
from the Iona Community*

*It was on the Saturday
that he was not here.*

*Those who don't like corpses
can't stay away from graveyards,
unless there's some prohibition to stop them
revisiting the dead end
of their hopes and their dreams.*

*It's as if they think
that should the voice speak again,
it will speak there
or a sunbeam will dance
or a flower will shoot
and give a sign of misinterpreted life.*

*But close to the cemetery,
or confine, through custom or constraint,
the wailing ones to the house
And it looms larger...
the loss,
the lostness,
the losers.*

*Men shiver in an upstairs room,
warm though the day is.
Women weep in an uncharmed circle*

*Memory is forced on memory.
the mind's eye tries to trace
the profile and the face,
the smile,
the gentle twitching of the nose...
and fails.*

*And a panic sets in
because it seems he can't be remembered.
Was he ever known?*

*It was on the Saturday
that he was not there.*

End Notes for Good Friday Meditations

Cover

Guarani Woodcarving, *Jesus Christ on the Cross*. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57492>

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210319976224652&code=act&RC=57492&Row=108>

Forgiveness

Prayer from:

Stages on the Way, Iona Community, Wild Goose Worship Group (GIA Publications Inc: Chicago, 2000) page 141.

Tintoretto, 1518-1594. Crucifixion, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56804> [retrieved March 19, 2021]. Original source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crucifixion_by_Tintoretto_-_Accademia_-_Venice_2016_-_crop.jpg.

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210319976224652&code=act&RC=56804&Row=32>

Petts, John, 1914-1991. Christ Crucified, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vand>

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210319976224652&code=act&RC=57342&Row=3>

Paradise

Bruegel, Jan, 1568-1625. Paradise Landscape with Animals, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville,

TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56933> [retrieved March 19, 2021].

Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_Breughel_Ii_-_Paradise_Landscape_with_Animals_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg.

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210319976224652&code=act&RC=56933&Row=18>

Here is your Mother

Michelangelo. Pieta, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56582> [retrieved March 23, 2021]. Original source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo%27s_Piet%C3%A0_Saint_Peter%27s_Basilica_Vatican_City.jpg - Jebulon.

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210323873697582&code=act&RC=56582&Row=7>

“Dear friend, please take care of my mother”

Painting © Linda E.S. Roberts, 2007

Mark Strand, *The Seven Last Words*. <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/17-holding/1731-poem-to-add-to-archive-the-last-seven-words-by-mark-strand>

Forsaken

Watkins, Carleton E., 1829-1916. Solar Eclipse from Mount Santa Lucia, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56320> [retrieved March 23, 2021]. Original source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carleton_Watkins_\(American_-_Solar_Eclipse_from_Mount_Santa_Lucia_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg\)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carleton_Watkins_(American_-_Solar_Eclipse_from_Mount_Santa_Lucia_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)).
<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210323796836714&code=act&RC=56320&Row=18>

Stages on the Way, Iona Community, Wild Goose Worship Group (GIA Publications Inc: Chicago, 2000) page 155.

Thirst

“I Thirst For You.” A Letter from Mother Theresa.

Text found at: <https://catholic-link.org/quotes/i-thirst-letter-written-mother-teresa-quote/>

Picture found at: <https://ignitewisdom.com/i-thirst-for-you-3/>

No known specific copyright information.

Finished

NT Wright, Christians at the Cross. Found on <https://bolsinger.blogs.com/weblog/2008/03/it-is-finished.html>

Church, Frederic Edwin, 1826-1900. Vision of the Cross, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55746> [retrieved March 24, 2021]. Original source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frederic_Edwin_Church_-_Vision_of_the_Cross_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg.
<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210323796836714&code=act&RC=55746&Row=190>

Isaac Watts, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*. (1707)
Hymn 101 in the Blue Presbyterian Hymnal.

Henri Nouwen, The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery. Quote found at: https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/4837.Henri_J_M_Nouwen?page=24

Commit

Adapted from: The Book of Common Worship, by *The Theology and Worship Ministry Unit*, for the Presbyterian Church (USA). (Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, 1993), page 936.

For Tomorrow

Stages on the Way, Iona Community, Wild Goose Worship Group (GIA Publications Inc: Chicago, 2000) page 174-175.