

FINAL WORDS ON THE CROSS



PRECEPT

LUKE 23:32-43

³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” ³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

(Read the rest of the verses 38-43)

PROMISE

Christ’s final words on the cross demonstrate the heart of God’s mission: that Christ take on the sins of humanity for our salvation. On the cross, He demonstrates His solidarity with us and His dedication to God’s mission—to forgive us through his death. In this suffering, we can see the love of God in its most powerful form.

In Luke’s account of the crucifixion, Christ demonstrates His dedication to the forgiveness of all, even through great physical and emotional suffering. Not only is Christ being crucified, but He is also being ridiculed by the people watching Him, the Jewish leaders, Roman soldiers, and the criminals crucified with Him. Matthew 27:39 says, “*Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads in mockery.*” and in Mark 15:29, it said, “*The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. ‘Ha! Look at you now!’ they yelled at him. ‘You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days.’*” If we are honest with ourselves, we know that every attitude on the hilltop that day is present in our midst today. We have ridiculed, taunted, mocked, insulted, and shamed Jesus at some point of our lives. Every time we do that, we erect the cross and place a nail on His hands, making Him suffer all over again. Let us learn from one of the criminals who changed his heart and proclaimed Christ as the King and Saviour of the world at the time of Christ’s death. Luke 23:39-41 said, “³⁹ *One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: ‘Aren’t you the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!’* ⁴⁰ *But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don’t you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence?’* ⁴¹ *We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this Man has done nothing wrong.*” The second criminal has not lost his faith and was aware that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. He acknowledged that it was right to punish him for his sin but that Jesus is innocent. Lastly, believing that Jesus is Messiah, the bandit asked for help from Him, pleading for mercy and hope that Christ will remember him. What an amazing faith at such a dark time!

In Jesus’ pain and anguish, we see the depths of suffering that He takes on for us—he drinks the cup of suffering (Matthew 26:39), leading to temporary separation from the Father, as a ransom for our sins. Salvation was bought at great cost. Christ’s last words remind us of the gravity of His sacrifice, which fosters forgiveness and grace toward those around us, even in hardship. Let us remind ourselves of the gravity of God’s forgiveness and commit ourselves to extending that grace to those around us, even in times when we are struggling and feel alone. Christ’s words on the cross should bring us both sorrow and comfort. Sorrow because Christ experienced death for us—it is our sins that held him on the cross. Comfort because God forgives us through the cross. His sacrifice made us right with God.

PRACTICE

1. Christ’s Example. Amidst Christ’s suffering on the cross, He forgives those who mock Him and remains dedicated to His mission of salvation. How might this be an example for Christians in suffering and persecution?

2. Jesus on the Cross. Knowing that Christ died for you and me, are you now assured of your salvation? How does Christ’s death impact you and the way you live your life?

PRAYER

I. Volunteers

- Pray for joy, passion, and perseverance for all our volunteers in serving our brethren and the Lord.

II. Life Worship

- Pray for more dedicated volunteers as they lead our congregation in praising God on Sundays.

III. Life Kids

- Pray that this ministry will not grow weary in discipling and leading the children to God’s ways.

IV. Life Link

- Pray that they will be effective in making guests feel welcome and belong during Sundays.

V. Worship Services

- Pray that more people will have an encounter with Christ as they attend and hear God’s Word.

VI. Resources

- Pray for sustenance and provision for the church’s mission, activities, and programs.

VII. Church

- Pray for guidance, direction, and for God’s help for all of our church’s activities and programs.