



SERMON SERIES | FEB 14 - MARCH 31

# FAMOUS LAST WORDS

THE FINAL WORDS OF JESUS  
FROM THE CROSS

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**Week 1 - "Father, forgive them..."**  
**February 18 2024**

1. **Understanding Crucifixion:** Discuss the historical context of crucifixion and its implications for Jesus' suffering on the cross. How does knowing the physical and emotional torment of crucifixion deepen our understanding of Jesus' sacrifice? (Luke 23:33-43; John 19:17-30)
2. **The Significance of Forgiveness:** Reflect on Jesus' prayer for forgiveness for his executioners. What does this reveal about Jesus' character and his mission on Earth? How does his act of forgiveness challenge our understanding of grace and mercy? (Luke 23:34; Matthew 5:44; Ephesians 4:32)
3. **Identifying with "Them":** Consider the idea that "we are the 'them'" for whom Jesus prayed. How does this concept challenge our perspective on forgiveness and redemption? In what ways do you see yourself in the individuals Jesus forgave on the cross? (Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-5)
4. **Acknowledging Sin:** Reflect on the concept of sin. How does recognizing our own sinfulness lead to a deeper appreciation of God's grace? How can Lent be a season for self-reflection and repentance? (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8-9; Psalm 51:3-4)
5. **Prevenient Grace:** Discuss the idea of God's prevenient grace, the grace that goes before us even before we ask for forgiveness. How does understanding God's proactive forgiveness impact our relationship with Him? How can we respond to this grace in our lives? (Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-5)

6. **Modelling Forgiveness:** Explore Jesus' role as a model for forgiveness. How does Jesus' example of forgiveness challenge our attitudes toward those who wrong us? How can we emulate Jesus' forgiveness in our relationships and daily lives? (Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:31-32)
7. **Practicing Forgiveness:** Reflect on personal experiences of forgiveness and unforgiveness. What are the barriers to forgiveness in our lives? How can we overcome these barriers and extend forgiveness to others? (Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 6:37; James 2:13)
8. **Living in Forgiveness:** Consider the practical implications of living in forgiveness. How does forgiving others contribute to our own spiritual and emotional well-being? How does it foster reconciliation and peace in our relationships and communities? (Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; Colossians 3:13-14)
9. **Personal Application:** Reflect on how the message of forgiveness from the cross applies to your own life. How can you respond to Jesus' prayer for forgiveness in your thoughts, words, and actions? What steps can you take to embody the forgiveness you have received? (Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:5-8)



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**Week 2 - "Today you will be with me in paradise"**

**February 25 2024**

## **1. Understanding the People Around Jesus:**

- In what ways did Jesus challenge societal norms by associating with "undesirable" people during his ministry? (Luke 15:2)
- Reflect on a time when you have felt judged or excluded by religious individuals or communities. How did that experience shape your view of Christianity?
- How can we emulate Jesus' example of welcoming and embracing those who are often marginalized or considered outcasts in our society today?

## **2. Exploring Perspectives About Jesus:**

- Compare and contrast the perspectives of the two criminals crucified with Jesus. How did their views of Jesus influence their responses to him? (Luke 23:39-43)
- Consider your own perspective on Jesus. Do you see him as a source of hope and salvation, or do you view him with skepticism or indifference? How does your perception of Jesus impact your daily life and decisions?
- Reflect on the significance of the criminal's simple plea to Jesus: "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." How does this demonstrate the accessibility of grace and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?

### **3. Responding to the Petition for Jesus:**

- What does it mean to "remember" someone in the biblical context, as seen in passages like Genesis 8:1 and Genesis 30:22? How does this understanding deepen our appreciation of the criminal's petition to Jesus? (Luke 23:42)
- Discuss the concept of salvation and its implications for believers. How does the criminal's request for remembrance illustrate the core message of the Gospel?
- Reflect on your own prayers and petitions to Jesus. Are they focused solely on personal salvation, or do they reflect a deeper desire for communion with God and participation in his kingdom purposes?

### **4. Embracing the Promise of Jesus:**

- Explore the biblical concept of paradise as depicted in Genesis 2:15 and its association with the Garden of Eden. How does Jesus' promise of paradise to the repentant criminal offer hope and assurance to believers? (Luke 23:43)
- Consider the significance of Jesus' actions in relation to the garden setting throughout his life, from Gethsemane to the garden tomb. How does this imagery reinforce the theme of redemption and restoration?
- Reflect on the implications of Jesus' invitation to paradise for your own life and faith journey. How does the promise of eternal fellowship with God shape your perspective on suffering, death, and the ultimate hope of believers?



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**Week 3 - "Behold Your Son.... Behold Your Mother"**

**John 19:25-27**

**1. Understanding Rejection and Disconnection:**

- Read Matthew 27:45-54, the account of Jesus' crucifixion. How does this passage illustrate the rejection and disconnection experienced by Jesus on the cross?
- Reflect on a time when you felt rejected or disconnected. How did it affect you spiritually, emotionally, and mentally?

**2. Jesus' Concern for Women:**

- Read Luke 8:1-3. How does this passage demonstrate Jesus' radical inclusivity and concern for women during his ministry?
- Discuss instances in your life or community where women have been marginalized or excluded. How can we embody Jesus' care and inclusion for women in our interactions and ministries?

**3. Honouring Parents and Caring for Mothers:**

- Read Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1-3. What do these verses teach us about honouring our parents?
- Share practical ways in which we can honour and care for our parents, particularly as they age. How can our faith inform our approach to caregiving?

#### **4. Creating a Community of Care:**

- Reflect on John 19:26-27. How does Jesus' assignment of Mary to John illustrate his desire for a broader community of care?
- Discuss ways in which our church or community can foster a culture of caring for one another, transcending differences and barriers.

#### **5. Living Out Jesus' Last Words:**

- Consider the phrase "The Whole church caring for the whole Church." How can we practically implement this principle in our church and personal lives?
- Reflect on a time when you experienced care or support from your church community. How did it impact your faith and sense of belonging?

#### **6. Application and Response:**

- Take a moment to identify someone in your life who may need care or support. How can you reach out to them and demonstrate Jesus' love and compassion?
- Spend time in prayer, asking God to help you embody the principles of care and inclusion modelled by Jesus in his last words.



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**Week 4 - "My God, My God, Why have you Forsaken Me?"**

**Mark 15:29-36a**

1. Our guest preacher, Peter, quoted theologian Richard Niebuhr, who highlights a tendency for churches to neglect the cross. Why do you think some churches overlook the significance of Jesus' crucifixion? How can we ensure that we keep the cross central in our faith and practice? (1 Corinthians 1:18)
2. Share a time when you struggled to understand the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross. How did you eventually come to grasp its significance for your life? (Mark 15:34)
3. Discuss the significance of Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22 from the cross. Why do you think Jesus chose this psalm in his moment of anguish? (Mark 15:34; Psalm 22:1)
4. The sermon explores the tension between viewing Jesus as a superhero and recognizing his profound suffering and abandonment on the cross. How does this tension challenge our understanding of Jesus' identity and mission? (Mark 15:35-36)
5. Reflect on the idea that Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross reveals the depths of his sacrifice for humanity. How does this understanding impact your relationship with Jesus and your response to his sacrifice? (Mark 15:34)
6. Consider times in your life when you have felt abandoned or rejected by others. How does Jesus' experience of abandonment on the cross offer comfort and hope in those moments? (Mark 15:34; Romans 8:38-39)
7. How does Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross demonstrate his solidarity with humanity's suffering and alienation? How does this shape our understanding of God's love and compassion for us? (Mark 15:34; Hebrews 4:15-16)
8. Discuss the implications of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our own lives and faith. How does his willingness to endure abandonment and suffering inspire us to persevere in our own faith journeys? (Mark 15:34; Philippians 3:10-11)

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## Week 5 - "I Thirst"

### John 19:28-30

Jesus' two words, "I thirst," seem small and insignificant, but they echo and reverberate in many ways. Consider the questions below based on Rob's sermon and the five "echoes" he suggested. (John 19:28-30)

#### 1. The Affliction Echo:

- Reflect on the concept of suffering presented in the sermon. How does Jesus' refusal to drink the wine mixed with myrrh and gall demonstrate his willingness to endure suffering for the sake of fulfilling his mission? (Mark 15:23, Matthew 27:34)
- Have you ever experienced a situation where enduring suffering led to growth or transformation? If so, share about it. (Romans 5:3)

#### 2. The Prediction Echo:

- Explore the connection between Jesus' statement, "I am thirsty," and the prophecy from Psalm 69:19-21. How does this demonstrate the fulfillment of ancient predictions in Jesus' life? (Psalm 69:19-21)
- Discuss the significance of recognizing Jesus' death as part of God's predetermined plan. How does this understanding impact your perspective on the crucifixion? (Acts 2:23)

#### 3. The Connection Echo:

- Reflect on the humanity of Jesus as portrayed in his statement, "I am thirsty." How does Jesus' shared experience of human thirst resonate with your own experiences? (Hebrews 4:15)
- Why is it important for Christians to acknowledge both the divinity and humanity of Jesus? How does this aspect of Jesus' identity impact your faith? (John 1:14)



#### **4. The Satisfaction Echo:**

- Consider the analogy drawn between Jesus' statement, "I am thirsty," and his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. How does Jesus offer living water to satisfy our deepest needs? (John 4:10-14)
- Reflect on your own search for satisfaction and fulfillment. How has encountering Jesus provided a source of true satisfaction in your life? (John 6:35)

#### **5. The Redemption Echo:**

- Explore the symbolism of the hyssop branch mentioned in John's account of Jesus' crucifixion. How does this echo the Passover story and the concept of redemption? (Exodus 12:22)
- Discuss how Jesus' death on the cross brings about freedom and redemption for humanity. In what ways does the imagery of Jesus as the Lamb of God resonate with you personally? (John 1:29)

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**Week 6 - "Father, Into Your Hands..."**

**Luke 23:44-49**

One day our lives will come to an end. It's hard to fathom what that will feel like. Will we be able to let go of our fears and entrust ourselves to what comes next? This Sunday we will consider Jesus' final words, words that show us not only how to live, but how to die.

## **1. Understanding God's Care:**

How does the analogy of the little girl hesitating to jump into the pool relate to our relationship with God?

Reflect on the significance of Jesus addressing God as "Father" in his final prayer. How does this demonstrate God's care for us? (Luke 23:46)

Can you share personal experiences where you have felt God's care in your life, especially during challenging times? (Mark 14:36)

## **2. God's Strength:**

Discuss the concept of God's "hands" and its significance in understanding God's strength.

How does Jesus' reliance on God's strength reassure us in our own struggles and challenges? (Psalm 95:4-5)

Share instances where you have witnessed or experienced God's strength carrying you through difficult situations. (Slide 5, Psalm 55:22)

### **3. Bravery in Faith:**

In what ways does the analogy of jumping into the pool parallel the concept of bravery in faith?

Explore the idea of letting go and taking a leap of faith as demonstrated by Jesus on the cross. (Matthew 16:25)

Are there areas in your life where you struggle to let go and trust God completely? How can you overcome these barriers and take the leap of faith? (Matthew 16:25)

### **4. Facing Death with Hope:**

Reflect on Jesus' last words and their significance in providing hope in the face of death. (Luke 23:46)

How does the assurance of God's presence in both life and death impact your perspective on mortality?

Share your thoughts on the concept of entrusting ourselves into God's hands, especially in the context of facing death. (Luke 23:46)

### **5. Application and Response:**

How can the lessons learned from Jesus' final moments on the cross shape our daily lives and interactions with others?

Discuss practical ways in which we can cultivate trust and reliance on God's care and strength in our everyday experiences.

Take a moment to pray together, committing any fears, doubts, or uncertainties into God's hands, trusting in His care, strength, and guidance.

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## Good Friday - "It Is Finished." Famous Last Words

1. Reflect on the saying, "It's not what you say, but how you say it."
  - a) How does the tone, volume, and manner of speaking influence the impact of a message? ([Proverbs 15:1](#))
  - b) Consider different scenarios where the way we say something changes the meaning of the words.
2. Why is it important to understand not only what Jesus said on the cross but also how he said it? ([John 19:30](#)). What were Jesus' final words on the cross according to John's Gospel?
3. Explore the significance of Jesus crying out with a loud voice just before his death. How does this manner of speaking contribute to understanding his final words? ([Matthew 27:50](#)) Reflect on the Greek term "tetelestai" used by Jesus. What implications does this word carry in terms of completion and victory? ([John 19:30](#))
4. Discuss the parallel between Jesus' declaration "It is finished" and a servant completing a task for their master? A victorious soldier returning from battle? God's completion of creation.
5. Reflect on areas of your life where you may have felt defeated or discouraged. How can you apply the victorious declaration "It is finished" to these situations? ([Philippians 4:13](#))
6. Discuss how believers can claim victory in Christ and declare "It is finished" over their struggles and challenges. What biblical promises support this declaration? ([Romans 8:37](#))



## Easter Sunday - Famous First Words

### [John 20:1-18](#)

1. Recall and share your earliest memories of significant words spoken to you or by you. How did those words shape your understanding of yourself and others?

#### **2. Understanding Jesus' Words of Caring:**

Read [John 20:15](#). Why do you think Jesus chose to ask Mary Magdalene, "Woman, why are you crying?" instead of immediately revealing himself to her?

Reflect on a time when someone showed genuine compassion toward you during a moment of grief or sorrow. How did their words or actions impact you?

#### **3. Exploring Jesus' Words of Searching:**

Read [John 20:15](#) again. What deeper question might Jesus have been asking Mary with his words, "Whom are you looking for?"

Discuss the concept of searching and its significance in human experience. How does Jesus fulfil our deepest searchings?

#### **4. Discovering Jesus' Words of Knowing:**

Reflect on the statement, "To be truly known with nothing to hide is life at its best." When Jesus spoke Mary's name, what impact did it have on her? How does being known by Jesus bring fulfilment and purpose to our lives? Share an experience when you felt deeply known and understood by someone else. How did that experience impact your sense of searching and connection?

## **5. Applying Jesus' Words of Sending:**

Discuss the significance of Jesus entrusting Mary Magdalene with the mission to "Go and tell" ([John 20:17](#)). What does this reveal about Jesus' view of women and his mission?

Reflect on your role as a messenger of the Gospel. What barriers or fears do you face in sharing the message of Jesus with others, and how can you overcome them?

Brainstorm practical ways you can embody Jesus' words of caring, searching, and knowing in your interactions with others in your daily life.

Share personal experiences or strategies for initiating conversations about faith and Jesus with friends, family, or coworkers.

## **6. Mary's (and Our) First Words:**

Read [John 20:18](#) and discuss Mary Magdalene's immediate response to encountering Jesus and receiving her mission. How can we follow her example in sharing our own experiences of encountering Jesus with others? Reflect on the challenge to make Jesus' first words our first words in our interactions with others. What steps can you take to embody compassion, understanding, and the message of Jesus in your daily life?