

Good Friday Service – Seven Sayings from the Cross

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(30 minutes before service, various candles are lit around room. Until service begins, keep up M/M Slide: "Please enter the worship center quietly. Use these moments for silent prayer.")

Opening Song: I Will Glory in My Redeemer [C-D] (SG-Files)

*(*7 Main Candles on Stage are Lit during Song.)*

Set the Pace: Good evening, and welcome to our Good Friday worship service. Tonight, we focus on Jesus' last words from the cross.

This Good Friday service can be called "Tenebrae" which means darkness/gloom. We will share the Lord's Table together remembering Jesus' death and resurrection. After sharing the Lord's Table, you will notice that the room will progressively get darker. Seven individuals from our pastoral staff and leadership team have written Scripture-based readings, which are included in your devotional booklets. After each of the readings, one of seven candles will be snuffed out. When the last candle is out, we will be left in silent darkness. After a time of solitude, we will be prompted to soberly leave in silence and to return on Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection.

Tonight, please meditate on Jesus' final words from the cross (*His words of grace, love, hope, agony, suffering, finality, and rest*) and respond to the Lord in repentance, reverent worship, singing, prayer, devotion and obedience.

(On the Screen, Project the 7 "Let us" italics statements from bottom of page). We have 7 goals tonight: 1) Let us **reflect** and meditate on the last words of Christ spoken from the cross: *His words of grace, love, hope, agony, suffering, finality, and rest*. 2) Let us **remember** the sacrifice of Jesus Christ & the suffering he endured. 3) Let us **recognize** the seriousness of sin & penalty that we deserve. 4) Let us **repent**, turn from sin, and turn to the Lord for forgiveness. 5) Let us **realize** the greatness of our Triune God – To see His character, holiness, justice, wrath, love, mercy & grace. 6) Let us **respond** to the Lord in reverent worship, singing, prayer, and obedience. 7) Let us **return** on Easter Sunday in hope of the resurrection. *(Screen goes black).* **Prayer.**

On Screen:

- 1) *Let us **reflect** and meditate on the last words of Christ spoken from the cross: His words of grace, love, hope, agony, suffering, finality, and rest.*
- 2) *Let us **remember** the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.*
- 3) *Let us **recognize** the seriousness of sin.*
- 4) *Let us **repent** and turn to God for forgiveness.*
- 5) *Let us **realize** the greatness of our Triune God.*
- 6) *Let us **respond** to the Lord in reverent worship, prayer, and obedience.*
- 7) *Let us **return** on Easter Sunday in hope of the resurrection.*

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(*Cross Light Fades ON.)*

***Reading for Dark Candle 1 (by Dwayne Milioni)**

1. A Word of Grace

When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. 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 23:33-34 (NASU)

Grace Forgives

A blood-thirsty crowd gathered around Jesus as his pummeled and bleeding body was nailed to a cross. They mocked and jeered and cursed him. They adorned him with spit and ridicule. He did not threaten them. What were his first words?

His first words were an appeal to the Almighty Father, the Creator and Sustainer of all things. His plea was not for personal vindication, nor divine intervention. He did not cry out for help as he was being humiliated. Rather, the first word that came out of the Lord's mouth as he was hoisted to the sky to hang and to hurt was a plea for our forgiveness.

He called out to his Father for us, asking for the removal our sins, to cancel our spiritual debt, to cleanse us from the stain of guilt so easily exposed by the glory of God's holiness. There was no anger in his voice, only compassion as he personally pleaded with his Father to place the punishment of our sins on himself so that God might cancel out our record of wrongs and forget that we had ever offended him.

Grace Understands

The soldiers gathered around the cross not to cry out to the Lord for mercy, but to make a little extra money before the weekend. As they gambled for Jesus' soiled garments, hoping to take what was not theirs Jesus hung above them, ready to give them what they did not earn. They were hoping to make a few dollars. He was offering something everlasting.

Though salvation was just an arms reach away, they did not understand. Jesus was right there. As he watched them scurry after his worn-out vestiges, he was peering into their hearts. He saw darkness and emptiness and it evoked his pity and compassion. He knew their need because he understands us.

Grace is Victorious

No one is more undeserving of salvation than these ruthless soldiers who found humor in torturing Jesus. The Savior still bears the nail marks they placed upon his wrists and feet. These will be the only glorious scars allowed in heaven. These are the wounds that provide our healing. We are no better than these Romans that nailed our Savior to the cross. He endured for our sins as well. He went to war for us on the cross. He won the battle for us. He is mighty to save. He is our victor.

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Reflect on the following Scriptures pertaining to the grace of Jesus Christ:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

-- Romans 5:1,2

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

-- Titus 2:11-14

Remember His Word of Grace: *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”*

Lord’s Table: The Bread

Song: Grace Flows Down [D] Begin w/ Instruments Only (MSPW3-162)

Lord’s Table: The Cup

Song: Near the Cross [F] Vs. 1-4 (BH-280 or CH-319)

Song: Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus [F] Chorus Only (BH-320 or CH-340)

(Pastor then snuffs out Dark Candle #1 [on far stage right] and is seated).

(*All Stage/House Lights fade OFF.)

(*6 Readers are Seated on Platform.)

***Reading for Dark Candle 2 (by Scott Lorenz)**

2. A Word of Love:

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. John 19:26-27

Love Sacrifices

Some of Jesus’ followers stood, at that place called the skull. The past three years seemed a blur. Disbelief swept over them. Their sweet fellowship and the deep friendships now stood in contrast to the scene before them – the execution of their Master. Ordinary things became very distant--places, people they had met, and the once

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approving crowds they had encountered. Memories of the extraordinary things that Jesus performed now seemed out of place--raising the dead, feeding the five thousand, walking on water, miracles of renown, miracles that demonstrated the promise of life. Now they seemed to make little sense—or was something else happening as Jesus hung on the cross?

Love sacrifices for others, and God knows this truth better than the ones who stood before Him during His crucifixion. Jesus' crucifixion did not stand in contrast to his earthly life, but was the greatest expression of love in a life whose purpose was to show godly love. We now see what this grieving small group could not--that Jesus sacrificed his own life that we may live. His life was a long line of examples that taught us about true love. Now He was proving that his love for his own was real and his vindication would come three days later.

The Lord Jesus spoke the greatest word of love from the cross--without uttering a syllable.

Love is Selfless

A little maid yelled out, "Doesn't anyone care that I'm hurt!" as she sat on a park bench clutching her knee. The words in her head escaped, and surprised even her. We might excuse these words from an eight year-old, but we would consider them selfish coming from an adult. Scriptures tell us that what is in the heart of a man is what comes out of his mouth (Luke 6:46-47). We may surprise even ourselves at the selfish words that come out of us when prompted by physical or emotional pain.

Now consider the words of our Lord; words that came out as he was being cruelly executed. His words tell us exactly what was in his heart--selfless love. He did not cry out for self-pity. He thought of those whom he loved. When he said, "*Woman, behold your son*" he was doing more than making provision for His mother. They are words of selflessness. Each one a golden coin of God's selfless love for us. Each word refined in a genuine heart of love, minted at the cross.

Reflect on the following Scripture:

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 8:35-39

Remember His Word of Love: "*Woman, behold your son! . . . Behold your mother!*"

(Reader then snuffs out Dark Candle #2 [on far stage left] and is seated).

Song: My Savior's Love [G or Ab] Vs. 1-4 (*Passion or BH-547 or CH-348*)

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***Reading for Dark Candle 3 (by Rush Witt)**

3. A Word of Hope:

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 23:43

Try for a moment to imagine a world without hope. Try to imagine a world in which you have no hope of avoiding sickness. Once sick, there would be no hope of healing. Try to imagine a world in which there is no hope of bearing children, no hope of finding love, no hope of fulfilling relationships, no hope of life beyond this life. Try to imagine a world without hope and you will find it to be an impossible task. For to imagine a world without hope is to imagine a world without Christ.

When Christ's broken body expired upon the cross, all of creation--the universe and everything in it--was forever altered. For until that time, the future of hope lay in the balance. From the fall of man until the death of Christ, sin reigned on the earth and held men in bondage by unforgiving chains. There was no hope of escape apart from a heavenly miracle--apart from God's intervention. Not willing for his treasured creation to hopelessly suffocate beneath the weight of its sin, our Mighty God came down from His throne into our space and our time. As history patiently recorded an act of love never before imagined, God, being rich in mercy, chose to send his Son to live perfectly among sinful men and to die selflessly on our behalf.

He was not alone at His death. The Scriptures record, "*Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Him. When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"*

One of the criminals was hanging beside Jesus hurling abuse at him, saying, "*Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!*" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "*Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong*" 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.*" That day, both criminals died, but one--the one clinging to the Savior who was dying at his side--forever enjoyed the inheritance of everlasting life. There is still hope in Christ.

Reflect on the following Scriptures pertaining to the hope of Christ:

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let Your ears be attentive

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*To the voice of my supplications,
If You, LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with You,
That You may be feared.
I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait,
And in His word do I hope.
My soul waits for the Lord
More than the watchmen for the morning;
Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For with the LORD there is lovingkindness,
And with Him is abundant redemption.
And He will redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.
– Psalm 130*

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. – Romans 5:1-6

Remember His Word of Hope: *"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #3 [2nd candle in from stage right] and is seated).

***Reading for Dark Candle 4 (by Bob Jones)**

4. A Word of Agony:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46

The suffering of Christ on the cross was beyond calculation: The beating and stabbing of his body. The blood loss. The physical pain. On top of that the unbelief and rejection by his own Jewish community at the hands of Gentile leaders. Even his very own disciples, the Scriptures tell us, all abandoned him.

Yet there was something that happened to Jesus on the cross that was more horrific than bodily suffering and social alienation. It was the rejection by his God, by God the Father. *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* Jesus is conscious that he is being abandoned by God his Father. He is aware, and he voices the fact that God has forsaken

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him. Throughout the history of the church, this utterance has been called “the cry of desolation,” “the cry of dereliction,” and “the cry of abandonment.”

For one who knew the intimacy of a deep relationship with his heavenly Father--himself being God, himself one with God--this rejection is a shuddering agony. Here is the only time in the Gospel record where Jesus refers to his Father not as his Father.

But why? Why the separation? Why did God the Father abandon his own Son on the cross? Why abandon him at what would seem to be his point of greatest need? This is the question, of course, that vexed the great Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther. “God, forsaken by God, how can this be?” Thankfully Luther rediscovered the Bible’s answer: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, was bearing, on the cross, the sins of his sinful people. Jesus, our Substitute and our Redeemer, giving his life as a ransom for many. *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Stuart Townend, in his is recent hymn, “How Deep the Father’s Love,” pictures it this way, “How great the pain of searing loss, / The Father turns His face away, / As wounds which mar the Chosen One / Bring many sons to glory.” In turning his face away from his own Son, God was pouring out his wrath upon Jesus instead of us, to save us from the wrath we deserved.

Or hear Elizabeth Browning, as she reflects upon this scene of desertion in her poem, “Cowper’s grave”

Yea, once Immanuel's orphaned cry his universe hath shaken.
It went up single, echoless, ‘My God, I am forsaken!’
It went up from the holy lips amid his lost creation
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation.

In other words, why did God forsake Christ on the cross? So that you and I would not be forsaken. So that you and I, his sons and daughters, would never be abandoned. Jesus was rejected by his Father so that we his people would never face the rejection that we deserved.

Reflect on the following Scriptures pertaining to the atoning work of Jesus Christ:

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting [Himself] to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

1 Pt 1:24,25

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This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. – 1 John 4:10 [NIV]

Remember His Word of Agony: “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*”

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #4 [2nd candle in from stage left] and is seated).

Song: The Wonderful Cross (When I Survey) [C-D] Vs. 1-4 (MSPW2-76)

***Reading for Dark Candle 5 (by Ted Manby)**

5. A Word of Suffering:

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” John 19:28

Human Suffering

These words, “*I thirst,*” show us that the God-Man, Jesus the Messiah, was fully human. These words are ironic in that the One that spoke the seas into existence and held the waters in His hand is now suffering from thirst. This One who brought water out of the rock in the wilderness for His people and could walk on the water could also have provided for His human need. But his spiritual and physical sufferings were for a purpose. He was a substitute for sinners, so he did not shrink back from any of the pain and shame he bore in our place on that cruel, painful cross (equivalent to a modern day symbol of execution, like a gas chamber). *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted (Isaiah 53:4). Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17).*

Intense Suffering

The words, “*I thirst,*” also give us a glimpse into the intensity of the Messiah’s suffering. *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin . . . Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:10–11).* The Messiah bearing the Father’s holy wrath against sin and sinners is beyond our minds’ ability to fully grasp. He has been many hours without sleep and suffered many things at the hands of the Romans. Now His throat is parched along with the other crippling pains he is experiencing. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death (Psalm 22:14–15).*

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Scriptural Suffering

After arranging for John to care for His mother, “*Jesus, knowing that all (His suffering) was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”*” In addition to Psalm 22 quoted above, Jesus was keenly aware that his death was a fulfillment of other Old Testament prophecies. One text he knew the Romans had yet to fulfill was found in Psalm 69:21, “*They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.*” Thus, one of his motivations for saying, “I thirst,” was to provide an opportunity for the Romans to offer him the sour wine. Right on schedule, a Roman soldier fulfilled the last prophecy about the Messiah. Even in such intense pain, Jesus is giving careful attention to fulfill the Word of God that is without mistake or error.

Thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His intense spiritual and physical suffering in your place.

Reflect on these Scriptures showing Jesus’ concern for and fulfillment of your thirst:

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:37-38

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” John 6:35

“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” John 4:10

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.” Revelation 21:6

Remember His Word of Suffering: “*I thirst.*”

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #5 [3rd candle in from stage right] and is seated).

***Reading for Dark Candle 6 (by Wes Price)**

6. A Word of Finality:

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. John 19:30

With the breath of God the universe begins: nebulae and stars, galaxies and suns spinning into the seeming infinity of space. And in the midst of the vastness of it all, a tiny stone

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gently turns in His hands--earth. His Spirit hovers over the depths of its face and life begins to take hold of its surface. It grows and blooms into the flower of creation, swaying with the limbs of trees and grasses and happy creatures. And in the midst of the beauty of it all, a tiny shape gently forms in His hands--man. And as God breathes, man inhales the breath of life. This is how it was meant to be: God, the source of life, and man, utterly dependent on God's sustaining power. This was in the beginning.

But "man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree...brought Death into the world, and all our woe." And man began a different story – the story of sin. This story has been punctuated by wars and atrocities, but has been deceptively at work all of the time--when man built a tower to try and reach God, when Esau sold his birthright, when Israel made the golden calf, when David gazed across the white-washed rooftops at Bathsheba, when Judas kissed the face of Jesus. But everything that man begins must have an ending.

So, here, on this dusty bald-spot of a hill, Jesus breathes in and out the air of a world that he created--each breath an agony, each word a torture. And lifting himself to speak he proclaims an ending--not to God's story but to man's. The power of sin has ended. The power of death has ended. The power of the grave is finished forever. No more atonement for sin needed. No more work to justify God is necessary. But God's story is far from over. God's eternal story will continue with the return of Christ, when he will put the final stroke to man's story of sin and cut off the evil one with the breath of His mouth and destroy him with the brightness of His coming. As it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Reflect on the following Scriptures pertaining to death of Christ and the promise of salvation that it brings:

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like [that which came] through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment [arose] from one [transgression] resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift [arose] from many transgressions resulting in justification.

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted

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condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Romans 5:10-21

Remember His Word of Finality: *"It is finished!"*

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #6 [3rd candle in from stage left] and is seated).

Song: The Power of the Cross (Oh to See the Dawn) [Bb-C] (KG-Files)

(*At close of song, musicians turn OFF all lights on music stands).

***Reading for White Candle 7 (by Mark Armstrong)**

7. A Word of Rest:

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

(*Cross Light Fades OFF . . . All stage/house lights are already OFF).

Confidence. This simple word beautifully depicts our Savior's final words. Jesus dies with the words from Psalm 31:5 on his lips. Historically, this psalm was used as an evening prayer by Jewish families as they entrusted themselves into God's care during the night's sleep. The loud cry that Matthew, Mark and Luke all record is significant for two primary reasons. It reminds us of the intensity of the pain and suffering that Jesus endured on our behalf, and it illustrates the confidence with which he entrusted His soul to His Father. Let's consider two reasons why Jesus could display such confidence as he utters his last statement.

There is no greater joy in this life than simple obedience to our Heavenly Father. Obedience brings with it a confidence that we have done what is right and good in spite of the consequences. Jesus' mission on earth was simple; to do His Father's will (John 8:27-29; Luke 22:42). None other than Jesus has been perfectly obedient to the Father's will. So with a confident cry, Christ yields up his soul, knowing his work has been accomplished. Neither his life nor his death would be in vain.

Secondly, though his physical body was battered and bleeding, Christ knew that his Father would keep his soul safe and uninjured from death. And let us not forget that Christ not only entrusted his own soul to the Father, but also the souls of all who would believe on his name. Christ's work on the cross accomplished salvation for you and me.

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So that when our life on earth comes to an end, we too with confidence, can know that our souls are being preserved by our Heavenly Father.

Confidence. Despite the beatings, the ridicule, the torture and humiliation, our Savior was able to endure with confidence. Why? Because he was determined to be obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). He came to earth to live and die, so that we might live with the Father forever. Knowing his life and death were not in vain, our Suffering Savior died with confidence. With one final breath, for all to hear and with unexpected confidence, Jesus entrusted his precious soul to the only One who could preserve it.

Reflect on the following Scriptures pertaining to the confidence we have in Christ for his gift of salvation he offers through his sacrifice:

“So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You”; just as He says also in another passage, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation . . .”
– Hebrews 5:5-9

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, [and] being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
– Philippians 2:5-11

Remember His Word of Rest: *“Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.”*

(Reader turns off lecturn light).

(Reader then snuffs out White Candle #7 [stage center] and is seated).

*(After 1 minute of silent darkness, Bring up last M/M Slide: **“You are dismissed. Please leave the worship center in silence. Let us return on Easter Sunday remembering the hope of the resurrection.”** Bring up House Lights a little.)*

[Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is referenced from the New American Standard Updated Version, NASU]