

Sermon #124 — John's Gospel

Title: **SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS**

Text: John 19:25-30

Subject: *The Message of Our Lord's Seven Sayings*

Tape: *John #124*

Reading: *Psalm 22:1-31*

Introduction:

The title of my message is **SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS**. I want us to look at those seven things our Lord Jesus Christ spoke from the cross, as He hung upon the cursed tree, bearing our sin, suffering all the horror of the wrath of God for us, when He was made to be sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. I am certain that our Redeemer said many things that are not recorded in the four gospels (Psalms 22, 40, 69). But the Holy Spirit inspired Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to record seven specific statements spoken by the Lamb of God, as He hung upon the cursed tree as our sin-atoning Sacrifice, bearing all the fury of Divine justice and wrath as our Substitute.

These last seven words that fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ are recorded in the Book of God by divine purpose and inspiration for our learning,

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edification, comfort, and hope. This is what God Himself declares in **Romans 15:4**. — *“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*

In this Volume of Inspiration God the Holy Spirit has taken very special care to record these seven things spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, as He was laying down His life for us, to put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

1. *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”*
2. *“Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.”*
3. *“Woman, behold thy Son!”* — Son, *“Behold thy mother!”*
4. *“My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken Me?”*
5. *“I thirst!”*
6. *“It is finished!”*
7. *“Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”*

There have been mountains of words and thousands of sermons preached from these seven sayings of Christ from the cross. I cannot add anything to what

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has already been spoken and written by faithful men. But **I do hope that God the Holy Spirit will enable me to give you a glimpse of what I see in them.**

The only fear I have in preaching this message is the tendency to reduce these tremendous themes to mere homiletical points of dry doctrine and lifeless theology. May God forbid that from being the case!

These are the very words spoken by our great God and Savior in His humiliation, spoken as He engaged the forces of hell and endured the indescribable wrath of God in the place of sinners.

The horrid load of all my guilt
Was on my Savior laid;
When He who knew and did no sin
For sinners sin was made.

Enduring all God's wrath in death,
My Savior prayed for me;
In love He took my place and died
Upon the cursed tree.

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Oh love amazing! Love beyond
The reach of mortal tongue;
This love shall be the subject of
My everlasting song.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die!

Proposition: In these seven words from the cross I see the glorious Person, work, and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ beautifully demonstrated.

1. **CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR** (Luke 23:34)

The *first* word from the cross is found in **Luke 23:34**. — “*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*” **Here I see Christ our Mediator**. Here is the Son of God suffering by the hands of wicked men, suffering with wicked men, suffering as a wicked man, and yet praying for the men who made Him suffer. — “*There is one God,*

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and one Mediator between God and men,” and that Mediator is “*the man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5).

- We must have a Mediator (Hebrews 5:1).
- The Mediator must be a man of God’s choosing (Hebrews 5:4-5).
- The Mediator must pray and be heard (Hebrews 5:7).

Who meets all these qualifications? Only the Lord Jesus Christ! (John 14:6; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25)

Illustration: Peter — “*I have prayed for thee!*”

(1 John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*”

2. **CHRIST OUR KING** (Luke 23:43)

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The *second* word is found in **Luke 23:43**. The dying thief prayed, — “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom*” (v. 42). — “*And,*” in verse 43, “*Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.*” **Here I see Christ our King**. Even as He hung upon the cross, suffering untold agony under the wrath of God, Jesus Christ reigned as Lord and King over everything.

- Here is the sovereign King, the Ruler of the Kingdom of God, **saving whom He will!**
- Here is the King of Grace **opening the door** which no mere man can ever open.
- Here is the Prince of Peace, **giving peace** that no mere man can give.
- Here is the King of Glory, **promising mercy and eternal life** that no man can merit.

Would you obtain mercy like this dying thief? If you would, come to the King, Christ Jesus. Acknowledge Him as your Lord, and cry, “**Remember me!**”

“Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve,
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,

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And make this last resolve

‘I’ll go to Jesus, though my sin
Hath like a mountain rose;
I know His courts I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

Prostrate I’ll lie before His throne,
And there my guilt confess;
I’ll tell Him I’m a wretch undone,
Without His sovereign grace.

I’ll to the gracious King approach,
Whose scepter pardon gives;
Perhaps He may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives!

Perhaps He will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;

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For if I stay away, I know,
I must forever die.

But, if I die with mercy sought,
When I the King have tried,
This were to die (Delightful thought!)
As sinner never died!”

— *Edmund Jones*

“Salvation is of the LORD!” Grace comes from the Throne of Grace; and the King Who sits upon that throne is the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Peter 3:22) “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.”

(John 5:20-21) “For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. (21) For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.”

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(John 17:2) “As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.”

3. **CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE** (John 19:26-27)

The *third* word spoken by our Lord as He hung upon the cross is found in **John 19:26-27**. — “*When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy Son! (27) Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*” — **Here I see Christ our Representative and Example**. Even in the agonies of death, under the penalty of sin, enduring the wrath of God, fulfilling the everlasting covenant, accomplishing eternal redemption for us and satisfying the Divine justice, **our Lord Jesus Christ did not neglect the responsibilities of manhood!** Our Savior, as our Representative and Example, deliberately gave attention to His responsibilities as a man, even in the time of His dying agony. **He fulfilled all righteousness! He did everything that it is right for a man to do.**

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- He was circumcised.
- He was subject unto His parents.
- He was baptized.
- He attended the synagogue.

Our Lord Jesus was “*made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.*”

He fulfilled all righteousness as our legal Representative. — “*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*” (Romans 5:19). **And our dear Savior fulfilled all righteousness as our Example of Righteousness.** Peter tells us that our Lord Jesus “*suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps*” (1 Peter 2:21; John 13:13-15).

(John 13:13-15) “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. (14) If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

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If we would learn how to live in this world for the glory of God, if we would learn how to serve our generation, if we would learn how to worship God, let us go to Calvary. — Behold the Lamb of God and learn...

- Submission to the Will of God.
- Patience in Suffering.
- How to Love Your Brethren.
- How to Love Your Wife.
- How to Give (2 Corinthians 8:9).

4. CHRIST OUR SUBSTITUTE (Matthew 27:46)

The *fourth* word is found in **Matthew 27:46**. — “*And about the ninth hour (at 3:00 in the afternoon, after three hours of great darkness) Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*”

Here I see Christ our Substitute. This is the only time recorded in Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the Father as God. Here He takes the lowest place of humanity and cries out to his Father and our Father as a Creature to be pitied by his Creator. In His great agony, this mighty Man who is

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God reverts to His childhood, speaking in His native Syrian tongue, not in the Hebrew of His fathers or in the Greek He acquired as He matured.

At the height of His obedience to the Father, the Lord of Glory, was forsaken by His God and our God, because we deserve to be forever forsaken of that God whom we have spent our lives forsaking!

He was forsaken of God because He was made to be sin for us! Reproach has now broken His heart!
“MY GOD! MY GOD! WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?” This is a cry arising from depths of infinite anguish no mere human being can know. This cry no mortal mind can comprehend. This mystery no creature can fathom!

Martin Luther, after studying and meditating upon this text for hours, closed his Bible, slammed his fists down on his desk and cried, “God forsaken of God! My God, no man can understand that!”

I will not attempt to explain what no man can understand. But I rejoice in the fact of this our

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Substitute's greatest sorrow. This was not a type, but the reality. This was not a picture, but a real abandonment!

- The Substitute was real!
- The sin was real!
- The transfer was real!
- The suffering was real!
- The sacrifice was real!
- The forsaking was real!

The Lord Jesus was forsaken of God. That means those for whom He died shall never be forsaken of God!

(Isaiah 53:9-11) “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (10) Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge

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shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

(John 3:14-16) “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(Romans 5:6-8) “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21) “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made

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him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(1 Peter 2:24-25) “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

(1 Peter 3:18) “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:”

(1 John 4:9-10) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

What an infinitely, horribly evil thing sin must be!
How holy, just, righteous and good our God must

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be! O my soul, how great, how infinitely great is the love of God for me!

- Eternal, Electing Love!
- Faithful, Covenant Love!
- Sovereign, Free, Unconditional, Immutable Love!
- Sacrificial, Sin-atoning, Redeeming Love!
- Distinguishing, Saving, Keeping, Everlasting Love!

How anxious, how willing, how ready the holy Lord God is to save poor sinners! — “*He delighteth in mercy!*”

5. CHRIST THE MAN (John 19:28)

Our Lord’s *fifth* word from the cross is found in **John 19:28**. — “*After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.*” — **Here I see Christ the Man**. — “*The Word was made flesh.*” Here we see our Savior’s real humanity. **This is the shortest of the seven words of the cross; but it is every bit as instructive as the other six.** I am sure it is meant to teach us at least these three things.

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BODILY THIRST — Being in anguish of body, burning with fever, His tongue swollen and cleaving to His jaws, He thirsted for water, just like the rich man in hell, as He endured the fire of God’s hot, holy wrath for us.

SOUL THIRST — Being forsaken of God, He thirsted in His soul. — “*As the hart planteth after the water brooks,*” so panted His soul for God.

HEART THIRST — The Lord of Glory was made to be sin, made to endure all the horror of God’s holy, unmitigated wrath, because **He thirsted for the souls of men. He thirsted for His people! He thirsted to be thirsted after!** When I hear the Master cry, “*I thirst,*” I can almost hear His heart crying, — “*I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.*”

6. **CHRIST OUR SURETY** (John 19:30)

Stay here in **John 19**. Read verses **28-30** again. — “*After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now*

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*accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. (29) Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. (30) When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, **IT IS FINISHED**: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.”* Here, in this *sixth* word from the cross, as I hear the Immanuel cry, “*It is finished,*” I see **Christ our Surety**.

“**It is finished!**” — What a blessed, triumphant word! Our blessed Savior was not crying a sigh of relief. He was not saying, “At last, it is over.” Oh, no! Most men leave this word with things unfinished. — So many plans unfinished! — So many hopes unfulfilled! — So many desires unsatisfied! — So many works incomplete! — So many things they wanted to do, or see, or experience, unfinished! — Not so with the Lord Jesus Christ, our great Surety! He accomplished everything He came here to do.

What did he come here to do? The Scriptures tell us plainly...

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- The Father's Will (Hebrews 10) — "*It is finished!*"
- Save His People (Matthew 1:21) — "*It is finished!*"
- Fulfill All the Types, Promises, and Prophecies of the Scriptures — "*It is finished!*"
- Make an End of Sin — He came here to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself! — "*It is finished!*"
- Bring Everlasting Righteousness — "*It is finished!*"
- Obtain Eternal Redemption (Hebrews 9:12) — "*It is finished!*"
- Redeem us From the Curse of the Law — "*It is finished!*"
- Fulfill and Make an End of the Law – To Magnify the Law and Make it Honorable — "*It is finished!*"

This is the Surety's cry of accomplished suretyship to the Father. — "*It is finished!*" — "*I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do!*" – Here our Covenant Surety says to His Father, I

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have finished all the work trusted to My hands. I have redeemed all the souls trusted to Me. I have ransomed all the sheep. I have found all the lost ones I came to find. All the work is fully done, well done, perfectly done!

This is the cry of our great Surety to poor, needy sinners! — **“It is finished!”**

- Wrath is finished!
- Judgment is finished!
- Sin is finished!
- Righteousness is finished!
- Redemption is finished!
- Justification is finished!
- Sanctification is finished!
- Salvation is finished!

“*It is finished!*” Sinners, hear it:
Hear the dying Savior’s cry;
“*It is finished!*” Angels sing it,
Sing the praise of Christ on high.
“*It is finished!*” — “*It is finished!*”
Tell it through the earth and sky!

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Justice now demands salvation
For those souls whose wrath Christ bore;
And it smiles with approbation
On the ransomed evermore!
Grace and mercy, grace and mercy
Freely flow from boundless stores.

Hear the Son of God declare it,
All is done He came to do!
Needy sinners, Hear, believe it. —
Is not this good news to you? —
“It is finished!” “It is finished!”
All is done! Oh, yes, it’s true!

“It is finished!” All is over.
Jesus drank damnation dry!
Never can a ransomed sinner
God’s salvation be denied!
“It is finished!” “It is finished!”
Cries our Surety now on High!

Who is he that shall condemn us?
Who shall charge us now with sin?

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It is God Who justified us
Christ, Who died, cries in our name, —
“*It is finished!*” “*It is finished!*”
Praised forever be His name!

7. CHRIST OUR SABBATH (Luke 23:46)

The Savior’s *last* word from the cross is found in **Luke 23:46** — “*And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*” – **Here I see Christ our Sabbath.** Once our great Redeemer had finished His work, He “*cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost.*” Thus He entered into His rest and obtained eternal rest for us.

(Hebrews 4:9-11) “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. (10) For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his. (11) Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

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Our Savior died with the Word of God in His heart and on His lips (Psalm 31:5).

(Psalms 31:1-5) “In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. (2) Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defense to save me. (3) For thou *art* my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name’s sake lead me, and guide me. (4) Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* my strength. (5) Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.”

Be sure you do not miss this. — Our dear Lord Jesus, our great Savior Who had cried, “My God, my God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” now calls His Father by that endearing name, “Father.” —

The storm of God’s holy wrath beat fiercely upon His holy soul; but now the storm is nearly over. Only one thing is to be done. He must yet die; but here He seems to say to poor, needy sinners, “Look here.

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Look unto me. Behold, now reconciliation is made. Anger is turned away. Judgment is gone!”

(Isaiah 12) “And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. (2) Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation. (3) Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. (4) And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. (5) Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth. (6) Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

Our blessed Savior committed His spirit into His Father’s hands, not Satan’s. — Some vainly imagine that the Lord Jesus was now taken to hell to be tormented of the devil for three days. Not so

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(Hebrews 9:12). He owed Satan nothing! Here He conquered the fiend of hell forever! He committed His spirit into His Father's hands, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps.

(1 Peter 2:22-24) “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

At last, in sovereign majesty, “He gave up the ghost.” He dismissed His spirit. — This Man who is God our Savior did what none but God, Who gives life and takes life at His will, could do. — “*He gave up the ghost.*” That is to say, He dismissed His spirit!

Come, now, to Christ and enter into His rest. Hear the Master's sweet call. May God the Holy Spirit give you give you grace to hear and heed the Lord Jesus. — “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are*

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heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

“Sinners Jesus will receive;
Sound this word of grace to all
Who the heavenly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall.

Come, and He will give you rest;
Trust Him, for His Word is plain;
He will take the sinfulest;
Christ receiveth sinful men.

Now my heart condemns me not,
Pure before the law I stand;
He who cleansed me from all spot,
Satisfied its last demand.

Christ receiveth sinful men,
Even me with all my sin;
Purged from every spot and stain,

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Heaven with Him I enter in!”

Amen.