

Father Forgive them

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[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's blessing, let's turn together to Luke chapter 23. Luke chapter 23, and let's read again at verse 34.

Luke chapter 23 and verse 34. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they cast lots to divide his garments.

And especially the words of verse 34 of Jesus' petition. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. We'd like us just to spend a few moments here just now just to reflect on what we have before us in verse 34 with regards to the petition of Jesus.

And I'm sure many of you will know and understand that this petition is one of the seven saints of the cross. Where on the cross we have recorded for us the Gospels that Jesus spoke seven things. And these seven saints are recorded. And this is actually understood and known as the first of these seven saints. And we come here to reflect on these words that Jesus presents.

[1 : 16] And we see here that it is presented as a petition to his Father. That the first saying of the cross and the final saying of the cross begin with the word Father.

In verse 46 we have the final saying of the cross. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. But this first saying is where we're concentrating our attention on for a few moments here.

And it speaks to us very much of who Jesus is and why he came. It reminds us of his very mission. And this time that he has on the cross as he is there crucified on Calvary.

And the place that is called the skull gives to us an opportunity to understand and hear what he has to say. That he is able up until the end to converse and to communicate.

And to allow us to hear what words he has. And they are for us his final words. His final words before his death. And it grants us a window.

[2 : 22] The opportunity to understand more about our Lord. More about why he came. But also of course it grants to us this window into his prayer life.

Because what we have here in verse 34 is this intercession. This prayer of Jesus. And what we have in verse 43 is actually the second saying of the cross.

Today I say to you you will be with me in paradise. And it reminds us that he is crucified here with two alongside him. One on each side.

That he isn't here crucified all on his own. But the scene is the scene of the Roman condemnation. And here their own application of the sentence that has been passed on those who have been tried. And there Jesus is numbered with the transgressors. And yet in the first two scenes we have this connection. That they are both in reference to others.

[3 : 24] Jesus is saying in verse 43. He is speaking with reference to the penitent thief on the cross. That man who is showing repentance. And as we will see here in verse 34.

He is speaking here about others. To others at the subject of his saying. And what we have here is really the climax of the gospel.

Where we have the death of our saviour on Calvary's cross. And we collect together the information that is in the gospels with regards to his crucifixion and his trial.

We see the abuse that he suffered. The injustice of the trial. The torture. The mocking. The deriding. The physical. The physical. Mental. And spiritual.

Abuse. To which our own lord. Had inflicted upon him. And his life ends here. With the most barbaric. Of deaths. Where he is left to fight for his breath.

[4 : 21] Upon a cross. And to die there. And we know that. The agony of our saviour. Is not confined to this. He was a man of sorrows. Most acquainted with grief.

And the Gethsemane experience itself. Communicates. Communicates to us. His anguish. And why has Jesus suffered? Why has Jesus come into this world?

Why has he had to endure all of these things? Why is it that he is crucified there? He does this for his people. And we have spoken over the last few days.

Of how the Christian suffers in different ways. But Jesus' suffering is different. It is for us. It is to pay the redemption price. He suffers in our room.

And in our stead. The hymn writer said. In my place. Condemned. He stood. He is there for us. And here in the final moments of his life.

[5 : 17] We have his final words. And also of course. As we thought of. The final words. Of the two who were crucified alongside him. In verse 42.

We have this penitent thief. And he says. Jesus remember me. When you come into your kingdom. Here is this man also. In his final moments. And his final moments.

Are words of repentance. Isn't it amazing. When on the eleventh hour. Someone turns to Christ.

Isn't it amazing. When somebody on their deathbed. Turns to Jesus.

That even after a lifetime. Filled with rebellion. And sin. That there can be genuine repentance.

Found there. And that there are these. Experiences. Of deathbed conversions.

Experiences. Like this man. In the last moments. Like the parable. Of the workers. And some who are called. At the eleventh hour. Isn't it amazing. That this occurs.

[6 : 14] But it's unusual. It's unusual. And don't leave your own repentance. To the last moment. For you do not know. When the last moment will come. And when you see.

The scene. At that place. Called the skull. There are two men there. One on either side. Jesus. In the middle. And we have to reflect. On these things. One person.

Was repentant. And the other person. Remained absolutely. Unmoved. Still unrepentant. Even in his last breaths. Still mocking Jesus.

Even when he was coming. To his end. The crucifixion. That the Romans had. Was of course. One of the most barbaric. Deaths of all. It was awful. Tortuous. And painful.

But it gives the opportunity. For conversation. Yet for Jesus. We see in verse. 49. That his friends. And the people. Who followed him. They stood at a distance.

[7 : 11] They kept. Their distance. But yet still. Here we have recorded. His seven saints. And these saints. Leave. An impact. In verse. 47.

After Jesus. He breathed his last. The centurion. Saw what had taken place. And he praised God. He was impacted. By what he had heard. And seen. Let's look then. Together at verse.

34. And this first. Saying. Of the cross. And. First of all. I just want to make a few. Comments. With regards to it. I'm sure we could. Explore further. And deeper. And make other observations.

Ourselves. But I just want to make a few. Small observations here. And first of all. I want to. Want us to reflect here. On how the offer. Of salvation. Is to those who are.

Undeserving. Father. Forgive them. Forgive them. They do not know. What they are doing. Father. Forgive them. They do not know. What they are doing. Who is Jesus.

[8 : 05] Praying for. It's quite clear to us. That he is praying for people. Here. Who are undeserving. He uses this opportunity. Of his first saying. To pray to the father.

To intercede. And how intercession. Is so important. We remember. When we came across. Sodom and Gomorrah. How lot is in there. And how God reveals.

To Abraham. What he is going to do. And when Abraham. Hears these things. Knowing the horror. That is going on there. Abraham engages himself. In intercession.

He prays for that place. He is praying. Of course. For a lot. But he is praying. For others too.

Intercession is part of the ministry. That the Christian. Is called to engage in.

That we are to pray. For those around us. To pray for family. And friends. And our own acquaintances. To pray for their very salvation. To pray for their protection. And Jesus himself.

[9 : 02] Is ascended to the right hand. Of the father. Ever living to make intercession. For us. He is praying for us. Interceding for us. And here on the cross. He is interceding.

For his own persecutors. The people. Who put him there. The people. Who nailed him to the tree. The people. Who sentenced him. To this. The people.

Who delivered him over. The people. Who shouted. Crucify him. Crucify him. And Jesus says. Father. Forgive them. He is here. Desiring. That they would know salvation.

That they would realize. The great opportunity. That is here. Presented before them. That they would come. To a place of repentance. And faith. And here he comes.

And when we reflect. On Jesus' intercession. We wonder what to make of this. How many people. Will take this opportunity. How many people. Will repent.

[9 : 57] His prayer. Is in a general fashion. Forgive them. But there is a specific application. Some do come. Even this thief on the cross.

He came. And we believe. Maybe others. In that crowd. Came too. He prays for his persecutors. As they put him. To death. This is the first saying. In verse 33.

When they came to the place. That is called the skull. There they crucified him. Verse 34. Jesus said. Father forgive them. Not long after putting the nails. Through him.

Through his flesh. And onto that cross. Not long after lifting that cross. And leaving him there.

Crucified. He prays for them. In their very act of torture.

And murder. And death. He prays for them. These very people. Engaging in this barbaric act. He prays for his own murderers.

[10 : 53] As they lift that cross. He cries. Forgive them. That's his response. To their cruelty. That's how he responds. To the evil. That they have done to him.

Their hurt. And pain. And hardship. That they've inflicted upon him. Isn't this so contrary. To the way we are. When we suffer injustice. Or pain. When people hurt us.

Our natural reaction. Is that we want to see them hurt too. We want to see some kind of retribution. Some kind of justice inflicted. Some kind of pain. So they'll feel.

What they made us feel. That this is the natural reaction. Here are a people who hate Jesus.

They've plotted against him. They've persecuted him. They've said all manner of evil things against him.

They've physically abused him. They've done all of these things. And they've put him to death. And he fulfills everything we've expected. Of a suffering saviour.

[11 : 51] Physically and spiritually. Suffering. And his response. Is to pray for them. To pray for their very souls. To pray for their very salvation. And his conduct.

Is a stark contrast. To their conduct. We see this throughout the gospel. Accounts. Of what is happening here. Matthew records for us. In chapter 27.

And there in verse 39. Those who passed by. Derided him. Wagging their heads. There they are.

Going right past the cross. Laughing at Jesus. Mocking him.

Insulting him. Making him the subject. Of their jokes. And their insults. In verse 41. Matthew then goes on to say. The chief priest describes the elders.

They're all mocking him. They're saying he saved others. He cannot save himself. We see this even here. In our reading. In Luke chapter 23. And verses 35 to 37.

[12 : 46] The people are watching. The rulers are scoffing. The soldiers are mocking him. Offering him sour wine. Saying to him. If you are the king of the Jews. Save yourself. They mock him. Even as he is drawing his last breaths.

As he is dying there. They're adding insult to injury. Mocking him. They're even robbing his clothes. We see this in verse 34. They cast lots to divide his garments.

John reminds us of this too. In chapter 19. They're not even waiting till he's dead. To take his clothes off him. And to divide them. And to add shame.

To what they've already done. I suppose. An occasion like this. Is one where we're brought to reflect. On the death of our saviour. Where our thoughts.

Have. Even over the last few days. Has been bringing us to this place. Where we're called to remember the Lord's death. Till he comes again. And this takes us to Calvary. And it takes us to.

[13 : 45] What happened here. And all of these events. And when we reflect. And we. Catalogue everything that's occurred. And we bring this together. We wonder.

We imagine. Was there ever a greater sin. When they took the Lord of glory. And they hung him on the tree. They beat him. Spat on him.

They ridiculed him. Even in his dying. They mocked and blasphemed him. As he's put to death. All of these things happen. In verse 47. This man was innocent.

He's an innocent man. He doesn't deserve any of this. But more. This is the Lord of glory. This is the very son of God. This is the Messiah. Who has come. And this is what we've done to him.

This is what's occurred here. And this great sin. Compounded. Time and again. With their insults. And we look at our Savior.

[14:41] And we wonder at his pain. And we wonder at his suffering. And he says. Forgive them. Forgive them. It's wonderful here. To trace many. Of the prophecies.

As we understand them. In Isaiah 53. And in verse 12. We're told. He's numbered with the transgressors. He bore the sin of many. And he makes intercession.

For the transgressors. Here are the transgressors. And here is. The intercession. Forgive them. He prays for them. He prays for all those.

Who are around him. He prays for his enemies. He prays for those. Who have done him wrong. Who have been at enmity. With him. Who have done nothing good.

Towards him. And his desire. Above everything. Is not revenge. But salvation. He wishes that these people. Would repent. And be saved.

[15:37] He prays here. The offer of salvation. To those who are undeserving. Can you see yourself there. Naturally. At enmity with God.

A blasphemer. An insolent person. Paul says. I'm the chief of sinners. Maybe every Christian. Ought to say that. Maybe every Christian. Ought to realize.

Their guilt. And their shame. And their sin. Against the Lord. Maybe we ought to realize. Time and again. Our sins. Put him there. That we're just like that crowd.

Shouting. Crucify him. Crucify him. We are absolutely. Undeserving. We've done nothing good. Nothing deserving. Salvation. But Jesus offers.

Salvation. Not just. To the undeserving. But to the ignorant. In verse 34. They know not what they do. Jesus is saying to the father. They're ignorant.

[16:35] They're blind. They're dead. Their sin is so great. They cannot see. In all the darkness. They cannot see the one who is light. The light of the world.

They cannot see the one who gives and sustains life. They cannot see the Lord of glory. They're so blinded by their sin. They're not aware of how horrendous their actions are.

What they're doing. They are dead in their trespasses and sins. And this is the testimony of every person. Paul tells us this in Ephesians.

We were dead in our trespasses and sins. Walking in accordance with the course of this world. Under the power of the prince of the air. The devil had hold of us. He blinded us.

Even to the things we were actually doing. Even to our great sins. There was nothing in us. It was all dark. We were like Lazarus.

[17:33] Still in the tomb. Unable to move. Unable to do anything. No light. No life. Nothing in us. Our hearts were so dark. And yet into the darkest place of all.

Light shines. Outside the tomb. Jesus says Lazarus come forth. And by his miraculous power. Lazarus is made alive.

And when we come to faith. It's the same thing. The blindness is gone. We see. We are able to see. We are made alive. Our hearts are transformed.

And when we come here. And we see what's happening. We ought not to be surprised. We're told by the prophet. That the heart is deceitful. And desperately wicked. It's amazing the depths our hearts will take us to.

It's amazing the dark places. Our hearts will lead us to. The Christian knows. What sin is. Because the Christian has been made to see. Been made to see.

[18:32] But these people have acted in ignorance. Jesus says they know not what they do. You remember in Acts chapter 3. And there in verse 17.

Where Peter is preaching. And he speaks there of how they put Jesus to death. And he says. Now brothers I know. You acted in ignorance.

As did also your rulers. And it's believed by most commentators. That those whom Peter was preaching to. Were part of that crowd. In verse 21.

That shouted crucify him. Crucify him. That these people. Were forgiven. And the reality is. That there is this lack of understanding.

In our ignorance. In 1 Corinthians chapter 2. In verse 8. They did not understand. They did not know. Otherwise they would not have crucified.

[19:29] The Lord of glory. They didn't know what they were doing. They didn't see who it is. They were doing this too. And yet Paul later writes to Timothy.

And he says. I was a blasphemer. A persecutor. An insolent opponent. But I received mercy. For I acted. Ignorantly. And in unbelief.

And then he goes on to say. That he is the chief. Of sinners. And so we are called. To realize our guilt. And I always find it starting.

Standing. In a place like this. On a day like this. That there are people. Not sitting at the table. And is it because. You haven't seen your guilt. Or seen your need.

Of the saviour. The people sitting at the table. Are not there. Because they are saying. Anything great of themselves. They are saying. That they are sinners. And they need a saviour. And they found that saviour.

[20 : 25] Jesus speaks here. Father forgive them. For they know not what they do. Jesus shows love. To those who are undeserving. I said at the very beginning.

It demonstrates to us. More of who Jesus is. Communicating to us. Something of his very identity. The character. Of his love.

This is not natural. As I have said. Our natural reaction. Is to it out. To cause pain. And desire to address. But this is not natural.

To take this moment. And to say forgive them. It is not natural. To do this. It is supernatural. It is something. Deeply.

Spiritual. A love. That forgives. A love. That forgives. A love. That loves. Those. Who do not deserve. A love.

[21 : 20] That desires. That people. Would not perish. A love. That loves. The unlovable. And that is why we are here. Because the testimony.

Of our own heart. Is how unlovable. We are. But the testimony. Of our saviour. Is that he loves us. With an everlasting love.

That there has been. Nothing in us. That would provoke this. But it is all. Of his grace. All of his mercy.

All of his love. And his love. Is measured. By forgiveness. This is how you know. When you really love somebody.

When they hurt you. You can forgive them. And here we are. In a scene of unprecedented. Wickedness. And yet love.

[22 : 17] Is poured out. The greatest of crimes. Against him. Against him. The Lord of glory.

And what does he do. As the victim. Of their evil. And wickedness. He cares for them. He loves them.

He tells them. They haven't gone too far. And maybe you wonder. Have I gone too far.

For God's grace. Is there forgiveness. For what I've done. Is there really love. That can. Forgive.

What I've done. Jesus. Jesus. Here is demonstrating. The wonder. Of his love. Peter. Speaks of it. As we saw together.

[23 : 15] And acts. As he preaches there. He speaks. Not only. Of their ignorance. But he reminds them. Of how awful. This crime was.

Then he tells them. It was according. To the definitive plan. And foreknowledge. Of God. This is of God. The way.

Is offered. Access. Is made open. An encouragement. To you. If you feel. Undeserving. If you feel. The weight. Of the conviction. Of your sin. That here. In the gospel. And here. In Jesus. There is a love. That is unexpected. And undeserving.

That here. Despite everything. We've done wrong. He wants. What's right. For us. And he begins. The saints. On the cross.

[24 : 13] With this word. Forgive them. Forgive them. And this also. Describes to us.

His mission. As it identifies. Part of. Who he is. And the character. Of his love. It identifies. To why he came. It speaks.

To us. And reminds us. Of why. He came. What his mission. Was. Here we are. In his final moments. And here.

In the beginning. Of his final words. There is the communication. To concur. Exactly everything. We ought to have expected. Of Jesus. In harmony.

With all that he said. Through his life. How he proclaimed. And preached. The necessity. Of his death. And resurrection. The need. For him to come.

[25 : 09] Why did he came. He came. To seek. And to save. He came. For the lost. He came. For the prodigal. He came.

For the undeserving. He came. For you. And for me. He came. To die. For our sins. That's why.

Jesus came. And this is the great climax. Of his mission. And yet the most painful. Point of it. For here. He pays the price.

Here. He pays the price. For our sin. The wrath. And agony. Of God. Upon him. And he prays. As he pays.

He is here. For us. He is here. For the very people. Who put him. There. And his first saying.

[26 : 09] Tells us. That he is faithful. His first saying. Tells us. That he is a loving. Savior. His first saying.

Tells us. That he came. So that the father. Would forgive. Jesus here. Is committed. To our forgiveness.

He communicates. This to us. And he achieves it. At Calvary. And he does this. For a people. Who are undeserving. And as we proclaim.

The Lord's death. Till he comes again. We proclaim. Of ourselves. We are the undeserving. And yet. The challenge. That we face.

Is that we are called. To be like him. You remember. How he. Brings this to us. In the sermon. On the mount. You have heard.

[27 : 06] That it was said. You shall love your neighbor. And hate your enemy. But I say to you. Love your enemies. Pray for those.

Who persecute you. So that you may be. Sons of your father. Who is in heaven. For if you love. Those who love you. What reward. Do you have. Do not the tax collectors.

Do the same. You must be perfect. As your heavenly father. Is perfect. The call of the gospel. Is to follow Jesus.

To have the mind. Of Christ. And as he demands. From his disciples. That they would love. Their enemies. And pray for those. Who persecute them. He does the same. Himself.

He exemplifies it. Father. Forgive them. For they know not. What they do. And he does this. To show. His great love.

[28 : 03] For us. He died. For our sins. That's why. He is here. On the cross. Paul speaks.

In similar ways. In Romans 5. In verse 8. God chose his love. For us. In that while we were still sinners. Christ died for us. While we were enemies.

We were reconciled to God. By the death of his son. More than that. We rejoice in God. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through whom.

We have now received. Reconciliation. Paul speaks. Of our enmity. He speaks. Of the great love. Of God. Of what Christ.

Has done for us. And then he tells the church. We rejoice. We rejoice. That we found that forgiveness. We rejoice.

[29 : 01] That we found that love. We rejoice. That we found peace. With God. That we've experienced. What Jesus prayed for.

Amen. God bless. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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