

A Word of Forgiveness

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Date: 07 May 2023

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if you would turn with me this morning to the Gospel according to Luke. We read in Mark's Gospel, but if you turn to Luke's Gospel and chapter 23.

Luke chapter 23. It's on page 1065, if you're using the Pew Bible.

Page 1065. Luke chapter 23. And we're just going to read one verse there.

Luke chapter 23 at verse 34. It says, Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Did you have a nice weekend?

[1 : 0 4] Did you get up to much at the weekend? What were you doing at the weekend? Do you know, when I was an electrician, quite some number of years ago now, but when I was an electrician, there's some of the questions I used to be asked first thing on a Monday morning.

Were you up to anything at the weekend? And of course, nobody asks me these questions anymore nowadays, because like many others, post-COVID, I work from home. But maybe you're asked these questions.

You've been asked these questions before. Maybe you'll be asked those questions first thing tomorrow morning. But what will you tell people? What will you tell people tomorrow morning when they ask you what you've been up to at the weekend?

Will you tell them where you went and what you did? Will you tell them that you were in church on Sunday morning? Will you tell them that you watched the coronation of King Charles on Saturday morning?

Because I'm sure hundreds of millions of people watched the coronation of King Charles. People love the monarchy. People love the royal family. They love the history.

[2 : 0 4] They love the pomp. They love the pageantry. And for them, the coronation of King Charles was a great occasion to celebrate. In fact, Christians, all Christians are commanded in Scripture to pray for the king, to pray for the royal family, to pray for those who are in high positions of government.

Because as the Bible says, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. But you know, for many other people, Saturday was just another day.

They had no real interest in the royal family, no concern for the coronation of the king. Equally so, there are many people who have no real interest in this king, in King Jesus.

Because for them, today, Sunday, is just another day. But for the Christian, today is a day of rejoicing. Today is a day of renewal. Today is a day of redemption.

Today is the day of resurrection. It's a day that reminds us and reaffirms to us that our Savior, this King Jesus, is risen and ruling.

[3 : 1 0] And he's a reigning king. And we gather this morning to celebrate. We celebrate the coronation of King Jesus. Not just his coronation in glory, but also his coronation at Golgotha.

Because it was at his coronation at Golgotha that Jesus was crowned. As we read in Mark 15, he was crowned with a crown of thorns. And this morning, I want us to begin a seven-part series on the seven sayings or the seven words of Jesus from the cross at Calvary.

So this is part one. I hope you'll come back for part two. And part three. And part four. And carry on all the way to part seven. It's a seven-part series on the seven sayings or the seven words from the cross of Jesus.

And I'd like to call these seven words crosswords. Seven crosswords from Calvary. Seven crosswords from Calvary.

My father-in-law, he loves crosswords. Maybe you enjoy crosswords too. But these seven crosswords from Calvary, they're not a puzzle. They're a picture.

[4 : 23] They're a picture for all of us. To present to us and to portray before us this king. This wonderful king. King Jesus.

And so the first crossword from Calvary, as we see there in verse 34. Luke 23 at verse 34. We see that it's a prayer where Jesus prays, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

And you know, I'd like us to consider this first crossword from Calvary. I want us to think about it under two headings. A royal family and a royal forgiveness. A royal family and a royal forgiveness. So first of all, a royal family. A royal family. Jesus says, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Father, forgive them.

As you know, yesterday was a historic day for our nation. That's what we're saying to the children. And it was a historic day because the coronation of King Charles III was the first coronation of a British monarch in 70 years.

[5 : 29] I wasn't around for the previous coronation of Queen Elizabeth II when she was crowned on the 2nd of June 1953. But as you know, Queen Elizabeth, she began her 70-year reign immediately following the death of her father, King George VI, where he died on the 6th of February 1952.

And she reigned from 1952 all the way to 2022, the 8th of September 2022. And yet, you know, when you look at the history of the monarchy, and even the last three who have sat upon the throne, none of them would ever have received the crown.

None of them would have received the crown were it not for Edward III, abdicating the throne after only 326 days in power. He was the shortest reigning monarch in British history.

And yet, you know, the history of the royal family is very interesting. And I'm sure it's been made more interesting and even more intriguing if you've been watching that controversial series and all the storylines from the Netflix program, The Crown.

Maybe you watch it, maybe you don't watch it. But you know, the thing about this crown that we see in the gospel, the crown of Jesus Christ, when you consider his crown, there was no succession planning.

[6 : 54] He couldn't abdicate his throne. He couldn't relinquish his role. He couldn't relinquish his responsibilities. He couldn't relinquish his reign. There was no one to succeed him upon his death.

There was no successor. He was the only king, the only one king. And there was one king only. And Jesus was that king. He is the king of kings and the Lord of lords.

And what we see from this first crossword from Calvary is that at his coronation at Calvary, Jesus was crowned with a crown of thorns.

And as Jesus is crowned with a crown of thorns, Jesus addresses the other member of his royal family. He addresses his father. That's what we read there in verse 34.

He says, Father, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But you know, when Jesus, or King Jesus, addresses his father who is in heaven, he's showing us that his first coronation wasn't at Golgotha.

[8 : 00] His first coronation was in glory. His first coronation wasn't at the cross at Golgotha. His first coronation was in glory, where God the Father crowned his son in glory and honor.

And you know, that's what we've been singing about this morning. We were saying that all of our psalms today, they have this royal theme. They're royal psalms. In Psalm 21, we sang about God's son being crowned with a crown of purest gold.

And that same son was given the affirmation and the assurance that he is a king who holds the power of salvation and the promise of eternal life.

Then we sang in Psalm 2. We sang about God the Father, not only decreeing and declaring his son to be the king of kings, but also appointing and anointing his son to be the king of kings.

And that's why David said right at the end of Psalm 2, that when it comes to King Jesus, we must be wise. We must fear the Lord.

[9 : 09] We must kiss the sun, lest we perish from the way. We must submit and surrender our heart and our life to this king, King Jesus.

And so when King Jesus addresses his Father in heaven with this first crossword from Calvary, he's showing us that his first coronation wasn't a coronation at Golgotha.

His first coronation was a coronation in glory. But more than that, Jesus is showing us by this prayer that he not only reigned in glory, but that he also had a relationship in glory.

Because there was this relationship within the royal family. It was a relationship between God the Father and God the Son. We look at our royal family and some of the relationships have broken down over the past few years.

But this relationship between God the Father and God the Son, it was a sinless relationship. It was an eternal relationship. It's a relationship that had no beginning and would have no end.

[10:15] It's a relationship that was based up and bound upon all in love. It's a relationship which was infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. And throughout the Gospels, the Gospel writers emphasize and explain in, they explain that this royal relationship between God the Father and God the Son, it reminds us that Jesus is God the Son.

He's the Son of the Father. He's one with the Father. He's co-equal with the Father. He's eternally begotten of the Father. He's the only begotten Son.

He's the only begotten Son. And we're familiar with that phrase, aren't we? The only begotten Son. I'm sure we learned it as children in school or maybe in Sunday school.

We learned John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever, whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

You know, you look at this royal relationship between the Father and the Son, and you think, well, what a royal family. What a royal relationship. What a royal coronation that Jesus had in glory.

[11:38] But the question we have to ask as we look in this passage, in Luke chapter 23, the question we need to ask is, why is He here? Why is Jesus here? Why is Jesus Christ here?

Why is God's King who was crowned in glory, why is He at Calvary? Why is this King who was crowned with a crown of purest gold, why is He now at Golgotha?

Why is He having a coronation with a crown of thorns at Golgotha? Three words. God so loved.

God so loved. If you take anything away with you this morning, I want you to take that with you. God so loved.

God the Father so loved this world that He gave His only begotten Son. His one and only Son. His unique Son.

[12:41] His special Son. His incomparable and irreplaceable Son. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

And that Son, that King, humbled Himself from His crown and glory, down to the cradle we celebrate at Christmas in Bethlehem, all the way down to the cross at Calvary.

It was down, down, down, down from the crown to the cradle to the cross. And you know what's amazing and astonishing about this royal relationship between God the Father and God the Son is that the Bible tells us, the Bible tells us that it pleased the Father to wound His Son for our transgressions.

The Bible tells us that it pleased the Father to bruise His Son for our iniquities. It pleased the Father for His Son to receive all our chastisement that we deserve in order to give us peace.

It pleased the Father that His Son on Calvary's cross would bear our griefs and carry all our sorrows. It pleased the Father to make His special Son to be sin for us, even though He knew no sin.

[14:12] And it was all so that we could be made righteous before a holy God. And you know, it's no wonder the hymn writer said, how deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure that He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.

My friend, God so loved that He gave. That's why He's here at Calvary. That's why this King is at Calvary.

That's why He left His crown in glory for His crown at Golgotha. That's why He humbled Himself from the crown to the cradle to the cross. Down, down, down.

That's why He's nailed here to a Roman cross. Because this royal family promises a royal forgiveness. This royal family promises a royal forgiveness.

And that's what we see secondly. A royal forgiveness. So there's a royal family father. But then we see a royal forgiveness where He says, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

[15:29] Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. As you know, we read earlier from Mark's Gospel and we read there that prior to the crucifixion, Jesus was taken into the headquarters of the Roman governor.

And the Roman governor at the time was Pontius Pilate. And it was there in the governor's headquarters in front of a battalion of Roman soldiers. A battalion was about 420 fit, strong men.

And it was there in front of these 420 men that there was this coronation, this crowning of Jesus. But as you know, the coronation of Jesus, it was completely different to what we saw on the TV yesterday with the coronation of King Charles.

Because before this battalion of Roman soldiers, Jesus was clothed in a royal robe of purple. Then He was crowned with a crown of thorns.

And then one by one, each and every one of these 420 men in Pilate's battalion, they didn't bow down before Jesus.

[16:43] No, they all took it in turn to scourge Jesus and spit on Jesus and strike Jesus and then salute Jesus saying, Hail King of the Jews.

And then we're told that they stripped Jesus and then sent Jesus to Calvary. And you know, when it came to the crowds gathered at the cross for the coronation of King Jesus, they weren't shouting, Long live the King!

Long live the King! What were they shouting? Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! But you know, the question I have in my mind is, at the coronation of Jesus, why was He crowned with a crown of thorns?

At the coronation of King Jesus, why was He crowned with a crown of thorns? Of course, the crown of thorns would have caused a significant amount of pain and blood loss.

[17:49] The scourging and striking that Jesus received would have actually caused more pain and more blood loss. And you know, we can understand why Jesus was clothed in this royal robe of purple, just to mock Him as the King of the Jews.

But at the coronation of Jesus, why was He crowned with a crown of thorns? Why was He crowned with this crown of thorns? And I want to suggest to you that the coronation of Jesus at Calvary was because of a coronavirus.

The coronation of Jesus at Calvary was because of a coronavirus. And I say that because I find words fascinating. Words are really interesting.

English was not my strong point in school at all. Probably still isn't. But I find words fascinating. Because the words coronation, we've all heard of that recently, words coronation and the word coronavirus, another word that we're familiar with, they both come from the Latin word corona, which isn't a type of beer, by the way.

It means crown. Corona means crown, which is why a coronation is a crowning ceremony and coronavirus is a crown poison.

[19:07] That's what the word coronavirus means, crown poison. So a coronation is a crowning ceremony and a coronavirus is a crown poison. Therefore, the coronation of Jesus at Calvary was because of a coronavirus.

My friend, the crowning ceremony of Jesus at Calvary where he was crowned with a crown of thorns was all because of a crown poison. But not the coronavirus, not the crown poison that we've all come to know and hate as COVID-19.

No, this is a greater coronavirus. This is a greater crown poison because this is the crown poison that the Bible describes as sin.

And this crown poison has affected and infected every single one of us. Do you know all we have to do is look around. Look around at the community that we live in.

Look around, even look at ourselves and the impact and the influence that sin has had upon our lives. Because this crown poison has brought into our lives sin and stress and sickness and suffering and sorrow and separation.

[20:23] And you know, at the coronation of King Jesus, he was crowned with a crown of thorns at Golgotha to point us to a prophecy in the garden.

At the coronation of King Jesus, he was crowned with a crown of thorns at Golgotha to point us to a prophecy in the garden. Because you know, when you go back in your Bible, all the way back to the very beginning of the book, to the book of beginnings, to the book of Genesis, in the garden of Eden, we read there of the first man, Adam.

And Adam was crowned. He had a coronation ceremony. Adam is crowned as King of the creation. God has made him as the apex of all that he has created.

He has been given dominion to rule over all the creatures. Adam had his own coronation ceremony. But the thing about Adam was that he abdicated his throne. He abdicated his throne when he submitted and surrendered his life to the serpent and to sin.

And of course, the curse that came in was a coronavirus. The curse was a crown poison where there were thorns and thistles that began to emerge. There was punishment. There was pain that began to be felt.

[21 : 41] And then there was death and decay that became the norm. Because the curse of the crown poison, the Lord said when the crown poison came in, from dust you are and to dust you shall return.

From dust you are and to dust you shall return. And you know, my friend, the glory of the gospel and the first glimpse of that gospel, it was there in the garden where the Lord said, He, He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

And here is the head of King Jesus at the cross at Calvary and his head has been bruised by this crown of thorns.

the crown poison of sin. And you know, you look at it and you think, well, what a coronation. What a coronation that King Jesus was crowned at Calvary with a crown of thorns in order to declare and to demonstrate to all of us that He loves us.

That's what He's doing here. He's declaring and demonstrating His love for us and He's saying to us, He's even showing us that greater love hath no man than this.

[23 : 07] That a man lay down His life for His friends. You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you. My friend, Jesus became our crown poison for us.

He became sin for us even though He knew no sin. Never sinned. And it was all so that we could be set free from the power of sin and death.

That's why King Jesus is praying at His coronation. And what is He praying? Look at His words. Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. You know, when you read the Bible you come across verses and the Apostle John he says when he points you know, he points to the crown cross of Calvary and he says to us behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God.

That we should be called the children of God. And you know that's the thing about Christianity. Christianity is not about following a religion. Christianity is about a fulfilling relationship relationship with Jesus Christ.

[24 : 32] Where we're able to experience this royal relationship. We're able to be part of this royal family. And it's all through faith. It's all through forgiveness found in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

And that's what Jesus is praying for. He's praying Father, forgive them. And you know I hope that that's what you're praying for too. I hope you're praying for forgiveness.

I hope you're seeking the Lord. That you'll experience this forgiveness. That you'll enjoy being part of this family. Where we can access God. And where we can address God as our Father.

And say as we were saying earlier, our Father which art in heaven. Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

Father forgive them. And notice the them isn't specific. Father forgive them.

[25 : 37] The them isn't specific because Jesus wants you to see that you're included in the them. You're included in the them. Which means that Jesus here is not only praying for the scribes who sentenced him and the Pharisees who falsely accused him and the Romans who ridiculed him and the disciples who deserted him and even the criminals who were crucified on either side of him.

Jesus is praying for the them. And we are included in the them. Jesus is praying for us. Jesus is praying for you.

Jesus is praying for you. Do you see that? I want you to see that. I want you to understand this.

Jesus when he prayed on the cross, Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

When Jesus was on the cross he was thinking about you. But you know sadly so many people they don't see these words as a personal prayer of Jesus.

Well he's praying for somebody else. He's not praying about me. He's praying about someone else. But you know I want you to read this verse and I want you to replace forgive them with forgive and your name.

[26 : 57] Father forgive Murdo. Father forgive your name.

I'm not going to start naming all of you because you know who you are and you know if you need forgiveness. Father forgive them.

That's you. That's you. That's me. Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Do you know my friend at the coronation of this king Jesus spoke the first cross word from Calvary and his first cross word was a word of forgiveness.

Jesus is the most forgiving man you will ever meet. You'll ever hear about. Father forgive them for they know not what they do. And you know the thing is it was a word of forgiveness to show you that it's not about being good enough.

It's not about being worthy enough. It's not about being faithful enough. Not about knowing enough. Because none of us myself included none of us will ever be good enough.

[28 : 15] None of us will ever know enough. None of us will ever be worthy enough. None of us will ever be faithful enough. That's why the gospel reminds us so clearly Christianity is all about accepting and appreciating that Jesus Christ has declared and demonstrated his love towards us through his death on the cross.

And that by trusting in him we're promised a royal family. And by coming to him we are assured of a royal forgiveness. Because you know the thing is Jesus is more than willing to forgive you.

Sometimes I don't think we realize that. Jesus is more than willing to forgive you. But you need the thing is the question you need to ask is or to ask yourself are you willing to ask and accept and appreciate his full and free forgiveness?

Are you willing to ask and to accept and to appreciate his full and free forgiveness? Because all you need to do is simply come to him in prayer and thank him for his coronation and glory and his coronation at Golgotha.

Thank him for his coronation and glory and his coronation at Golgotha. Father, forgive them. Them.

[29 : 51] For they know not what they do. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks for being so gracious with us, for being so merciful and so loving and so forgiving, that despite the many times that we have failed, the many times that we have let God down and what we've said or thought or done, we give thanks that we come to a cross and realize that upon that cross is a crowned king, a king who was crowned for us, a king who had a coronation in Golgotha, all so that we might be set free from the curse of sin and death.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to come, to come and ask him for forgiveness, to come and accept his forgiveness, to come and appreciate the forgiveness that God gives to us freely and fully through the cross of Jesus, all that none of us would leave here today without realizing the forgiving nature of God and that we're able to come to him just as we are, realizing that he is one who forgives us, that when we call upon him, when we cry, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, that he will cleanse us, he will wash us and make us white as snow.

Lord, go before us, we pray, keep us, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing the words of Psalm 145. Psalm 145. It's on page 444 of the Blue Psalm book.

Psalm 145. Psalm 145. Psalm 145, page 444.

[32 : 03] It's a second version of the psalm, the long meter version, and we're singing from the beginning down to the verse marked five. As we said, all of our psalms are royal psalms this morning, but here is the confession about the king.

O Lord, thou art my God and king. Can you say that? Can you say that this morning? O Lord, thou art my God and king.

Thee will I magnify and praise. I will thee bless and gladly sing unto thy holy name always. Each day I rise, I will thee bless and praise thy name time without end.

That's the confession of the Christian. Every day, Lord, I'm walking with you. Each day I rise, I will thee bless and praise thy name time without end.

Much to be praised and great God is. His greatness none can comprehend. Race shall thy works praise unto race. The mighty acts show done by thee.

[33 : 07] I will speak of the glorious grace and honor of thy majesty. We'll sing these verses of Psalm 145. We'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

O Lord, the heart my God and King, they will I magnify and praise.

I will thee bless and gladly sing unto thy holy name always.

Each day I rise, I will thee bless and praise thy name, time time without end.

Much to be praised and great God is his greatness none can comprehend.

[34 : 33] rich rich shall thy works praise of to raise the mighty acts showed on by thee.

I will speak of the glorious grace and honor of thy majesty the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more.
Amen.