A Word of Committal

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0:00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to Luke, Luke chapter 23.

Luke chapter 23, and we're going to read again at verse 44. Luke 23 and verse 44. It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.
Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he breathed his last.
But particularly the words there in verse 46, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
As you know, and as we were saying to the children, today is Father's Day. Today is Father's Day, and like many milestones in our lives, such as birthdays and anniversaries and Christmas and New Year and Mother's Day and Father's Day, these events often cause emotion.
[1:26] These events often cause emotion because they're happy for some, but heartbreaking for others. They're happy for some, but heartbreaking for others. And that was certainly true of the first Father's Day.

The first Father's Day took place in West Virginia in 1908. There was this special service that took place and a special sermon that was preached in honor of fathers.
And the reason the special sermon was preached was because 362 men had been killed in a mining accident. And of course, out of those 362 men, there were sons and fathers and grandfathers.
And so as a community, as the community came together in mourning, that was to become what was the first Father's Day. They gathered for this special service to honor both the living fathers who had survived, but also to remember the dead and to remember also all that our fathers do for us.
And needless to say that that Father's Day service, it was happy for some, but also heartbreaking for others. And that's also true of this Father's Day.
[2:39] Even though all these events in our calendar, whether it's Christmas or New Year or Father's Day and Mother's Day, they've been commercialized. And yet we cherish those whom we love at these times of year.

We cherish those whom we love, and we cherish those whom we've lost. But the glory of the gospel—and this is what we always have to do—we always have to come back to the gospel, because the glory of the gospel is that we can have a relationship with God as our Father.
That's what we're saying to the children. He's our Father which art in heaven. And our Father in heaven, He promises, He promises to be a father to the fatherless.
And even a husband to the widow. He promises to be a father to the fatherless. And a husband to the widow. And it's all through the one who was crucified on this cross at Calvary.
It's all through faith in Jesus Christ. And so this morning, as you know, we're coming to our seventh and last word in our seven-part series on the seven sayings or the seven words of Jesus on the cross at Calvary.
[3:48] And we've called these seven words crosswords. They're the seven crosswords from Calvary. But as we said, the seven crosswords, they're not a puzzle.

They present to us a picture. They're a picture which presents the glory of the gospel in the portion and work of Jesus Christ. And in our study, our seven sayings, we've seen that the first crossword was a word of forgiveness, where Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

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The second crossword was a word of salvation, where Jesus said to the thief on the cross, Today you will be with me in paradise. The third crossword was a word of affection, woman, behold your son, behold your mother.
The fourth crossword was a word of abandonment, where Jesus said, Eli, Eli, Lema sabachthani, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The fifth crossword was a word of torment, where Jesus cried, I thirst.
The sixth crossword was a word of completion. We saw that last Lord's Day, where Jesus said, Tetelestai, it is finished. And now the seventh and final crossword is a word of committal.
[5:01] It's a word of committal, where Jesus says there in verse 46, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And what I want us to notice from this final crossword is the relationship which Jesus had with his Father.
I want us to see the relationship which Jesus had with his Father, because what we see here is two points this morning, a paternal relationship and a prayerful relationship.
There's a paternal relationship with the Father and a prayerful relationship with the Father. So first of all, a paternal relationship. A paternal relationship.
Look again at verse 44. We're told there was now the sixth hour, or about the sixth hour. There was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.
[6:03] Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he breathed his last. What we see here is that as Luke, the gospel writer, as he draws our attention to the final scene and the final stages of the cruel cross of Calvary, he shows us that everything is now coming to its culmination and its conclusion.

Because Jesus, as you know, he has been betrayed and beaten. He has been arrested and apprehended, denied and deserted, falsely accused, and then flogged. He's been mocked and maligned.
He's carried his cross and he's worn his crown. And although he enjoyed seeing the salvation of the penitent thief, as we've seen in our study, Jesus is one who has endured deep and demonic darkness, and he has experienced the flaming horrors and the fiery heat of hell, as well as the forsakenness of his Father.
And this morning, and I want us to see it every time we come to the cross, this morning we can say he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.
He became sin for us. He became a curse for us. He loved us and gave himself for us. But what's remarkable is that all that Jesus did for us, he did it for his Father.
[7:33] All that Jesus did for us, he did it for his Father. Because as Jesus said, he said it many times, as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.

All that Jesus did for us, he did it for the Father. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. The relationship which Jesus has with his Father, it's a paternal relationship.
It's a fatherly relationship. And the glory of the gospel is that we can have that paternal relationship with God as our Father through faith in Jesus Christ.
Because Jesus, he had a paternal relationship with his Father. That's why he prayed to his Father in heaven on the cross at Calvary. But when Jesus prayed to his Father in heaven, he prayed to God as God.
He prayed to God as God. We'll come back to that in a moment. But that's the amazing thing. He's the God-man. He's God the Son who's on the cross.
[8:42] God the Son is on the cross, and as our Bible teaches us, he is co-eternal with his Father. He's co-equal with his Father.

He's the only begotten Son of the Father. He is, as John describes, he is his monogamous, his one and only Son. He's his unique Son, his special Son, his incomparable and irreplaceable Son.
There's this special relationship between God the Son and God the Father. And it's a paternal relationship. It's a paternal relationship.
You know, it always reminds me of this conversation. It was an inspiring conversation, which the 17th century Puritan, John Flavel, as one of the Puritans I'd love to meet when we get to heaven, he imagined this conversation between God the Father and God the Son.

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This inspiring and imaginative conversation where John Flavel, he imagines this conversation taking place in heaven before the foundation of the world, where God the Father and God the Son they're talking, they're speaking, and they're speaking about us.
[9:59] This is what they're talking about. We are the subject of their conversation. And this is the imagination he has. John Flavel says, My son, my son, here, here is a poor company of souls who have utterly undone themselves and now lie open to my justice.

And what shall be done for these souls? And you know, the son, he responds by saying, Oh, my father, my father, such is my love and my pity for them that rather than they perish, I will be responsible for them.
Bring me your bills, my father. Bring me your bills that I may see what they owe. Upon me, my father, he says, upon me be all their debt. And the father, he responds to his son and he says, But my son, my son, if you undertake for them, you must pay the last penny.
Expect no discounts from me. If I spare them, I will not spare you. And the son replies, he says to his father, Father, I am willing.
I am willing, Father, let it be so. Charge it all to me. I am able to pay their debt and though it will undo me, though it will impoverish all my riches and empty all my accounts, yet I am content to do it.
[11:19] And that's what happened. That's what's revealed to us in the gospel. That's what we see on the pages of Scripture. That though he was rich, though the son of God was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich.

God the son, he humbled himself from the crown of glory down to the cradle in Bethlehem, all the way down, down, down to the cruel cross of Calvary.
And you look at this relationship and you see that the relationship which Jesus had with his father is a beautiful relationship, but it's a paternal relationship. It's a relationship where they were so close. They were in union and communion with one another all the time. And their focus was you and me. That's what they were all about.
And you know, you see that throughout the life and ministry of Jesus. He emphasizes and explains this paternal relationship he has with his father. Jesus says on various occasions, he says, what the father says, I say.
[12:31] What the father wills, I will. What the father loves, I love. What the father does, I do. Why? Because I am in the father. And the father is in me.

If you know me, says Jesus, you know the father. If you have seen me, you have seen the father. If you love me, you love the father because I and the father are one.
I and the father are one. It's a paternal relationship. It's a unique relationship. It's a close relationship. But as Luke draws our attention to this final scene and these final stages of the cross of Calvary, when he says there in verse 44 that from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over the whole land.
There was darkness as we saw this before. There was darkness because there was a distance in this personal relationship, this paternal relationship.
There was distance, but not disconnect. There was distance, but not disconnect. Because Jesus is no longer praying as he always did throughout his life and throughout his ministry.
[13:49] He prayed, Abhi, Abhi, my father, my father. But on the cross in the darkness and in the distance from his father, he's praying, Eli, Eli, Lema sabachthani, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

In the darkness, there was distance, but not disconnect. There was distance, but not disconnect in this paternal relationship.
And I say that because many will tell you that when Jesus was forsaken on the cross, that was the point at which the father turns his face away from his son.
He turns his back to him. But what's really interesting is that they base their theological understanding of this not upon Scripture, but upon a well-known hymn.
As you know, I love hymns. I love quoting hymns. I love singing hymns because many of them are brilliant. Many of them are beautiful. But there's always a danger that singing hymns gets priority of place over Scripture.
[15:01] That's why we sing Psalms. We stick to Scripture. They're scriptural. The hymn I'm referring to is a beautiful hymn. It's the hymn, How Deep the Father's Love for Us.

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How deep the Father's Love for Us. How vast beyond all measure. That he should give his only son and make, to make a wretch, his treasure. How great the pain of searing loss.
Then he says, The Father turns his face away as wounds which mar the chosen one bring many sons to glory. It's a beautiful hymn. But the phrase, The Father turns his face away, isn't what Scripture tells us.
There was distance. But not disconnect. Because, you know, we sang earlier in Psalm 22. And as you know, Psalm 22, it's an inspired, inerrant, and infallible psalm.
And it's all about the suffering Savior. It's all about Jesus. This whole psalm of Psalm 22 points us to Jesus. And what's amazing about Psalm 22 is that it was written before crucifixion was ever invented.
[16:05] It was written a thousand years before the crucifixion of Jesus took place. It's the oldest and the clearest Old Testament prophecy about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

And we sang there in Psalm 22 that the Father has not hidden his face from him, but he has heard him when he cried to him.
There was distance, but not disconnect. Which means that the Father, he didn't turn his face away from his Son. Because even in the forsakenness of the darkness, even in that forsakenness, there was distance, but no disconnect.
There was always a paternal relationship, a personal relationship, a union, and maybe not so much a communion at that point.
But there was always this relationship between the Father and the Son. But as we said, the relationship which Jesus had with his Father, it was not only a paternal relationship, it was also a prayerful relationship.
[17:10] It was a prayerful relationship. That's what we see secondly. It's a paternal relationship and a prayerful relationship because Jesus says there in verse 46, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Now I don't know if you noticed, but Luke records for us the first and last crosswords from Calvary. The first crossword was a word of forgiveness.
It's there in verse 34 where Jesus says, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. The last crossword is a word of committal here in verse 46.
Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. But when we read these crosswords from Calvary, they not only emphasize this paternal relationship with the Father where Jesus is addressing God as his Father, but they also emphasize a prayerful relationship.
A prayerful relationship with the Father because these seven crosswords that we've studied together, they begin and they end in prayer. These seven crosswords from Calvary, they begin and end with prayer.
[18:24] Which means that the cross of Jesus Christ was coated in prayer. I find that amazing. The cross of Jesus Christ was coated in prayer.

More than that, the life and death of Jesus Christ was coated in prayer because Jesus knew the importance of a prayerful relationship with his Father.
Which is why the life of Jesus was a life of prayer. The life of Jesus was a life of prayer. Now, some may ask, and it's a good question to ask, if Jesus is God, why does he need to pray?
God is on the cross, God is in heaven. Why is God praying to God? If Jesus is God, why does he need to pray? And the answer is one that explains and even emphasizes and exemplifies to us the importance of prayer in our lives.
Because the life of Jesus was a life of prayer because in his humanity he was depending upon his Father in heaven. And in his humility he was submitting to his Father's will.
[19:39] The life of Jesus was a life of prayer because in his humanity he was depending upon his Father. and in his humility he was submitting to his Father's will. That's what we do every time we pray.

We're submitting to the Father's will. That's what we pray in the Lord's prayer. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And so the life of Jesus was a life of prayer where he was humbly and where he was humbly in his humanity praying according to the Father's will.
His life was a life of prayer. It was a prayerful relationship which is our example to follow. Because Jesus what I love about Jesus we should all love the things about Jesus but what I love about him he prayed about everything.

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He prayed about everything. That's our example to follow. He prayed about everything. And what's amazing about Jesus is he spent hours in prayer nights in prayer days in prayer.
He prayed about every situation and every circumstance that he encountered and experienced in his life. He prayed when he was young. He prayed when he was making decisions. He prayed when he was choosing his disciples.
[20:54] He prayed when he was looking at lost souls. He prayed for his family. He prayed in times of heartbreak. He prayed in times of hardship. He prayed when facing the cross in his experience.

He prayed when he was on the cross. He prayed in life and he prayed at death. My friend, Jesus prayed about everything. There was nothing too small, nothing too insignificant to bring to his heavenly Father in prayer because the life of Jesus was a life of prayer.
It was a prayerful relationship. It was a prayerful relationship. And the thing is, Jesus, he not only exemplifies the need for a prayerful relationship with the Father, he also expressed the need for a prayerful relationship with the Father.
He said it time and time again. He got angry in the temple, you remember. They were buying and they were selling in the temple and Jesus said to them, my house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.
Jesus emphasized the need for a prayerful relationship because he said, whatever you ask in prayer, whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive if you have faith.
[22:12] Therefore, says Jesus, ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.

Jesus also explained the need for this prayerful relationship with the Father because he said in the Sermon on the Mount, he said, don't pray like the Pharisees. Don't stand on the street corner just to be seen and to make a show of yourself.
No, when you pray, when you pray, says Jesus, go into your room, shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And when you pray, pray like the publican.
Don't pray like the Pharisee. Pray like the publican. Pray earnestly. Pray emphatically to the Lord. Pray, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Pray, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
Have you prayed that? Do you pray that? Do you pray? Do you pray at all? Because Jesus believed in the power of prayer. And that was because he enjoyed this paternal relationship with his heavenly Father that he experienced this prayerful relationship with his heavenly Father.
[23:26] He was in constant prayer, praying about everything in life. And you know, the glory of the gospel is that we as unworthy sinners, and that's what we are, unworthy sinners, we can have a paternal relationship and a prayerful relationship with God the Father.

We can cry, Abba, Father. We can pray, Our Father, which art in heaven, all because Jesus is our advocate with the Father.
He is the one who has opened this new and living way for us. He's done it all so that we will be encouraged, we will be enabled to pray, to go into our closet and pray, and to say, if we haven't said it yet, pray, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
You know, my friend, we have this wonderful privilege, this wonderful access, and if we neglect it, well, we neglect it at our peril because it's all done for us.
All we are asked to do is ask. Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. It doesn't say it'll be closed.
[24:43] It says it'll be opened. The life of Jesus was a life of prayer. It was a prayerful relationship where Jesus prayed about everything because he believed in the power of prayer, which raises the question for you and for me.

Do we believe in the power of prayer? Do we believe in the power of prayer? Our friends from Hawaii, they somehow ended up at the manse this morning.
They were meant to come to the church. They wanted to know about these two women who prayed prior to the revival in Barvis. Do we believe in the power of prayer?
You know, in 1855, there was a Baptist church in London. They had a young 20-year-old preacher. His name was Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Spurgeon preached regularly to a congregation size of about 1,500 people every Lord's Day.
But in 1855, in order to renovate the building and to extend the building to make it bigger, they moved out of their church and they moved to a much larger venue of the Exeter Hall in London.

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[26:00] It seated about 5,000 people. And some would have thought that the young Spurgeon, he had probably overreached himself. A congregation of 1,500 seated in a 5,000-seat building.

But when they moved, each Lord's Day over 6,000 people gathered for worship. What did Spurgeon put down to the reason for such a rise in church attendance?
Was it because he was such a great orator? Was it because he was a powerful preacher? Was it because he was a good pastor? No. It was all about the power of prayer.
The power of prayer. Spurgeon firmly and fully believed that the prayer meeting was the powerhouse of the church. Spurgeon said, if the engine room is out of action, then the whole mill will grind to a halt because we cannot expect blessing if we do not ask.
We cannot expect blessing if we do not ask. That's why Jesus said to us, ask and you shall receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. And you know, Spurgeon, he was someone who fully and firmly believed in the importance of the prayer meeting that he later wrote, a brilliant book called Only a Prayer Meeting.
[27:20] Only a Prayer Meeting. Spurgeon sought to address and even admonish the apathy and sometimes even the arrogance of church members who regarded the most important meeting of the week as only, only a prayer meeting.

Spurgeon wrote in his book, Brethren, we will never see much change for the better in our churches until the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians.
We will never see much change for the better in our churches until the prayer meeting occupies a higher esteem, a higher place in the esteem of Christians.
And you know, do you believe that? Do you believe in the power of prayer? Because you know, of late, I'll be brutally honest with you, our prayer meeting attendance has not only been discouraging, it has been distressing.
Distressing. We can make time, myself included, although I have to be at the prayer meeting every week, we can make time for everything else, we can make time to be everywhere else except the prayer meeting.
[28:40] Now, I know that there are parents with young children, I know others are unwell, I know people who work, I know you, you know me. The prayer meeting, though, should be our priority.

It should be our priority, not just as Christians, but as a congregation. As a congregation. Because it's for everyone.
It's not just for members. It's not just for Christians. It's for everyone. Absolutely everyone. I hate this idea that it's only for members, it's only for Christians, and I'm not worthy enough, I'm not good enough to go.
It's for everyone. Jesus said, ask and you shall receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. And as the Slavic Gospel Association, gentlemen, who always say to us, every me, much prayer, much power.
Little prayer, little power. No prayer. Well, there's no power. My friend, this final crossword from Calvary, the last thing Jesus said on the cross, it emphasizes to us the importance of prayer.
[29:49] Because the life of Jesus was a life of prayer. It was a life of prayer. But you know, with this I'll conclude, when we enjoy a paternal relationship with our Father in Heaven, and when we experience this prayerful relationship with our Father in Heaven, the amazing thing is, we trust Him with our life.

We trust Him with everything in our life. Whatever it is, we trust Him. He knows what He's doing, and He knows that He's doing it well. We trust Him with our life, and we trust Him with our death. We trust our Father in Heaven with our life, and we trust Him with our death. Because that's what Jesus did. He trusted His Father with His life.
And He trusted His Father with His death. Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit. And you know, my friend, what better way to live well in this life?
What better way to live every single day that the Lord grants to you in this world than to live it well and to die well? To die well trusting in Your heavenly Father and to die well even echoing the words of Jesus with Your last breath.
[31:13] Father, into Your hands. into Your hands I commit my spirit. My friend, let's live lives that seek to bring glory to God by following in the footsteps of this faithful Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us.

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Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we bless and praise Thee that Thee art our Father in Heaven and that we can have this paternal relationship with God and to know that it's not only a paternal relationship, it's a personal one too and it's a prayerful relationship where we keep coming back, where we keep confessing our sins and our shortcomings, where we keep asking for help and for guidance, where we realize that in this world we have so much to contend with and yet we look not to ourselves but we look to our Heavenly Father who knows us and who deals with us so graciously.
O Lord, help us then, we pray. Help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, to live well by glorifying God and enjoying Him forever and to die well, to die well trusting our Father with our life and to trust Him with our death.
Lord, bless us, we pray, bless us as a congregation that we would be a people of prayer for as Thy Word reminds us the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man or woman, it avails much and Lord, help us then to be found at the throne of grace pleading for our people, pleading for our community, pleading for our families, realizing, Lord, that without Thee we can do nothing but the promise remains that with Thee all things are possible.
Cleanse us, we pray, and go before us for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.
[33:30] We're going to sing the words of Psalm 31. Psalm 31. Psalm 31, it's in the Sing Psalms version on page 36.

So Psalm 31, Sing Psalms version, page 36, if you're using the Blue Psalm book. We're singing from verse 3 down to the verse marked 7. And in Psalm 31, you'll notice that Jesus is actually quoting verse 5.
He's quoting verse 5 where He says, My spirit, I commit to you. Jesus' life was a life based upon Scripture.
It's how our life should be. And so the psalmist, David, he confesses in verse 3 of Psalm 31, You are my fortress and my rock, for your name's sake, be my sure guide.
Preserve me from the trap that's set. You are the refuge where I hide. Redeem me, Lord, O God of truth. My spirit, I commit to you. I hate all those who trust false gods.
[34:42] I trust the Lord for He is true. I will rejoice and take delight in all the love that you have shown for my affliction you have seen. To you, my soul's distress is known.

So we'll sing Psalm 31 from verse 3 down to the verse Mark 7 and we'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise. You are my fortress and my walk.
For your name's sake, be my sure guide. preserve me from the trap that's set.
You are the refuge where I hide. Redeem me, Lord, O God of truth.
O God of truth. My spirit, I commit to you.
[36:02] I hate all those who trust false gods.

I trust the Lord for He is true. I will rejoice and take delight in all the love that you have shown.
for my affliction for my affliction you have seen.
Do you, my soul's distress is known.
Amen. 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 forevermore. Amen.

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