

Seven Words From the Cross - Submission

by Warren Wiersbe

Jesus died confidently, willingly, and victoriously, fulfilling God's plan and providing a way for us to come into the presence of God.

Duration: 35:00

Scripture: Psalm 31:2-5, Matthew 26:45, Matthew 26:50, Luke 23:44-50, Acts 2:23, 1 Corinthians 15:55

Topics: "The Cross", "Atonement"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He highlights the significance of the three statements Jesus made before his death: 'I thirst,' 'It is finished,' and 'Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.' These statements represent the suffering of Jesus' body, the completion of his sacrifice for sin, and the release of his spirit. The speaker also mentions the miracles that occurred during Jesus' crucifixion, such as the darkness and the tearing of the temple veil. He emphasizes that these events were not accidental but part of God's plan. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that Jesus' death solved the problems of sin, law, and death, and that through him, believers have victory over these challenges.

Transcript

I read the word of God from Luke chapter 23, beginning at verse 44 and concluding with verse 56, the death and the burial of our Savior. Luke 23, 44. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And having said this, he gave up the spirit.

Now, when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that site, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned. And all his acquaintances and the women that followed him from Galilee stood afar off, beholding these things.

And behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor, and he was a good and righteous man. The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them. He was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who also waited for the kingdom of God.

This man went on to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and he took it down and wrapped it in linen and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, in which never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also who came with him from Galilee followed and beheld the sepulcher and how his body was laid.

And they returned and prepared spices and ointments and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment. But they never had the chance to use those spices and ointments, for he arose from the dead and he is alive today. Wherever the gospel has gone, and it has not gone far enough, but wherever the gospel has gone, people know that Jesus died.

You can take down a volume of an encyclopedia, look up Jesus Christ, and find there a description of the fact that Jesus did die. Most people know that Jesus died, and many people know why Jesus died. Wherever the gospel has gone, in clarity and power, people have discovered that Christ died for our sins according to the scripture.

He was buried and he arose again the third day according to the scriptures, so that the facts of history and the truths of doctrine do not contradict each other. We know that Jesus died, and we know why Jesus died. Today we're going to discover how Jesus died.

The Lord Jesus Christ spent six hours on the cross. Three of those hours were in the sunlight, three were in the darkness. When it came to the end of that period, our Lord uttered three statements very close to each other.

I thirst the suffering of his body. It is finished the offering of his soul as a sacrifice for sin. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

His spirit released. His death effected. This final statement of our Lord from the cross, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, describes for us how the Lord Jesus died.

I'm not talking about the physical method of death, that was crucifixion. This is the remarkable thing about Psalm 22. Psalm 22 is a prophecy of crucifixion, written by a Jew to be read by Jews, and Jews did not crucify people, they stoned to death.

Our Lord was crucified, cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. I'm talking about the manner of his death, not the means of his death. The manner of his death.

People die the way they lived. The thing that is written on the heart of a person comes out at death. When Napoleon died, his last words were army, head of the army.

He died the way he lived. When Sam Houston died, his last words were Texas, Texas. Henry David Thoreau, the great naturalist, was dying and his last mumbled words were moose, Indian.

While he was still conscious, a friend said to him, what are your thoughts about the next world? And rather facetiously, Thoreau said, one world at a time. Our Lord's last words were, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. What were the characteristics of our Lord's death? How did he die? Well, to begin with, he died confidently, Father.

He died confidently because he died in the Father's presence. Now, three times while he was on the cross, the Lord Jesus addressed heaven, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. While they were in the process of crucifying my Lord, while they were actually nailing him to the cross, repeatedly he was praying, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

The awful ignorance of sin. Peter said, had your rulers known? But they didn't know. Paul wrote and said they would not so have crucified the Lord of glory.

And then at the middle of that period, our Lord prayed. The darkness came over the land. And from that darkness, our Lord quoted Psalm 22.

There are some students who think that Jesus may have quoted all of Psalm 22 when he was on the cross. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And it appeared at that point that something went wrong. But nothing went wrong.

Our Lord was being made a sacrifice for our sins. And so at the beginning, he prayed, Father. In the middle, God, my God.

At the end, Father. He died confidently because he was in the Father's presence. On a cross, but in the presence of the Father.

Dying, but in the presence of the Father. Ridiculed, but in the presence of the Father. It makes no difference what the earthly circumstances may be as long as you are in the presence of the Father.

The word Father was often on our Lord's lips. When he was just a lad, he said to Joseph and Mary, don't you know that I must be about my father's business? Seventeen times in the Sermon on the Mount, he uses the word Father. When he talks about worry, he says, your father knows that you have need of these things.

In his discourse to his disciples in the Upper Room, written for us by John in John chapters 13 through 17, beginning with the washing of their feet and ending with that great prayer in the garden. In this discourse, the Lord Jesus talks about the Father 51 times. And when he prayed, he said, I have made known thy name unto the man that you gave to me.

What name did he make known, Father? In the Old Testament, the great name of God was Jehovah. I am. And Jesus came and said, I am.

I am the bread of life and I am the light of the world and I am the one who reveals the Father. He that has seen me has seen the Father. And the one word that Jesus wants to write upon our hearts is the word Father.

So many Christians walk the streets as though the word is dictator, judge. It's the word Father. I was teaching my Sunday school class downstairs in Sankey a few years ago before we moved into the auditorium.

And I was talking with the class about God as the Father. And as soon as the class was over, a young student from one of the universities in the area came up to me and he said, Pastor, if God is like my father, I'm not interested. Well, God is not like any earthly father.

Jesus said, if ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your father in heaven give good things to them that ask him? He's a compassionate father. He's a forgiving father. He's a chastening father because he's a loving father.

He died confidently in God's presence. Father, I wonder if you and I were dying that kind of a death after living that kind of a life, if we'd give expression to that kind of a testimony. Father, some of the saints would be saying, I don't have a father.

If he were my loving father, why would this happen to me? One of our hymns says, judge not the Lord by feeble sense. Someone has misquoted that and said, judge not the Lord by feeble saints. A lot of truth to that, too.

We must never say, I'm suffering, therefore I don't have a father. My prayer wasn't answered, therefore I don't have a father. Things aren't working out my way, therefore the father doesn't care.

If anybody had a right to say the father didn't care, it was the perfect, holy, harmless, undefiled son of God who was suffering not only a cruel death at the hands of men, but was offering his soul a sacrifice for the sins of the world. And yet he says, I don't have a father. He died confidently in God's presence.

He died confidently with God's promise. He's quoting scripture. The scripture is from Psalm 31.

You ought to turn back there. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust. Let me never be ashamed.

Deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me. Deliver me speedily.

Be thou my strong rock for a house of defense to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress. Therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me.

Pull me out of the net that they have laid secretly for me. For thou art my strength. Into thy hand I commit my spirit.

Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. Now when our Lord quoted this verse, he made two changes. Now he can do this because this is his book.

I have no right to add to the word of God or to take away from the word of God. It's not my book. But he can do it.

He didn't say, Into thy hand I commit my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. He added, Father, Father, into thy hand I commit my spirit.

Not many Old Testament saints called him Father, Lord, Master. Our Jewish friends avoided the great name of God, Jehovah. But you will not find too often in the Old Testament a saint looking up and saying, Father.

Jesus added that. This is the privilege we have when you pray. Pray after this manner, not in these words, but after this manner.

Our father, not my father. There are no singular pronouns in the Lord's prayer. It's a family prayer.

Our father. He added the word father and he did not quote, Thou hast redeemed me. Now, redemption in the Bible has many different meanings.

Sometimes it means to save from physical danger. Sometimes it means to deliver from sin. My Lord needed no redeemer.

He was the redeemer. The mob said he saved others. Himself, he cannot save.

What a joke. He saved others. He cannot save himself.

That's right. If he's going to save others, he cannot save himself. If he saves himself, he cannot save others.

He did not need a redeemer. And so when he quoted this marvelous promise, he added, Father, into thy hands, I commit my spirit, and he stopped. The sinless Son of God did not have to have a redeemer.

You see, all three of our Lord's prayers on the cross are tied to the Word of God. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. That's Isaiah, chapter 53, verse 12.

He made intercession for the transgressors. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Psalm 22, verse 1. Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. Psalm 31, verse 5. It's a good thing when your praying is tied to your Bible reading.

It was Archbishop Trench who said, praying is not overcoming God's reluctance. Praying is laying hold of God's willingness. And where do you find God's willingness? In God's Word.

How could Jesus pray, into thy hand I commit my spirit? It was based on the Word of God. A lot of silly praying goes on. Jimmy Johnson told me one day about a teenager who wrecked his father's car and stood by the wreckage and prayed, oh Lord, may this accident not have happened.

It's a foolish prayer. I have heard prayers that foolish in prayer meetings, and I have prayed prayers that foolish. Our Lord tied his praying to the Word of God, as he did everything in his life.

He lived by God's Word, and he died by God's Word. Now, if you live by God's Word, you have no problem dying by God's Word. If you've trusted God's Word in life, you can trust God's Word in death.

Our world today is looking for some kind of security for life beyond the grave. They've tried the Ouija board and the seance, they've tried drugs, now they're trying parapsychology and the investigation of some who are supposed to have come back from the dead. If you want a solid rock for your feet when you go through that valley, that rock is the Word of God.

He died confidently in God's presence, Father. With God's promise, Psalm 31 verse 5, he died confidently under God's protection. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

Go back to Psalm 31 and see what it has to say about hands. Verse 8, talking about his adversaries, and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy. Verse 11, I was a reproach among all my enemies.

Now, what's he saying here? He had tasted of hatred, and he'd felt the hand of his enemies. Read the Gospel record and mark when you find the word hands. Jesus said to his disciples, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man is going to be given over into the hands of the Gentiles.

Matthew chapter 26, the record of our Lord's arrest and betrayal. Matthew chapter 26, verse 45, Jesus said to his sleeping disciples, take your rest. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Verse 50, then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took him. Peter in his sermon says, with wicked hands you crucified him. Wicked hands stripped him.

Wicked hands dressed him in a mocking robe. Wicked hands took a reed and smote him. Wicked hands slapped him in the face.

Wicked hands plucked out his beard. Wicked hands gleefully wove a crown of thorns, and wicked hands pressed the crown upon his brow, and wicked hands pushed him from Caiaphas to Pilate to Herod and back to Pilate. Wicked hands, and he took it.

But there comes a time in life when man's hand can do nothing more, and God's hand comes in. Psalm 31, verse 15, my times are in thy hand. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me.

David in Psalm 31 predicts what our Lord went through. The hand of man, the hand of God. The hand of man to buffet and beat.

The hand of man to hurt. But then there comes a time when our times are in God's hands, and God says that's the end, no more. Wicked hands nailed him to a cross, and then there came the end, and Jesus said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

He died confidently in God's presence, with God's promise, in God's protection. That's a great way to die. He had forgiven his enemies.

He had prepared and taken care of his mother. He had led one more soul to salvation. He had fulfilled the Father's will.

And having done all of this, he was now prepared to yield his spirit to the Father's hands. Paul must have had this in mind when he wrote, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. And it came to pass that the rich man died and was buried.

The beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. He died confidently. You and I can die confidently.

God is with us. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Thou art with me.

We can die in God's presence. We can die with God's promise. We have the word of God to rest upon.

We don't need Ouija boards. We can die in God's protection. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. The Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. He died confidently.

I notice a second characteristic. He died willingly. He was in perfect control.

He was not murdered. He willed his own death. You say, well, I can will my own death.

No, you can't. Well, I can commit suicide. Wait a minute.

There are multitudes of people who tried to will their own death. It didn't work. Thank God it didn't work.

You can drown yourself, but you can't will the very second when your spirit leaves your body. You can drink poison. You can shoot yourself, but you can't will that very instant when your spirit leaves your body.

Jesus could. He said, I have power. I have authority to lay down my life, and I have authority to take it up again.

Here is an amazing thing. Here is one who could will his own death, and then after dying, will his own resurrection. He's more than a man.

He died willingly. He wasn't stupefied with drugs. He had finished the work that God gave him to do.

Now the time had come for him to offer up his spirit, to yield his life. That's what he talked about on the Mount of Transfiguration. The greatest Bible conference ever held was on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The sad thing is the congregation went to sleep. Moses, the great prophet. Elijah, the great prophet.

Jesus, who is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. The greatest preachers you could find, the greatest subject you could find, it says they discussed his exodus which he would accomplish at Jerusalem. Not his death that he would suffer.

His exodus that he would accomplish. Moses knew a lot about an exodus. He'd been there.

But our Lord was going to be the lamb to be slain. Moses had the Jews kill lambs for an exodus. Jesus would be the lamb.

They had an exodus from earthly bondage. He gives us an exodus from spiritual bondage. They had an exodus from earthly bondage, and we're soon back in bondage again.

He gives us an exodus that delivers us from bondage eternally. And he accomplished it. His death was not an accident.

It was an appointment and an accomplishment. His exodus that he would accomplish at Jerusalem, willingly, willingly by an act of his own will, Jesus dismissed his spirit. Having completed the work that God gave him to do, he died willingly.

That's a wonderful thing to know that you can die in the will of God. It's a great tragedy for life to come to an end and we look back and discover we never lived. I notice thirdly that my Lord died victoriously, victoriously.

For when he died, the veil was torn from top to bottom. When he died, graves were opened and saints came out. When he died, an earthquake shook the area.

Now these three miracles were not accidental. They were a part of God's plan. I was reading the other day in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, which is the great gospel and resurrection chapter, and he gets to the end of this chapter, Paul does, and he is so enraptured by his theme.

In verse 55 he says, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Now here are three problems. Law, sin, death.

How are you going to solve those problems? But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, and the verb means he keeps on giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. When our Lord died, that was the end of the problem of sin. The veil of the temple was rent, and men can come into the presence of God.

The sin problem is settled. When God gave the law back at Mount Sinai, that mountain shook, and men trembled at God's law. Oh, but on Mount Calvary, the mount shook, but it was not trembling at the law of God.

It was the power of the grace of God. Sin has been taken care of. The veil is torn.

The law has been taken care of. Mount Calvary replaces Mount Sinai. The grave has been taken care of.

The graves were open. Jesus dies and graves open. Jesus dies and people come to life.

He died victoriously. He is the victor over sin, and he is the victor over the law, and he is the victor over death, and he died in great victory. Oh, as far as the Jerusalem Journal was concerned, as the reporters stood there writing up their stories, he died in great defeat.

I can just read what Time magazine would have said about it. Time magazine would have said, the strange Jewish carpenter whose ministry began with such power ended with such failure. He opened his life by turning water into wine.

He raised the dead, and yet he himself died a shameful death on a Roman cross. It's all over. Oh, but it wasn't all over.

With the Lord Jesus Christ, he died victoriously. Lifted up was he to die. It is finished, was his cry.

Now in heaven, exalted high, hallelujah, what a Savior. He died confidently, and he died willingly, and he died victoriously. But the big question is not how did he die, but how will you die? And someone just now says, now the preacher is going to frighten us.

No, I'm not. No, I'm not. The fear of death is a good motivation.

That's the reason you didn't walk out onto the L tracks the other day. That's what keeps you from going out in the deep water. That's what keeps you from drinking poison.

Nobody here wants to die. The fear of death is a good motive for doing good things. People go to the hospital and have x-rays because of the fear of death.

That's good. I don't know how life is going to end for you. I don't know.

I don't know how life will end for me, but one of these days life will end. Either the rapture, our Lord returning in great wonderful power, catching home his church, life will end. The end of our ministry here, the beginning of our ministry there, or death is going to come.

He who is not prepared to die is not prepared to live. My Lord died confidently. Every Christian can die confidently.

Our Lord died willingly. I can't do that, but I'm willing when God calls me. I cannot will my own death, but I'm glad I can pray my times.

My times are in your hands. He died victoriously, and he died for you. If you've never trusted him, that's the next thing to do.

Trust him. For the wages of sin is death, and payday always comes, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thank you, Heavenly Father, that Jesus spoke from the cross and he speaks to us today.

I pray for those in this congregation who need to trust him, who need to have a sure word from God to rest upon, that today they might trust him. Help those of us who are your children so to live that death for us will not be tragedy, but triumph. It will not be a waste, but an investment.

Help us so to live that our times are in your hands, and we'll be able to say, Father, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. We would just now surrender all that we are, body, soul, and spirit into your hands. Guide us.

Use us. Be glorified through us. I pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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