

The Seventh Word

by W.R. Inge

W.R. Inge's sermon explores the profound significance of Christ's final words and the implications for believers in terms of suffering, repentance, and eternal life.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Luke 23:46, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 2:8, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 4:10

Topics: "The Cross", "Sacrificial Love"

Description

W.R. Inge preaches about the profound sorrow and agony Jesus experienced during His crucifixion, emphasizing the heart-wrenching separation of His soul from His body, highlighting the deep love and harmony between them. He urges listeners to meditate on Christ's suffering and the immense sacrifice made for humanity's sins, calling for a heartfelt response to His sacrifice. Inge reflects on the significance of Christ's loud cry on the cross, symbolizing victory over sin and death, and the commendation of His spirit into the Father's hands as a powerful act of trust and submission. He encourages believers to follow Christ's example of surrendering all to God, acknowledging that all good comes from Him and should be returned to Him in humility and gratitude.

Transcript

OUR Lord Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." O all ye who love our Lord Jesus Christ, come, I beseech you, and let us watch, with all devotion and pity, His passing away. Let us see what must have been His sorrow and agony and torment, when His glorious soul was now at last forced to pass out of His worthy and most sacred body, in which for thirty and three years it had rested so sweetly, peacefully, joyfully, and holily, even as two lovers on one bed. How hard was it for them to be rent asunder, between whom no disagreement had ever arisen, no strife, or quarrel, or treachery. How unspeakably grievous was that Cross, when His sacred body was compelled to part with so faithful a friend, so gentle an occupant, so loving a teacher and master; and how great was the sorrow with which His glorious and pure soul was torn away from so faithful a servant, which had ever served obediently, never sparing any trouble, never shrinking from cold or heat or hunger or thirst; always enduring labour and sorrow in gentleness and patience. O how great was this affliction! For, as the philosopher says: "Of all terrible things death is the most terrible, on account of the natural and mutual affection, which is very great, between soul and body." How much greater must have been the anguish and sorrow, when the most holy soul and body of Christ were sundered, between which there had always been such wonderful harmony and love. Therefore, with inward pity and anxious sorrow, let us meditate

on this sad parting; for the death of Christ is our life.

Let us meditate devoutly how His sacred body, the instrument of our salvation, was steeped in anguish, when all His members, as if to bid a last farewell, were bowing themselves down to die! Who can look without remorse and sorrow and pity upon the most gracious face of Christ, and behold how it is changed into the pallor and likeness of death; how tears still flow from His dimmed eyes; how His sacred head is bent; how all His members prove to us, by signs and motions, the love which they can no longer show by deeds. Let us pity Him, I pray you, for He is our own flesh and blood, and it is for our sins, not His own, that He is shamefully slain. O ye who up till now have passed by the Cross of Jesus with tepid or cold hearts, and whom all these torments and tears, and His blood shed like water, have not been able to soften; now at last let this loud voice, this terrible cry, rend and pierce your hearts through and through. Let that voice which shook the heaven and the earth and hell with fear, which rent the rocks and laid open ancient graves, now soften your stony hearts, and lay bare the old sepulchres of your conscience, full of dead men's bones--that is to say, of wicked deeds, and call again into life your departed spirits. For this is the voice which once cried: "Adam, where art thou; and what hast thou done?" This is the voice which brought Lazarus from Hades, saying, "Lazarus, come forth: arise from the grave of sin, and let them free thee from thy grave-clothes." Truly it was not so much the grievousness of His sufferings, as the greatness of our sins, which made our Lord utter this cry. He cried also, to show that He had the dominion over life and death, over the living and the dead. For though he was quite worn out, and destitute of strength, and though He had borne the bitter pangs of death so long, beyond the power of man, yet He would not allow Death to put forth its power against Him, until it pleased Him.

With a loud voice He cried, that earthly men, who care only for the things of earth, might quake with fear and trembling, and to cause them to meditate and see how naked and helpless the Lord of lords departed from this life. With a terrible voice He cried, to stir up all those who live in wantonness, and who have grown old in their defilement, and send forth a foul savour, like dead dogs, so that at last these miserable men may rise from their lusts and pleasures and sensual delights, and see how the Son of God, who was never strained with any spot of defilement, went forth to His Father; and with what toil and pain and anguish He departed from the light of day, and what He had to suffer before He reached his Father's Kingdom. He also cried with a loud voice, that He might inflame the lukewarm and slothful to devotion and love.

Moreover He cried with a loud voice as a sign of the glorious victory which He had gained, when after a single combat with His strong and cruel enemy, and having descended into the arena--the battlefield of this world--He had routed him on Mount Calvary and stripped him bare of his spoils. This victory, this glorious triumph, Christ proclaimed with a loud voice, and thus departing from the battlefield triumphant and victorious, He departed to the place of all delights, to the heart and breast of God, His Father, commending to it, as to a safe refuge, both Himself and all His own, with the words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

We may learn from these words that the eternal Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, had been let down like a fishing-hook or great net, by the Father of heaven, into the great sea of this world, that He might catch not fish but men. Hear how He says: "My word, that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void, but shall execute that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it." And this net is drawn by the Father out of the salt sea, to the peaceful shore of His fatherly heart, full of the elect, of works of charity, of repentance, patience, humility, obedience, spiritual exercises, merits and virtues. For Christ drew unto Himself all the afflictions and good deeds of the good; just as St Paul says, "I live; yet not

I, but Christ liveth in me." Even so, Christ lives in all the good, and all who have been willing and obedient instruments in the hands of Christ. In all such Christ lives and suffers and works. For whatever good there is in all men, is all God's work. Therefore Christ, feeling His Father drawing Him, gathered together in Himself in a wonderful manner all the elect with all their works, and commended them to His Father, saying, "My Father, these are Thine; these are the spoils which I have won by My conquest, by the sword of the Cross; these are the vessels which I have purchased with My precious blood; these are the fruits of My labours. Keep in Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Thus did Christ commend Himself and all His own into His Father's hands. Come therefore, O faithful and devout soul, and contemplate with great earnestness the coming in and the going out of thy Lord Jesus; follow Him with love and longing, even to the chamber and bed of joy, which He has prepared for thee in thy Father's heart. Happy would he be, who could now be dissolved with Christ, and die with the thief, and hear from the lips of the Lord that comfortable word, "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." And though this is not granted to us, yet whatever we can here gain by labours and watchings and fastings and prayers, let us commend it all with Christ to the Father; let us pour it back again into the fountain, whence it flowed forth for us; and let nothing be left in us of empty self-satisfaction, no seeking after human praise or honour or reward. But whatever our God hath been willing to do in us, let us return it back into His own hands and say, "We are nothing of ourselves. It is He who made us, and not we ourselves. All good was made by Him, and without Him was not anything made. When therefore He taketh with Him what He made Himself, we are absolutely nothing."

Lastly, Christ commended His soul into His Father's hands, to show us how the souls of good and holy men mount up after Him to the bosom of the eternal Father, who must otherwise have gone down to hell; for it is He who has opened to us the way of life, and His sacred soul, by making the journey safe and free from danger, has been our guide into the kingdom of heaven.

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