

Sayings from the Cross 1

They say the last words a person speaks are important. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're focusing on the words of Jesus Christ while He was on the cross. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God declared about the Lord Jesus in Matthew 17:5, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" And we need to listen to Him if we want to know God's will. If we wish to please, to respect, and to obey Him, we first must hear and pay attention to what He says. Loving the Lord means carefully listening to Him. And that's why His words mean so much to us. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Someone has remarked that what people say at the close of their lives reveals their minds, their hearts, and their character. Today we're going to look at the words Jesus spoke, and whenever His burdens, His agony, and His sacrifice were at the most visible and difficult point. We're focusing on His words as He was being crucified and hanging upon the cross. While Jesus lingered there, just being able to breathe would have been exceptionally difficult. He suffered more severely than we can imagine. Just to speak would have required a lot of effort. Now if Jesus worked that hard to speak, what He had to say must be important! How important are the words of Jesus to you?

You know, hearing what Jesus has to say is important. He speaks the words of eternal life. And His words come from the Father, and they teach us of the Father's love and the Father's will for our lives. Jesus, quoting Deuteronomy 8 and verse 3, said in Matthew 4 and verse 4, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" If the words of Christ gave us life itself, shouldn't we pay close attention? Are you listening to Jesus?

We offer this study free on the words of Jesus and what He spoke on the cross. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now we also have materials free on our website www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Isaiah 53:4 to 6, and explore the fact that life in God's will matters.

Our reading today comes from Isaiah 53, verses 4 to 6. This is a marvelous Messianic prophecy about what Jesus experienced while He was on the cross. "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions,

He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each has
turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all, To fall on Him.”

Yes, to fall upon Him, and He suffered for us. Let’s pray. “Father we’re thankful for
the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us so much. And Father we’re thankful
that He was willing to bear our iniquities, so that we might be forgiven and have life
eternal. Father help us to devote our hearts and our lives to You always. In Jesus name
we pray, Amen.”

Crucifixion was the most painful and cruel death of ancient times. It was designed to
make the agony last as long as possible. As they were nailing Jesus to the cross we have
His first saying. The Lord Jesus was praying according to Luke 23:34, “Father, forgive
them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

We find it difficult to forgive when someone has intentionally and maliciously hurt
us. It’s easier to become angry and vengeful, but that’s contrary to God’s teaching on
forgiveness. Someone hurts us, and some decide we can’t forgive or forget. Of course,
anger only hurts us and keeps the wound open. People tend to nurture a grudge, but Jesus
didn’t. That’s why we need to listen to Jesus pray, “Father, forgive them; for they do not
know what they do.” Now these familiar words reveal a stunning and an amazing grace.
If we grasp the wonder of this first word from the cross, it will help us to forgive others.

Jesus could have prayed, “Father, punish them! Father, destroy them!” He could have
called for legions of angels to deliver Him and strike down His enemies. We could pray,
“Father, hurt them like they’ve hurt me!” 1 Peter 2 and verse 23 says about Jesus: that
“while being reviled, He didn’t revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but
kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.” Our Lord prayed from a heart of
love, “Father, forgive them.” What an example for us to follow!

Forgiveness and reconciliation are what the cross is all about. Forgiving others is
much less difficult when we remember how much the Lord has forgiven us. Ephesians
4:31 to 32 says, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put
away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving
each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

The second time Jesus spoke takes a little time to examine the context. Luke 23 verse
35 to 43 says, And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at
Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His
Chosen One." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour
wine, and saying, well "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" Now there was
also an inscription above Him, “This is the king of the Jews.”

And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you're under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we're receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Now Jesus endured the sneering of the Jews and the mocking of the soldiers. And one of the criminals also jeered at Christ to save Him, but the other criminal rebuked him. And he remarked that Jesus was innocent and asked Him to "remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And Jesus replied, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Now Jesus said they both would that very day be in Paradise. In Revelation 2 verse 7 Jesus promises, "To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God." Now paradise refers to the place where righteous souls go when this life is over.

Many point to the salvation of this thief on the cross and think, well salvation today comes just like it did to that thief. This, however, is a special situation and ignores many relevant facts. The thief lived under the first covenant before the blood and death of Jesus ratified the new covenant, under which we live today. Now during His ministry on earth, Jesus could and did save people any way He desired; but we today find our salvation by hearing the message of the gospel. 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." Romans 1 and verse 16 says that the "gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." Now the question is not what Jesus told the thief on the cross; the question is what will Jesus say to us about our salvation!

When people today hear and believe the gospel of Christ, they repent of their sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and they are baptized into Christ. The gospel is the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:24, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He (that is, the Son of God), you will die in your sins." Now we are saved by faith but not by faith alone. The Lord Jesus also said in Luke 13:3, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Paul told the Athenian philosophers in Acts 17 verses 30 to 31, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed,

having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” Now it takes faith to repent, but someone who says he believes but will not repent cannot be saved.

With faith and repentance, the person who loves the Lord because of what Jesus did on the cross will want to confess his faith in Jesus Christ and be baptized into Christ. Now before baptism, we’re outside of Christ and His blessings; but when we’re baptized into Christ, we put on Christ (Galatians 3 and verse 27). Romans 6 and verse 3 says, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?” You see our baptism in water today takes us to the cross, to the death of Christ. And we are baptized into Christ.

Now Paul explains how baptism sets us free from sin and unites us with Christ. Romans 6 verses 4 to 7 says, “Therefore we’ve been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we’ve become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”

Now baptism in water buries us with Christ and raises us up with Christ, so that we can walk in newness of life. And the old self was crucified with Christ so that our sins could be done away with and we could be free from the guilt and the punishment of sin. You see, when we are crucified with Christ, that’s when the blood washes that sin away. In Baptism, the blood washes away sin because we’re crucified with Christ. Now Peter tells us of another benefit: 1 Peter 3:21 says, “Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” When we’re baptized, we are saved. And baptism is the time that we appeal or inquire to God for a good conscience; and when we are raised up with Christ to a new life and born again, we have that conscience that says that we’re set free from that old life and have a new beginning. In 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 17 the Bible says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

Now, because through baptism into Christ and into His death, because that happens, God puts us in Christ, and He saves us, and makes us new creatures, and then we have a hope of entering Paradise when this physical life is over. Like Lazarus who went to Abraham’s bosom in Luke 16, faithful Christians have the promise of a blessing when this life is over.

Jesus promised the thief, “You will be with Me,” and we are going to be with the Lord when we die. Some people ask, “Well, will we go to be with Jesus when we die?”

Well the Scriptures answer this question. 2 Corinthians 5 verses 6 to 8 says, “Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight— we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” Now when our bodies die, our spirits go to be at home with the Lord.

Philippians 1:21 to 24 says, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I don’t know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart (that is to die) and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.” Now Paul believed that departing from this life and being “with Christ” to be far better than living in the flesh. He had confidence that when he died, he would be “with Christ.” Let me ask you, do you have confidence?

Life is very uncertain; and we have no guarantees we’ll live to a ripe old age. We may not have plenty of time to correct our lives to the saving of our souls. James 4 and verse 14 says, “You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You’re just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.” If you were to depart today, would you go to be with Christ? Would you hear the Lord say, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise”? If you’re not sure about your relationship with the Lord and your salvation, oh take the necessary steps that God requires.

Now God’s grace is open to every person who will lovingly and humbly come to Him in faith and willing to obey Him. Psalm 51 verse 17 says, that “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” When you see how a sinful way of life will cause you to be lost, and you humbly repent of your sins and turn your heart toward the will of God, it can make a difference. The person who wants to be saved doesn’t argue with God. His heart is ready to listen to whatever the Lord asks of Him. And he’s happy! He wants to obey the Lord.

He’s happy to deny himself, to take up his cross daily and follow the Lord. He’s happy to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of his sins. He wants his sins to be washed away, so like Saul of Tarsus he doesn’t wait but is baptized right then (Acts 22, verse 16). Now the three thousand on the day of Pentecost were baptized that very day. The Eunuch saw water and was baptized right then in (Acts 8 verses 36 to 39). The Philippian jailer and his family were baptized in the middle of the night in Acts 16. The twelve disciples of John in Acts 19 were baptized into Christ immediately Well why did they act so urgently? They acted because they loved the Lord and wanted to be right with Him! Will you?

Let’s pray together. “Oh Father, help each one to recognize the great gift of love that was given to us in the sacrifice of Jesus. And help us Father to live in such a way that we are not arguing with You, but loving You, and being obedient to Your will. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

Living in the grace and favor of God, being saved from sin and its consequences, is the most necessary step in your life. Now you can possess the world; but if you don't have the favor of God, you have no hope of eternal life with the Lord Jesus. I tell you, a future without God is terrible. The way God has determined for you to have eternal life comes by His grace and through faith. You must believe in the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. The basis for this faith comes in the message of the gospel. In Romans 1:16 Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Now to be saved, you must believe in Jesus and in the gospel.

Now having godly parents won't save you, if you refuse to come to Christ. Belonging to a church won't save you, if you live a worldly life. You must one day face the Lord Jesus, on your own. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." The Jesus who died on the cross will come again to judge the world in righteousness. Are you prepared to meet God?

Now if you love the Lord and believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, repent of your sins. Give them up and start living for the Lord. Confess your faith, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And then God washes away sin when we're baptized into Christ and He adds us to His church. So respond today.

We hope that today's study about Jesus' sayings on the cross has blessed you. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs, there's a map with the location of churches that are in your area. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We do have our own channel, please subscribe to it, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. If you get a hold of us, don't worry, we're not asking for and begging for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God today by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.