

Friday: Day of Agony

JESUS' FINAL WEEK - 6

Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'
- LUKE 23:34

God put on him the wrong who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.
-2 CORINTHIANS 5:21,
THE MESSAGE

The gospel writers devote a significant portion of their writing describing the events surrounding Jesus' death. They don't provide a lot of detail about the process of crucifixion—that was all too familiar. Specifically, they record what Jesus said from the cross—knowing that these words reflected what mattered most to Him. In this passage, Jesus pulls Himself up on the cross, and with great effort, says something we all need to hear about forgiveness and grace.

WELCOME

Brainstorm as many “famous last words”(humorous or serious) as you can. What would you like your “famous last words” to be?

WORSHIP

What's a favorite song that captures the essence of the love God poured out for you on the cross? Explain—Why do you find it so meaningful? “He Paid a Debt” (376), “Boundless Love” (325), Hallelujah! What a Savior!” (337).

WORD

Read Luke 23:32-37

1. Share what you know about the process of crucifixion. Why did the Romans prefer this particular form of execution?
2. How could Jesus have requested forgiveness for such a callused, uncaring crowd (notice insights like the one given in 1 Peter 2:23)? Is Jesus asking that the crowd be “let off” the hook (Acts 3:13-23)? What, exactly, is Jesus requesting when He asks that their sin be “sent away” from them? [Consider passages like 2 Cor. 5:21.] What does the heart and spirit of Jesus in this passage teach you about the nature of forgiveness and it's cost?

Read Luke 23:38-43

3. What do you know about these two criminals? How does knowing their background shed light on why they were so intent on jeering and mocking Jesus? [Initially, both men were involved, Matt. 27:44; Mark 15:32. Jesus practices what He just preached in this passage!]
4. How do you account for one criminal's sudden change of heart (vs 40)? What thoughts or attitudes are evident in his rebuke of the other criminal (vss 40-42) and in his request of Jesus (vs 42)? What do you find so incredible about Jesus' reply (vs 43)?
5. Why is this story such a good example of the only way anybody is saved? [That dark day, outside of Jerusalem, there wasn't just one man who died with peace in his heart, there were two. The grace which God offers is the only way to face your own death. But it's also the only way to face life!]

WORKS

The Cross is not something that you pay homage to one day a week, but rather something that should direct your life seven days a week. Jesus lived (and died) what He preached. *What does the Cross say about holding grudges, harboring resentment, or seeking revenge? What relationships in your life need the healing that comes only from fixing your faith on His grace, and not on yourself?*