

His death that we are redeemed. " For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, Himself human, who gave Himself as ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

THE FIFTH WORD

"I thirst"

Gospel of John 19:28

The fifth word of Jesus is His only human expression of His physical suffering. Jesus is now in shock. The wounds inflicted upon Him in the scourging, the crowning with thorns, and the nailing upon the cross are now taking their toll, especially after losing blood on the three hour walk through the city of Jerusalem to Golgotha on the Way of the Cross. Systematic studies of the Shroud of Turin, as reported by Gerald O' Collins in *Interpreting Jesus*, indicate the passion of Jesus was far worse than one could imagine. The Shroud has been exhaustively studied by ever possible scientific maneuver, and the scientific burden of proof is now on those who do not accept the Shroud as the burial cloth of Jesus. "He Himself bore our sins in His body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed"(1 Peter 2:24).

THE SIXTH WORD

***When Jesus had received the wine, He said, " It is finished" ;
and he bowed His head and handed over the spirit.***

Gospel of John 19:30

It is now a fait accompli. The sixth word is Jesus' recognition that His suffering is over and His task is completed. Jesus was obedient to the Father and gave His love for mankind by redeeming us with His death on the Cross.

When Jesus died, He "handed over" the Spirit. Jesus remains in control to the end, and it is He who handed over His Spirit. One should not miss the double entendre here, for this may also be interpreted as His death brought forth the Holy Spirit. Jesus speaks of *living water* in John 4:10-11, and refers to living water as the Holy Spirit in John 7:37-39. This becomes more evident in John 19:34: " But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water." This fulfills the prophecy in Zechariah 12:10: "They will look upon Him whom they have pierced." The piercing of Jesus' side prefigures the Sacraments of Eucharist (blood) and Baptism (water), as well as the beginning of the Church.

THE SEVENTH WORD

***Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
"Father, into your hands I commend My spirit":***

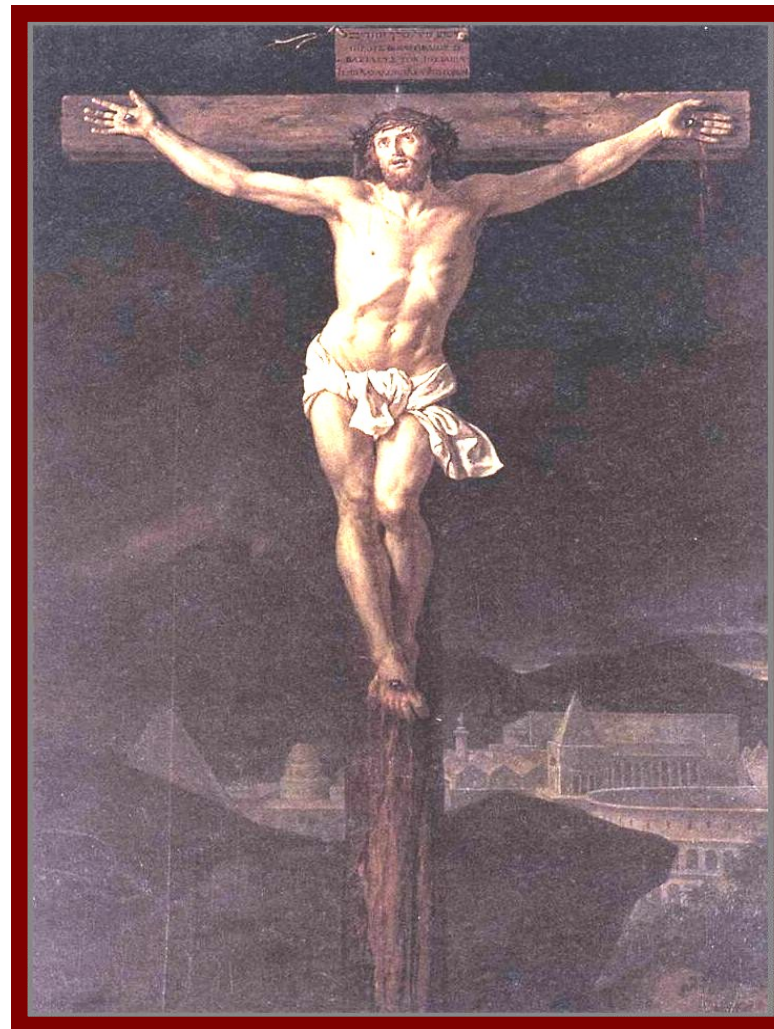
Gospel of Luke 23:46

The seventh word of Jesus is from the Gospel of Luke, and is directed to the Father in heaven, just before He dies. Jesus recalls Psalm 31:5 - "Into thy hands I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God." Luke repeatedly pleads Jesus' innocence: with Pilate (Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22), through Dismas, the criminal (Luke 23:41), and immediately after His death with the centurion " Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent" (Luke 23:47).

The innocent Lamb had been slain for our sins, so that we might be forgiven. " They are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith" (Romans 3:24-25).

Jesus fulfills His mission, and as He says so clearly in John's Gospel, He can now return: "I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father" (John 16:28). Jesus practiced what He preached: "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). *
(excerpted from: www.jesuschristssavior.net)

THE SEVEN WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS



" Father, forgive them,

for they do not know what they do"

***THE SEVEN WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS**
also referred to as
THE LAST SEVEN EXPRESSIONS OF JESUS CHRIST
ON THE CROSS RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE

THE FIRST WORD

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Gospel of Luke 23:34

Jesus says this first word only in the Gospel of Luke, just after He was crucified by the soldiers on Golgotha, with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. The timing of this suggests that Jesus asks His Father to primarily forgive His enemies, the soldiers, who have scourged Him, mocked Him, tortured Him, and who have just nailed Him to the cross. But could this not also apply to His Apostles and companions who have deserted Him, to Peter who has denied Him three times, to the fickle crowd, who only days before praised Him on His entrance to Jerusalem, and then days later chose Him over Barabbas to be crucified? Could this not also apply to us, who daily forget Him in our lives?

Does He react angrily? No, He asks His Father to forgive them, because they are ignorant! At the height of His physical suffering, His Divine love prevails and He asks His Father to forgive His enemies.

Right up to His final hours on earth, Jesus preaches forgiveness. He teaches forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" (Mt. 6:12). When asked by Peter, how many times should we forgive someone, Jesus answers seventy times seven (Mt. 18:21-22). At the Last Supper, Jesus explains His crucifixion to His Apostles when He tells them to drink of the cup: "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt. 26:27-28). He forgives the paralytic at Capernaum (Mark 2:5), and the adulteress caught in the act and about to be stoned (John 8:1-11). And even following His Resurrection, His first act is to commission His disciples to forgive, the Scriptural foundation for the Sacrament of Confession: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:22-23).

THE SECOND WORD

"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Gospel of Luke 23-43

Now it is not just the religious leaders or the soldiers that mock Jesus, but even one of the criminals, a downward progression of mockery. But the criminal on the right speaks up for Jesus, explaining the two criminals are receiving their just due, and then pointing to Jesus, says, "this Man has done nothing wrong." Then, turning to Jesus, he asks, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). What wonderful faith this repentant sinner had in Jesus - far more than the doubting Thomas, one of His own Apostles. Ignoring His own suffering, Jesus mercifully responds with His second word.

The second word again is about forgiveness, this time directed to a sinner. Just as the first word, this Biblical expression again is found only in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus

shows His Divinity by opening heaven for a repentant sinner—such generosity to a man that only asked to be remembered!

THE THIRD WORD

"Jesus said to His mother: "Woman, this is your Son."

Then He said to the disciple: "This is your mother."

Gospel of John 19:26-27

Jesus and Mary are together again, at the beginning of His ministry in Cana and now at the end of His public ministry at the foot of the Cross. What sorrow must fill her heart, to see her Son mocked, tortured, and now just crucified. Once again, sword pierces Mary's soul, the sword predicted by Simeon at the Temple (Luke 2:35). There are four at the foot of the cross, Mary His Mother, John, the disciple whom He loved, Mary of Cleopas, His mother's sister, and Mary Magdalene. His third word is addressed to Mary and John, the only eyewitness of the Gospel writers.

But again Jesus rises above the occasion, and His concerns are for the ones that love Him. The good son that He is, Jesus is concerned about taking care of His mother. In fact, this passage offers proof that Jesus was the only child of Mary, because if He did have brothers or sisters, they would have provided for her. But Jesus looks to John to care for her.

St. Joseph is noticeably absent. The historic paintings, such as Tondo-doni by Michelangelo and The Holy Family by Raphael, suggest Joseph was a considerably older man. St. Joseph had probably died by the time of the crucifixion, or else he would have been the one to take care of Mary. Early Christian traditions and the second-century apocryphal Protoevangelium of James held that Joseph was a widower, and his children by his former wife were the "brothers and sisters of Jesus."

Another striking phrase indicating Jesus was an only child is Mark 6:3, referring to Jesus: "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not His sisters here with us?" Now if James, Joses and Judas and Simon were also natural sons of Mary, Jesus would not have been called the "Son of Mary," but rather "one of the sons of Mary."

THE FOURTH WORD

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34

This is the only expression of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Both Gospels relate that it was in the ninth hour, after 3 hours of darkness, that Jesus cried out this fourth word. The ninth hour was three o'clock in Palestine. Just after He speaks, Mark relates with a horrible sense of finality, "And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last" (Mark 15:37).

One is struck by the anguished tone of this expression compared to the first three words of Jesus. This cry is from the painful heart of the human Jesus who must feel deserted by His Father and the Holy Spirit, not to mention his earthly companions the Apostles. As if to emphasize His loneliness, Mark even has His loved ones "looking from afar," not close to Him as in the Gospel of John. Jesus feels separated from His Father. He is now all alone, and He must face death by himself.

But is not this exactly what happens to all of us when we die? We too will be all alone at the time of death! Jesus completely lives the human experience as we do, and by doing so, frees us from the clutches of sin.

There can not be a more dreadful moment in the history of man as this moment. Jesus who came to save us is crucified, and He realizes the horror of what is happening and what He now is enduring. He is about to be engulfed in the raging sea of sin. Evil triumphs, as Jesus admits: "But this is your hour" (Luke 22:53). But it is only for a moment. The burden of all the sins of humanity for a moment overwhelm the humanity of our Jesus. But does this not have to happen? Does this not have to occur if Jesus is to save us? It is in defeat of his humanity that the Divine plan of His Father and Himself will be completed. It is by