

**“Father, forgive them...” Luke 23:24**

"The Saviour made no murmur of complaint. His face remained calm and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon His brow. There was no pitying hand to wipe the death dew from His face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay His human heart. While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' His mind passed from His own suffering to the sin of His persecutors, and the terrible retribution that would be theirs. No curses were called down upon the soldiers who were handling Him so roughly. No vengeance was invoked upon the priests and rulers, who were gloating over the accomplishment of their purpose. Christ pitied them in their ignorance and guilt. He breathed only a plea for their forgiveness..."

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*Father, let me hear my own name in Jesus' cry of forgiveness. Let His incomprehensible love wash over me. Let His sacrifice free me from my dark dungeons of guilt. Bring the full force of His words on my heart so that I desire that every neighbor and every nation would know the wonders of His gift of salvation. May Christ's grace compel me to reach out to my world.*

**Read Luke 23:35-43  
“... today you will be with me...”**

Jesus died on the cross so He could offer each of us the comfort of these words. This comfort is only for those like the thief who understand their desperate need for Jesus. Do we believe what this man believed when he confronted the other criminal? *“We are being punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve.”* Do we recognize that we are no better than either of these criminals, that our sin is just as great and just as deserving of eternal punishment? Until we can admit that we are sinners at heart and that God is a just judge, we will be like the mocking thief who continued to reject Jesus. Fortunately the story doesn't end there. The repentant thief proclaims the innocence of Jesus and therein finds his hope, *“... this man has done nothing wrong.”* Indeed, Jesus lived a sinless life which qualified Him to be the unblemished Passover lamb sacrificed for our sins. The penalty for our sin fell on Him, so that we can make the same plea as this man, *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”* Place your faith fully and completely on Jesus who sacrificed Himself for your sin, not on any efforts of your own, and you too will hear the words of Jesus, *“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me ... and one day ... with me in paradise.”*

*If you have never placed your faith in Jesus as your savior, do so today. If you have placed your faith in Jesus as your Savior, recall the days when you first experienced this resting trust.*

**“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

The one who is the Light of the World was encompassed in darkness. The darkness was not because of the sin of those crucifying Him, it was because of the sin that He bore. The One who had lived in an eternal relationship with the Father, could no longer call Him Father, for their relationship was severed. For the first time in His eternal existence, the Son was alone. Hanging between heaven and earth, He no longer belonged to either. He was separated from a holy God who could not embrace the sin He bore, and He was rejected by humanity for whom He was giving His life.

The sinless One became sin because of His love for the lost and broken like you and me. Martin Luther said, “...doubt not that you are the one who killed Christ. Your sins certainly did, and when you see the nails driven through his hands, be sure that you are pounding, and when the thorns pierce his brow, know that they are your evil thoughts. Consider that if one thorn pierced Christ, you deserve one hundred thousand.”

*Through Your sacrifice, You bring us peace. Bring this peace to my life and to the world for which You died.*

### ***"I am thirsty" John 19:28***

On the cross, the One who created life-giving water endured unimaginable physical thirst. The One who promised to satisfy every believer's spiritual thirst - "... whoever drinks the water that I give him will never thirst again"- cried out that He, Himself, was spiritually thirsty. Jesus thirsted for God.

He endured the emotional agony of separation from the One who meant everything to Him in order to pay the penalty for our sin. Why did He pay such a price? He longed for our thirst to be satisfied through the vitality of life that only the Spirit of God can bring and by experiencing the Father's love that He had always felt. He was thirsty so that we might never thirst again.

For what do we thirst? What or who will satisfy our deepest desires?

*Lord, satisfy my thirst with Yourself. Fill me so that I would thirst for nothing besides You. I long for the rivers of living water, Your Spirit, to revive me, so that I might be Your instrument of revival for others, pointing them to the only One who can satisfy our ultimate thirst.*

### ***"It is Finished" - John 19:30***

Genesis 2:7 says, "... God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested..." God created a perfect universe, placed humanity in Paradise and rested. The broken world that we live in today is the result of humanity's rebellion against God. Yet, God remained relentless in His pursuit of us, seeking to bring us back into an intimate relationship with Him and to recreate the world as it was meant to be. In order to accomplish this, He sent His Son to take the sin of the world upon Himself. When Jesus declares "It is finished", His words purposefully echo the words of Genesis. The work necessary to bring humanity back into intimacy with the Father and bring about a new creation, the Kingdom of God, was completed. Jesus finally rested, laying His head upon a cross in the quietness of death.

*"Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.... grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love..." Francis of Assisi*

### ***"Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit"- Luke 23:46***

Jesus endured the humiliation and torture of crucifixion. He was in agony as He bore the wrath of God which we deserved. He was experiencing hell itself when He called out, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?" Three hours later He proclaimed the victory cry of, "It is finished." Jesus let us know that the debt of our sin had been paid in full. It was only then that He could rest His head on the cross and offer His spirit to the Father. Dr. William Barclay writes, "Jesus died with a prayer on his lips. 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' That is Psalm 31:5 with one word added-- Father. That verse was the prayer every Jewish mother taught her child to say last thing at night ... 'Into your hands I commit my spirit.' Jesus made it even more intimate, for he began it with the word Father. Even on the cross Jesus died like a child falling asleep in his father's arms."

*Father, may we experience this same intimacy with You. Make us faithful servants to proclaim to the whole world that Jesus died to bring everyone into the joy and splendor of this intimacy.*