

Lent Bible Study: The Seven Words of the Cross

Famous Last Words:

Death is the absolute finality for every human being. While some people's last words are mundane and sometimes even quite funny, it is significant to see that many people of faith have affirmed that faith all the way to their deaths.

→ Either that wallpaper goes, or I do. ~ ~
Oscar Wilde, writer,

→ Die? I should say not, dear fellow. No Barrymore would allow such a conventional thing to happen to him.
~ ~ *John Barrymore, actor,*

→ "Why yes, a bulletproof vest!" (On his final request before the firing squad.)
~ ~ *Rodgers, James W. [American criminal]*

→ "So little done, so much to do." ~ ~
Rhodes, Cecil John

→ I love you Sarah. For all eternity, I love you. (Spoken to his wife.)
~ ~ *James K. Polk, US President,*

→ Oh, do not cry - be good children and we will all meet in heaven.
~ ~ *Andrew Jackson, US President,*

→ Get my swan costume ready. ~ ~ *Anna*

Pavlova, ballerina,

→ When the priest who was attending him said "May the Lord have mercy on your soul", Chaplin is reported to have replied "Why Not? After all, it belongs to him." ~ ~ *Charlie Chaplin,*

→ I have offended God and mankind because my work did not reach the quality it should have. ~ ~ *Leonardo da Vinci, artist,*

→ It is very beautiful over there. ~ ~
Thomas Edison, inventor,

→ Ay Jesus. ~ ~ *Charles V, King of France,*

→ See in what peace a Christian can die.
~ ~ *Joseph Addison, writer,*

→ Jesus died for me ~ ~ *Charles Spurgeon*

→ The best of all is, God is with us ~ ~ *John Wesley*

Jesus' Final Words on the Cross:

These words are important to us for two reasons:

- They are uttered by our Lord Jesus Himself
- They are uttered from the cross which lies at the heart of what He came to do.

1. Father forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing
2. Today you will be with me in paradise.
3. Dear woman, here is your son, ...Here is your mother.
4. My God, My God why have You forsaken me?
5. I thirst
6. It is finished
7. Father into Your hands I commend my Spirit.

1. "Father Forgive Them"

Luke 23:32-34

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Acts 7:54 – 60

When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Digging in...

1. What attitudes might we expect from people in "showdown" situations like this where there is terrible injustice, hate and evil at work?

2. Was Jesus really powerless in this situation? See:

Matthew 26:52-53 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

John 18:4-9 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."

John 19:11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

3. What has Jesus suffered so far? Think about the arrest, the flogging, the "via dolorosa" and the crucifixion itself.

Chewing over the details...

4. Who is Jesus praying to?

(Look at His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane in Mark 14:36 – there He uses the Aramaic word “Abba” which means “Daddy”)

Mark 14:36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

When we free the picture of “Father” from all the failures of earthly fathers, what does the relationship between the Father and the Son imply?

5. Jesus was on the cross because of the Father’s will. (See Matthew 26:39)

Does the Father always spare us from difficult circumstances? (Hebrews 12:7-12)

Matthew 26:39 Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Hebrews 12:7-12 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.

6. Who is Jesus praying for?

Who crucified Jesus? (The Romans? The Jews? The System?)

7. Comment on the impact the following paragraph has on you...

"Father, forgive them ..." said Jesus out of love. "Forgive" is a word borrowed from the world of commerce. It is a money word. In the Greek culture it meant the cancellation of a debt, the pardoning of a loan. Jesus prays for forgiveness. He prays for the pardoning of a loan. He prays for the cancellation of the debt of sin."

8. Why “don’t we know what we are doing?”

- Is He talking about sins we don’t know that we have committed? (See Leviticus 5:17-19)

Leviticus 5:17-19 "If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible. He is to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the wrong he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. It is a guilt offering; he has been guilty of wrongdoing against the LORD."

- Or is He talking about the fact that disciples, Judas, Herod, Priests, Pilate, soldiers and the crowd didn’t recognise who He was?

- Or, was He commenting that they didn't understand the ramifications and consequences of what they were doing?
 - Or all of the above?
9. But why does Jesus need to pray to God for our forgiveness if Matthew 9:1-8 makes it clear that He has authority to forgive. (It might help to have a look at Isaiah 53:12) What role has Jesus taken on the cross, according to this passage?

Matthew 9:1-8 Some men brought to Him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and He will divide the spoils with the strong,
because He poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For He bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Application.

10. Four of Jesus seven words are prayers. How does the role of prayer in Jesus' life, ministry and death impact your attitude toward prayer? (Is prayer when we are bedridden or helpless (or crucified) a hopeless thing?)
11. What's the first thing that goes through your mind when someone causes you intense pain?
What's the first thing that Jesus did on the cross?
Stop to consider the commitment of Jesus to forgiving us...
Take some time to consider the greatness of His "Amazing Grace?"
12. What did Jesus do when He finished His work on the cross? (Hebrews 12:2)
What is unusual about what Stephen saw in Acts 7:56?
Why, in the light of the previous question, is Stephen able to forgive the way he does in v.60?

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Acts 7:56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Acts 7:59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

2. "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

Luke 23:32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Background Information

It's important for us to understand who the criminals are. In Matthew and Mark they are called "Robbers" (*Lestai* in the Greek) and in Luke they are called "Criminals/Evildoers" (*kakourgoi*). Roman law did not allow for the crucifixion of common robbers, but the word *Lestai* also had the political overtones of "Zealot", "Rebel", "Insurrectionist" and "Freedom fighter." Barabbas, who was released instead of Jesus by Pilate, was an insurrectionist who, with others, had been arrested for rebellion and murder.

The best is to assume that the two others crucified with Jesus were companions of Barabbas. This is reinforced by the one criminal's knowledge of the other's sins. It also sheds a lot of light on the saved criminal's reference to Jesus' Kingdom" – because the word "Kingdom" was a very heavily loaded word for Zealots: They understood it politically. They wanted "steak on your plate while you wait for your fate" not "pie in the sky one day when you die."

Digging in

1. What do you call:

- A fair day's pay for 8 hours of work?
- A trophy for winning a sporting event?
- Appropriate recognition for long service or good performance?

What do these have in common?

2. It's fairly safe to assume that the "baddies" are "partners in crime" (part of the "Barabbas Gang"). In this case, are there any differences between the

“opportunities” the two criminals are given in the crucifixion?

3. Why do you suppose Jesus was placed in the middle?

Chewing over the details

4. Why is presence of the criminals important? See Isaiah 53:12 & the footnote to Mark 15:27.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great,
and He will divide the spoils with the strong,
because He poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For He bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Footnote Mark 15:27 Some manuscripts: “and the scripture was fulfilled which says, “He was counted with the lawless ones”” (Isaiah 53:12)

5. How do we explain the discrepancy between Mt.27:44 and Lk.23:39-40?

Matthew 27:44 In the same way the robbers who were crucified with Him also heaped insults on Him.

Luke 23:39-40 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: “Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”
But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don't you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?”

6. Bearing in mind that the two criminals were probably Zealots, they would have had a very political expectation of the Messiah or Christ. They expected a political liberator who would free them from Rome's oppression. What was the angry criminal's agenda? (Lk.23:39)

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: “Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”

7. What clues would the criminals have had about Jesus identity and nature?

8. There are four important steps to the saved criminal's conversion. Looking carefully at the four sentences in v40-42, see if you can identify them.

Luke 23:40-42 But the other criminal rebuked him.
“**Don't you fear God,**” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?
We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve.
But this man has done nothing wrong.”
Then he said, “**Jesus, remember me** when you come into your kingdom.”

9. Apply the famous questions (who, what, when, where, why, how) to Jesus' answer to the man. (Luke 23:43)

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Application

10. In the Greek “I tell you the truth” is “Amen I say to you.” (Translated as “Verily I say unto thee” in older translations) What do we make of this?
11. Was there anything that the man could have done to earn his salvation?
Does that mean that a quick death-bed prayer is all we need?
What evidence is there of the man’s sincere transformation?
12. At the beginning of the study we talked about wages, prizes and awards. Do these words in any way describe what the saved criminal received from Jesus on the cross? What would be better descriptions?
Compare Ps106:1-8 to Luke 23:42

Psalm 106:1-8 Praise the LORD.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.
Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD or fully declare his praise?
Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right.
Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people,
come to my aid when you save them,
that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones,
that I may share in the joy of your nation
and join your inheritance in giving praise.
We have sinned, even as our fathers did;
we have done wrong and acted wickedly.
When our fathers were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles;
they did not remember your many kindnesses,
and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.
Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known.

Luke 23:42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. "

13. Listen to the song “Too Small a Price” by Don Fransisco as a group and close in a time of prayer, giving thanks for the Grace revealed on the cross.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYmucQyOBuA>

This really is justification by faith alone. Notice there was no baptism, no communion, no confession, no last rites, no church membership, no good works, no praying a prayer, no walking an aisle. This man trusts in Christ alone... All he can do is trust in the work of Jesus Christ, and Jesus says that is all that it takes.

Buddy Gray

Watch this amazing clip...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJIKOVQVCE4>

Too small a price

Don Francisco

I awoke to hear the jailer turn the key, and push the door. "Get out here!", he shouted, but I stayed there on the floor, frozen in the terror that rose and filled my brain, for I knew what they intended, but I could not face the pain.

Then soldiers came into the cell and they dragged me to the yard, they threw me down before a cross and brought the whip down hard. "Carry it!", they shouted as I struggled to my feet. I put my shoulder under it, dragged it to the street.

I stumbled through a wall of screams as they drove me through the gate. It seemed that thousands lined the street, their voices filled with hate. Like a wolf pack in the night that moves in for the kill, they closed the gap and followed us as we started up the hill.

It seemed I'd barely reached the top when they grabbed me from behind. They threw the cross down under me and tied the ropes that bind, the arms close to the beam as they nailed the feet and hands, and they raised the cross up in the air and dropped it in it's stand.

Through a whirl of pain I saw the cross there next to mine, there where people all around it so I looked to read the sign. It was nailed there up above His head so the world could see the news that the man that seemed so helpless there was the King of all the Jews.

The crowd that stood around His cross made jokes about His name, they shouted, laughed and spat on Him so I joined in the game, I said, "Hey if you're a King, why don't you get us down from here?" But the taunt just sounded hollow and echoed in my ears.

He looked at me with eyes that seemed to reach into my heart, they shone a light on all my life, and tore my life apart. There was more that lay behind that gaze than simply blood and clay, but knowing was too much for me, I had to look away.

Then I chanced another look at Him as He was looking down, for the soldiers who'd just crucified us drank there on the ground, and although He spoke them quietly somehow His words came through, He said, "*Father, please*

forgive them, for they don't know what they do."

Then as if they'd heard Him speaking, the crowd began to roar, whipped to frenzy by the priests who urged them on to more, but the worse the accusations now, the plainer I could see, the guilt of the accusers not the one there next to me.

Then the man upon the other cross began to curse and swear. His voice was filled with venom as he hurled it through the air, and all the horror that was in him, and had laid his life to waste, came out in every syllable he flung in Jesus' face.

Jesus only looked at him, but something rose inside of me and in spite of all that watched us there, it couldn't be denied, because his righteousness and innocence were shining bright and strong. I just couldn't keep my silence, as the cursing still went on, I cried out, "Don't you fear the wrath of God, even at the end, you'll curse us both into the pit is that what you intend. We're only getting what we're due, we've sinned our whole lives long, but don't you talk to Him that way, He's done nothing wrong!"

Then with all my courage, in a voice not quite my own, I asked Him, "Lord remember me when you come into the throne." He answered me and even then His love was undisguised, He said, "*Before the sun has set today, you'll be with me... in Paradise.*"

Well the shouts and curses did not stop, even when the sunlight ceased, but somehow in the midst of it, my soul had been released. Though the agony continued, it was still too small a price, to be allowed to hear those words, and to die beside the Christ.

And the darkness changed to dawning. I heard the sound of voices. The air was warm around me. I stood beside a stream. And Abraham was speaking to the multitudes before him. The unfolding of the answer to our prayers and hopes and dreams.

Then far across the chasm came a rumbling like a thunder. And the Prince of Peace came shining, from His mouth the power streamed. And the walls and towers crumbled and the gates of hell went under. A thousand sang the victory! We have been redeemed!

Jesus is the Lord of all, Jesus is the Lord of all, Jesus is the Lord of all, we have been redeemed!

3. “Woman, here is your son... Here is your Mother...”

John 19:25-27 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Background Information

John constantly refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. As scholars have tried to work out what that means, they have concluded that this was probably because John was much younger than the rest of the disciples. We have indications that John was still alive in 90AD. If he was between 75-85 years old (which was a ripe old age in those days) then he would have been between 15 and 25 during Jesus' ministry. If he was younger, it would also explain why he could be at the cross, and not be arrested.

Who was at the cross?

1. Mary Magdalene (mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and John)
Jesus cast seven demons from her (Mark 16:9) and she met the Risen Christ in the Garden and took the news to the disciples in John 20.

Mark 16:9 When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had driven seven demons.

2. The mother of Jesus (John) In Matthew and Mark she is called Mary the mother of James and Joses¹. These are some of Jesus' brothers who later became believers and part of the church.
3. The mother of Zebedee's sons (mentioned by Matthew), Mark uses her name, Salome and John calls her Mary's sister. This would explain why she would feel very comfortable to ask Jesus to appoint her sons James and John to sit on His left and right hand – she was Jesus' Aunt after all!
It's John's habit not to name himself, or Mary. It would be consistent for him to call her “Mary's sister” (and not Salome) if she was his mom
4. Mary the wife of Clopas who is most likely to be one of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 (most scholars agree the Cleopas (in Lk24) is a variant of Clopas.
5. The un-named Beloved Disciple (mentioned by John)

Digging in

1. Is it common for people to think of others when they are going through suffering?

1 Joses is a variant of Joseph. If he was named after his dad, it is quite likely that the nickname was used often.

Chewing over the details

2. What do you think Jesus' Mother, Mary was going through? Have a look at Luke 2:34-35.

Luke 2:34-35 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

3. What had the response of Jesus' siblings been so far? Look at Mark 3:20-21 and Mark 6:3-4.¹

Mark 3:20-21 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

Mark 6:3-4 Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offence at him. Jesus said to them, "Only in his home town, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honour."

4. Have a look at the encounter between Jesus and Salome in Mt.20:20-28? Do you think Salome may have had a bruised ego from that encounter? How did she feel about her sons?

Matthew 20:20-28 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favour of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Application

5. What important example is Jesus setting for us if we refer to Ex.20:12?

Exodus 20:12 "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live

¹ It was only after the Resurrection that Jesus' brothers came to faith. (In 1Cor15:7 we read that the Risen Jesus appeared to James (not the disciple) He went on to become the leader of the church in Jerusalem and his brother Judas wrote the New Testament letter Jude.)

long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

6. If Jesus said only seven things on the cross, what is the significance of this saying? What does it reveal about Jesus?
7. How do you think Salome felt about her son being made someone else's child and adopting a new mother?
8. If John was as young as we think he was, what did this instruction of Jesus mean for him?
9. Why do you think Jesus placed his Mom in John's care and not in the care of one of His four brothers.
10. Why did Jesus say: "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."?
11. Think about those who have given to you unselfishly and those who have been your spiritual family.

4. "Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani?"

Mark 15:33 At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" --which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

36 One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

Digging in

1. Bearing in mind that the gospels were written in Greek. Why do you think Matthew and Mark give us what Jesus said in Aramaic?
2. By the time Jesus says this, how long has it been dark for? What do you think the explanation for the darkness was?
3. Do you know which Psalm Jesus is quoting from here?

Chewing over the details

4. Read through the above-mentioned psalm – stop at verses parallels between the cross and the psalm and discuss them.
5. Compare Psalm 139:11-12 and the rest of the Psalm to the idea of darkness as discussed above.

Psalm 139:11-12 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

6. Why is Jesus forsaken by God?

Have a look at: 2Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 12:23; Hebrews 2:9; 7:26-27; 9:11-14; 9:18-22; 1Peter 2:24; 3:18

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Deuteronomy 12:23 But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 7:26-27 Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He

sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself.

Hebrews 9:11-14 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, He went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Hebrews 9:18-22 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit...

7. So was Jesus caught by surprise? Did He not expect to be forsaken? Is this why He cries out "Why?"?

8. Was the sacrifice sufficient? Mark 15:37-39

Mark 15:37-39 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how He died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Application

9. How you ever felt forsaken?

How does this compare with Christ's forsaken-ness?

10. How does the end of Psalm 22 point to victory and give us hope?

11. Take some personal time to reflect on the lengths to which Jesus would go for us.

"5. I Thirst"

Background: It is the ninth hour (measured from sunrise, therefore 3pm) It is six hours that Jesus has been on the cross. Three in the blazing heat of midday and three in the scary oppressiveness of darkness which Jesus spoke of as being abandoned by God. Now as He reaches the final stage of His suffering, He speaks three final words. This is the first of them.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. (John 19:28)

Introduction

This is the shortest of Jesus' words on the cross. In Greek it is one four letter word – *dipsoo*. There are four aspects to this word: Jesus' humanity, prophecy fulfilled, a spiritual perspective and the work completed. We'll look at each of these...

Jesus' Humanity.

1. Have a look at the verses below and note how they depict Jesus' humanity:

Lk 2:7

"And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. "

Lk 2:52

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

Jn 4:6

Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well.

Mt 4:2

After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.

Mk 4:38

Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Mk 1:35

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.

Jn 11:33

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

Jn 11:35

Jesus wept.

2. Why is this important? Have a look at Heb 2:17-18 and Heb 4:14-16.

Hebrews 2:17-18 For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of

the people. Because He himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

3. What light does this word shed on our physical suffering?

Prophecy fulfilled.

Jesus didn't comment on His whipping or the nails through His hands and feet. His comment about thirst is not just a comment on His suffering, but a conscious fulfilling of Scripture.

4. Psalm 69 is a psalm of someone who suffers greatly. Although the author of the psalm, David, acknowledges his own sin (v.5 *You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you*), there is also a strong element of innocent suffering in the psalm. There are a number of verses that are considered to be Messianic prophecies:

<p>PS 69:3 I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God.</p>	<p>Mark15:34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"</p>
<p>PS 69:4 Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal.</p>	<p>LK 23:40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."</p>
<p>PS 69:9 for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.</p>	<p>John2:14 In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."</p>

PS 69:21 They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

John19:28 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

5. Can you imagine going through such incredible suffering and still be conscious of fulfilling prophecy? Why would Jesus do it?

6. The hyssop plant is significant¹. It was used in smearing the blood on the door frames during Passover (Ex12:22) In Leviticus 14:1-7, which is a ritual for cleansing infectious skin diseases, there are two birds (one is killed and one is released – symbolising death and resurrection) water and blood mixed, cedar wood (representing the cross) and hyssop. Hyssop is also mentioned in David's great psalm of confession (Ps51:7 "Cleanse me with Hyssop")

Exodus 12:22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning.

Leviticus 14:1-7 The LORD said to Moses, "These are the regulations for the diseased person at the time of his ceremonial cleansing, when he is brought to the priest: The priest is to go outside the camp and examine him. If the person has been healed of his infectious skin disease, the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the one to be cleansed. Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot. He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields.

Psalms 51:7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

A Spiritual Perspective

7. Do you think there is a connection between Ps42:1-4 and Jesus' thirst?

Psalms 42:1-4 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.

1 An aromatic plant (*Origanum maru*) of the mint family with a straight stalk (see Jn 19:29 "I am thirsty.") and white flowers. The hairy surface of its leaves and branches held liquids well and made it suitable as a sprinkling device for use in purification rituals (NIV Study Bible)

8. Have a look at the thirst described in Mt.5:6. In what sense is this true of Jesus? (It might help to look at Jn.4:34 too)

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

9. Have a look at Jn.4:13-14 and Jn.7:37-39. Do you think it was an accident that it is John who also records that Jesus said "I Thirst"?

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 7:37-39 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The Work Completed

10. Have a look at what Jesus said to the disciples at the Last Supper in Mt 26:29 (*I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.*"). If you look at the four gospel accounts, Jesus is offered wine at various points:

- The Soldiers offer him wine mixed with gall (Mark says Myrrh¹) which is a powerful narcotic. Jesus refuses it.

Matthew 27:34 There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, He refused to drink it.

Mark 15:23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but He did not take it.

- During the crucifixion the soldiers mock Him and offer Him wine-vinegar but He doesn't take it yet (Luke 23:36-37)

Luke 23:36-37 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

- Then at the Ninth hour Matthew and Mark record that they offer Him wine after He cried out "My God, My God..." and John gives us the full picture. Why, according to John 19:28 is Jesus willing to drink now?

John 19:28 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

1 A bitter perfume which could quite easily be described as gall. The NIV Study Bible says: Tradition says that the women of Jerusalem customarily furnished this pain-killing narcotic to prisoners who were crucified. Jesus refused to drink it because he wanted to be fully conscious until his death

Conclusion: Three kinds of thirst.

11. Jesus was thirsty for righteousness – ours. He obtained it on the cross for us. He suffered terribly: physically and spiritually – He experienced the physical and spiritual thirst of being without God which is our sin-caused lot that He carried in our place. When His Work was completed He was able to drink the wine of the new covenant.

Take some time to consider the kinds of thirst we can have.

“6. It is finished”

Note: This study has a lot of cross referencing – this demonstrates the important principle: “Scripture interprets Scripture.”

Background: It is the ninth hour (measured from sunrise, therefore 3pm) It is six hours that Jesus has been on the cross. Three in the blazing heat of midday and three in the scary oppressiveness of darkness which Jesus spoke of as being abandoned by God. Now as He reaches the final stage of His suffering, He speaks three final words. This is the second of them.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips.²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips.³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:28-30)

Digging in.

1. Death is usually a struggle and people usually fight death, straining until the last breath. John has a different perspective: He sees Jesus, not as a victim who is helplessly murdered, but as a Victor who sacrificially lays down his life.

Divide into smaller groups and review John and Matthew’s accounts in the following passages. (John 13:21-30) (Matt. 26:59-66) (John 18:1-8) (John 18:29-19:10) (John 19:17) (John 19: 25-30) Look at who is in charge in each situation. Is Jesus really a powerless victim?

John 13:21-30 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.”

His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.”

Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

“What you are about to do, do quickly,” Jesus told him, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Matthew 26:59-66 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' "

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to Him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

John 18:1-8 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and He and His disciples went into it.

Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"I told you that I am He," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go."

John 18:29-19:11 (selected) So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

"If He were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed Him over to you."

Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge Him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death He was going to die would be fulfilled.

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against Him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

... As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

John 19:17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

John 19:25-30 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When He had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, He bowed his head and gave up His spirit.

Chewing over the details

The Greek for the word "completed" in v.28 and the word "finished" in v.30 is the word "Tetelestai." It is a commercial-legal word. Archaeologists have repeatedly found it scrawled across tax receipts used in those days. In this context it means "paid in full." This word was also scrawled across the charge-sheet of a criminal who had completed his prison sentence.

There are three areas that Jesus could say had been finished:

- the fulfilment of Scripture,
- the finishing of His Work,
- and the work of saving us.

Fulfilment of Scripture:

2. Briefly Have a look at just a few of the Scriptures that were fulfilled on the cross:

Ps 41:9

Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

Ps 31:11

Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours; I am a dread to my friends-- those who see me on the street flee from me.

Ps 35:11,12

Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about. They repay me evil for good and leave my soul forlorn.

Is 53:7

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Is 53:12

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Ps 22:16,17

Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.

Ps 109:25

I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads.

Ps 22:7,8 _____
All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

Ps 22:18 _____
They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Ps 22:1 _____
My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

Ps 69:21 _____
They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

Ps 31:5 _____
Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.

Zec 12:10 _____
"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Ps 34:20 _____
he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

Is 53:9 _____
He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

The finishing of His Work

3. Have a look at the awesome focus Jesus reveals throughout His life:

When He was Twelve years old: Lk2:49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Another way of translating it is to say "about my Father's business.")

After speaking to the woman at the well: John4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

At Transfiguration: Luke 9:30-31

Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. **(It's amazing to note that the Greek word for "departure" is "Exodus" which means departure, but it also implies setting God's people free from Slavery.)**

Talking to His Disciples: Luke 12:50

But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! **(Baptism here, means immersion into suffering or the "cup of suffering to drink.)**

Work completed: John17:4

I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave me to do.

The work of saving us

4. Have a look at the following verses:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Mark 15:38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Colossians 2:13-15

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Hebrews 9:11-14: First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). 9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ ***once for all***. 11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

Application.

5. The Old Testament temple did not have a chair in it, because the priest's work was never done and the so he could never sit down. Jesus Christ is our perfect High Priest. He completed the work God sent Him to do.

Have a look at Heb8:10-12.

- Our debt has been paid
- Our prison sentence has been served

Tetelestai! It is finished!

Hebrews 8:10-12 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

No longer will a man teach his neighbour,
or a man his brother, saying,

`Know the Lord,' because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.

For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

6. How do we we try to add to Jesus work? Should we?

7. Then why do we live good lives?

8. Take time to thank Jesus for finishing His work on the cross for us.

“7.Father into Your hands I commit my Spirit.”

Luke 23:44-46 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When He had said this, He breathed his last.

Digging in.

1. Three of the words from the Cross are prayers addressed to God. Which are they and what are they about?
2. What work was completed by Jesus according to v.45?

See Rom.8:1-3a Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

3. What work was still to be completed?

1Cor15:20-26 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under his Heel.
The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Heb2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Chewing over the details

There are three key areas that need to be examined in this Word: Jesus died; the immediate effects of His death; and Jesus entrusts Himself to the Father.

4. Jesus died:

- 4.1. Read the documented evidence of His death in John 19:31-37. Why do you think it was important that no bones be broken? What was the purpose of the piercing?

John 19:31-37 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that He was already

dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

4.2. What do the Gospel writers say about Jesus' dying moment?

Mt.27:50; And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice,
He gave up His spirit.

Mk.15:37; *With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.*

Lk.23:46; Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands
I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Jn.20:30 When He had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished."
With that, He bowed his Head and gave up His spirit.

4.3. Why, in the light of Jn.10:17-18a is this important?

Jn.10:17-18a The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down My life--only
to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own
accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

5. The Immediate Effects of His Death.

5.1. Some significant things happened at Jesus death, read Mt27:51-54 and Lk.23:48 and then list the significant events:

Mt27:51-54 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from
top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. 52 The tombs broke
open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.
53 They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went
into the holy city and appeared to many people. 54 When the centurion
and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all
that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the
Son of God!"

Lk.23:48 When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw
what took place, they beat their breasts and went away.

5.2. Which of the above events took place in Ex.19:18-19, at the giving of the Old Testament Law, and what is the significance?

Ex.19:18-19 Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD
descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a
furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the
trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God

answered him.

6. Jesus entrusts Himself to the Father.

6.1. Have a look at the passage (Ps31:1-5) that Jesus is (once again) fulfilling through His utterance. While Jesus does not need to be redeemed (He is without sin) He entrusts His Spirit – the very essence of His life – to the Father. Take note of the phrases and words of trust in psalm.

Ps.31:1-5

In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge;
Let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness;
Turn Your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.
Since You are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of Your name lead and guide me.
Free me from the trap that is set for me,
for You are my refuge.
Into Your hands I commit my spirit;
redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth.

Application.

7. Warren Wiersbe suggests that we can look at Jesus' Death from the following perspectives:

- Jesus really, actually, physically died for us.
- He died willingly: His life wasn't taken – He gave it.
- He died victoriously: He died to become the first-fruit of the Resurrection
- He died in confident trust in His Father

Discuss these points in the group.

8. Take time to reflect on how the hope of the “tasting of death” that Jesus did, fills us with hope.