

Remnant Life Church
March 31, 2019
Words Spoken from the Cross

Pt. 1

Luke 23:26-34

- We have come to one of the most important times of year on the church calendar
- The Jews have a very full church calendar-some of the major ones
 - March 21 – Feast of Lots or Purim (celebrates the saving of the Jewish people through the efforts of Queen Esther in the Persian Empire under King Xerxes – Esther)
 - April 19-27 – Feast of Passover (commemorates the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt – Exodus)
 - June 8-10 - Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (offerings of thanks for the summer wheat harvest originating as the Feast of First Fruits in the Pentateuch)
 - Sept 30-Oct 1 - Feast of Trumpets or Rosh Hashana (the Jewish New Year)
 - Oct 9 – The Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur (the most solemn and holy day of the year)
 - Oct 14-20 – The Feast of Tabernacles (commemorating the 40-year journey of the nation of Israel in the desert)
 - Dec 23-30 – Feast of Dedication or Hannukah (a Jewish holiday celebration observing the victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid kingdom oppressive rule around 165 BC. It was ignited, in part, by the ruling general, Antiochus who had a pig sacrificed on the altar of the temple defiling it with the blood of an unclean animal. In the revolt they removed the Greek pagan deities that had been put up in the temple, again, defiling the people's place to worship God)
- While the Protestant church does not celebrate specific feasts we do highlight specific times of the year
 - The death of Jesus on the cross was the beginning of the fulfillment of His coming to earth
 - I say beginning because His death was not the end
 - His resurrection, defeating death, hell, and satan was the moment of victory for each of us as the final sacrifice had been made for the forgiveness of our sins
- Over the next few weeks leading up to Resurrection Sunday, I want us to look at some of the words Jesus spoke from the cross
- Sermon in April 2014 called First Words
 - One point made that first words are very important
 - So are last words
 - Jesus' last words from the cross are of great importance
- If you read the crucifixion account in the 4 gospel books of the NT you will find 7 statements or questions spoken by Jesus in His last earthly hours of ministry
 - Earthly because He spoke to people again for 40 days after His resurrection
 - But He was then in His supernatural physical body

- The first this morning is a sentence Jesus spoke from the cross that we read in the Gospel of Luke

READ – Luke 23:26-34

The world today is filled with great anger, evil, and hate

- This is not to say there is not good, and joy, and evidence of God as well
- But we hear things every day that should shock us at the depths people have fallen in the way they treat one another
- Perhaps you have experienced something like that

And so an important question for you, as a Christian is, how do we forgive what may feel or seem unforgivable?

- These first words of Jesus from the cross provide the answer through a roadmap we should follow

1. Father

- a. Jesus could forgive because of His close intimate relationship with the Father
- b. This word in Aramaic (the spoken language of Jesus) was Abba
 - i. That word is translated as Daddy or Papa
 - ii. It is a word of close affection
 - iii. **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.”*
 - iv. Jesus did not try and engage anyone else until He spoke to His Father first – how many do we talk to before going to God with our situation or problem?
 - v. Emotions and our responses to them is what leads us to act in ways we should not, say things...
 - vi. Only if we walk closely with the Father will we have the capacity to forgive
- c. If you are in a situation that you are just mad; anger that causes you to act out...
 - i. Before you say a word or do anything take it to the Father first!
 - ii. Adult tantrums
 - iii. Count to 10? 50? 100?
- d. It is a surrender of your emotion, your will, your mind and reasoning to God that is going to bring you to the place of forgiving

2. Forgive them

- a. Consider what Jesus was asking God to forgive
 - i. He is first betrayed by one of those on His closest group of friends and followers (**Matt 26:14-15**)
 - ii. He is then abandoned by all those who swore they would stand beside Him regardless of what happened (**Matt 26:56**)
 - iii. He endured 6 illegal trials where He was railroaded through a legal system totally ignored (**Matt 26; Mark 15; Luke 22,23; John 18**)
 - iv. In that time, he was spat on, slapped, and beaten – and those were the supposed spiritual and religious leaders who did that (**Mark 14:65**)

- v. After He was condemned he was lashed, called flogging, designed to shred the flesh from the body by having pieces of bone and pottery tied to the end of the strands of the whip (Matt 27:26)
- vi. He is again beaten and a crown of thorns (*Euphorbia milii* - 1 to 1 1/2 inches in length) pressed down on the tender flesh of the scalp (John 19:2)
- vii. He has been experiencing a massive amount of blood loss by this time
- viii. He is forced to carry the heavy crossbeam laid over the raw flesh of his shoulders and back for about a mile to Golgotha (John 19:17)
 - 1. His strength gives out and an innocent bystander named Simon of Cyrene (modern day Libya) is pulled out of the crowd to carry it (Luke 23:26)
- ix. Once there he is laid on the cross and 8-10 inch spikes are driven through his wrists and feet
 - 1. Crucifixion was a method of execution in use long before the Romans perfected it
 - 2. Many of those to be crucified never made it to the cross as they would die from loss of blood or shock in the time leading up
 - 3. Those that did die slowly of asphyxiation since the position they were in did not allow them to fill their lungs
 - a. Death could take hours or even days
 - 4. The only way to get a breath was to “stand” on the spike
 - 5. This is why the legs of the thieves were broken to speed up their deaths (John 19:31-33)
- b. Jesus had every right to cry out in despair
 - i. He could have been angry
 - ii. He could have, justifiably, been self-centered in these agonizing hours but He was completely “other-centered”
 - iii. He asked His Father to forgive them
- c. Who was “them?”
 - i. Most obviously the Roman soldiers who had flogged Him, beaten him with their fists and shafts of their spears, mocked Him, and nailed Him to the cross
 - ii. Perhaps it was the Jewish leaders who had opposed Him for the past 3 years in every way they could to thwart His message of love, kindness, and forgiveness as well as paid Judas the 30 pieces of silver.
 - iii. Was He speaking of Herod and Pilate who, in their weakness, only did what would save their own political careers?
 - iv. What about the disciples who all deserted Him?
 - v. Maybe the crowd, most if not all who had probably heard Jesus speak His message of love, who came to satisfy a morbid curiosity and watch the spectacle?
 - vi. Or perhaps it was for us.
 - vii. If you believe this morning that Jesus dying on the cross was for the forgiveness of your sins then Jesus was praying for you and for me that day.

3. They do not what they are doing
 - a. This part of the prayer does not actually make much sense
 - i. The soldiers were professional men who had executed hundreds if not thousands of people before Jesus – surely they knew what they were doing
 - ii. The Jewish leaders not only knew what they were doing but they had been plotting how to do it ever since Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead (*John 11:53*)
 - iii. Had not the mob just cried out to Pilate, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” (*Matt 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19*)
 - iv. And what about you and what about me? Are we not aware of what we have done and what we continue to do in sin?
 - b. No one is innocent!
 - c. Yet Jesus pleads to the Father on their behalf on the basis of ignorance - yet how can that be?
 - i. It is because they were then, as are we still today, ignorant of the full extent of our sinful actions and what they do
 1. Heard me say many times, ‘sin will always cost you more than you want to pay, take you places you did not want to go, and keep you longer than you wanted to stay’
 2. The effects of sin are far reaching in your life and the lives of others
 - ii. Paul wrote in *1 Cor 2:8*, *None of the rulers of this age understood it (speaking of God’s wisdom) for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*
 - d. The soldiers thought this man was just another common criminal
 - e. The religious leaders thought they were ridding themselves of a heretic and an obvious imposter who threatened their power and position
 - f. The mob was confused and easily manipulated as they had just a few days earlier welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with shouts of Hosanna
 - g. And what about us this morning?
 - i. How easy is it for us to simply dismiss the sinful actions of our lives?
 - ii. We call it a slip-up, a mistake, I just couldn’t help it, I messed up, that wasn’t good, my bad
 - iii. In reality, we know exactly what we are doing from the moment the thought comes into our head
 - h. The truth is...we are no better than the soldiers, the Jewish leaders, or the mob – we desperately need God’s forgiveness!

Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing.

- These words were spoken for you and for me
- And because we have been and are forgiven, we must speak these same words when others hurt us
- When you are hurt by someone, they do not fully understand what you are feeling or experiencing
- So in a way, they don’t know what they are doing either...just like you and just like me

- Parable of the ungrateful servant
 - **READ** – **Matt 18:21-35**

Examining these first words spoken by Jesus from the cross should do several things

- First, they should bring us to our knees in gratitude and humility for what Jesus did for each of us
- Second, they should require us to always be acutely aware of how we treat those who might do us harm – do we forgive as we have been forgiven?
 - *...forgive us our trespasses (or sins) as we forgive those who trespass (or sin) against us...* (**Matt 6:9-10**)
- Finally, they should impact how we treat the people in our lives every day. A person who is forgiven should live a life that reflects the heart of gratitude and a desire to forgive quickly.