

# ***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **MORE ABOUT JESUS LESSONS** **“Jesus’ Statements on the Cross”**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

If you had just seven dying statements to make, what would they be? If you wanted to leave seven lasting impressions on someone, what would you say? What would you say to your friends? What would you say to your family? What would you say to all those who would hear your words in years to come? What would you say to leave a lasting impression on their minds? Today we are going to be studying the seven statements that Jesus made on the cross. Because we know that Jesus was in great agony and in great pain, and because we know that every breath He took was a great feat, we know that these statements that Jesus made were very important and very powerful. Today, I want to analyze these statements and look at each one of them. We will see what Jesus wanted to leave lingering in certain people’s minds, and we also are going to notice what practical lessons we can learn from these statements made by the Savior on the cross.

The first statement is found in Luke 23:34. This statement shows the great forgiveness that Christ had. Jesus is on the cross. They have just placed Him there. His executioners cried out “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” They beat Him. He was in great pain and agony during His trip to Golgotha. But then He found Himself upon the cross. And what would He say to these people who had just driven the nails into His hands? What would He say to these people who had just placed the nails in His feet? Here is what He said, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.” Talk about an amazing Individual—One Who was possessed of great love and Whose very core was forgiveness! That is what Jesus was like. Remember that these people had spit on Him. These people had taken their hands and hit Him. These were people who mocked Him, put a crown of thorns on His head, and said, “Prophecy to us so that if You are the King we can follow you.” They placed a purple robe on His body. They beat Him. Jesus had just been dealt the most amazing agony and pain by these very people. And what did Jesus say? Did He say, “Father, send them all to Hell”? No, He said, “Father, **forgive them** for they do not know what they do.” Talk about moving statements! This certainly is one of them.

On behalf of some of His greatest enemies—the very people who were killing Him—Jesus begged the Father that they would be forgiven. Was Jesus asking that they be forgiven in disregard of the Word of God? Absolutely not! Jesus was saying, “When these people come to know Me after My death, and as they come to obey the Gospel, forgive them. Do not hold the sin of killing Me against them so that they cannot go to Heaven one day.” Of course, we know that the Father would not do that. All those who repent have the opportunity to come to God and be forgiven. The forgiveness of God and of Jesus Christ is one of the great themes of the Bible. Jesus could say, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do,” because His purpose in coming to this Earth was to forgive people of their sins. The Bible teaches that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Ezekiel 18:20 says, “The soul who sins shall surely die.” Isaiah taught us that it is our sins that separate us from a loving, caring God (Is. 59:1-2). Since sin is the problem,

Jesus came to annihilate sin. He came to deal a deathblow to sin and Satan by His sacrifice on the cross. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:28, He said concerning the fruit of the vine, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The text of 1 John 2:1-2 tells us that He is a propitiation [an atoning sacrifice] for our sins, but not for our sins alone, but for the sins of the whole world. We do not want what we deserve. As the psalmist pointed out in Psalm 103:10, "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities." If we got what we **deserved**, we would go straight to Hell. But that is where the forgiveness of God and Christ comes in. What we need to see is that Jesus was not just talking about His executioners. He was talking about **all people who sin** and therefore had placed Him on the cross. **Why** was Jesus on the cross? Was it just because the Jews and the Romans did not like Him? No. Jesus went to the cross for me and for you. Jesus was there because of my sins and because of yours. So when Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do," yes, that applied to the executioners and those who were doing Him great harm. But it also applies to me in that Jesus went to the cross for my sins, and the forgiveness for which He begged is the forgiveness that I am able to receive today through obedience to Him. This is taught throughout the New Testament. If we are going to be forgiven, it will be according to God's way and according to God's plan. Jesus taught us that there is a certain way to be forgiven. It is not just everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," who will be going to Heaven (Mt. 7:21), but those who **do the will of the Father** Who is in Heaven. How do we receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ? It is a process that we find in the New Testament that is very simply laid out. We must listen to the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Once we have heard the Word and believe in Jesus as God's Son, then we have to make changes in our lives. God does not forgive us and then allow us to go on living immorally or in abject disregard for His laws. We must repent. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish." Then we must also be willing to confess that the One Who died on the cross for us—Jesus—is the Son of God and that He will be the Lord of our lives. Then we must be baptized for the remission of our sins. How do we receive forgiveness? At what point do we contact the blood of Christ and have forgiveness? Saul was told in Acts 22:16, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." We are forgiven of our sins when we obey God—the culminating act being baptism, at which point we contact Jesus' blood. Jesus truly was a great Man of forgiveness.

But from the seven statements of Jesus on the cross, we also see Jesus' great love for those who are lost. The context leading up to Luke 23:43 is that Jesus is being crucified with two criminals. At first, these criminals revile Him. But then one of the criminals "changes his tune" and begins to think about more serious things. He begins to think, "**We** are here on this cross because of things we have done, but this Man is not." He begins to think about his soul and says, "Remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Look at what Jesus said in Luke 23:43. "And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" As we think about this statement, it shows us the great love that Jesus possessed, not only for this man who was going to be with Him in Paradise, but for all people. Jesus was a Man Who came to die for the lost. Luke 19:10 says, that Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." Why did Jesus suffer and hang on the cross? It was so that the whole world could be saved by obeying His will. According to 1 Timothy 2:4, God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. Jesus possessed a great love for those who were not in accord with God's will. Why did He perform miracles? Why did He spend three years of His life teaching? Why did He do all the things He did? Why did He suffer at the hands of religious hypocrites? It was because He loved the lost, and because He wanted those who are lost to go to Heaven.

There are some considerations that we need to explore when it comes to the thief on the cross who asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. This is not necessarily an example of New Testament salvation for us today. Here is why. This thief, and Jesus, both lived and died under the Old Testament. Colossians 2:14 teaches that it was at Jesus' death on the cross when Christ's will went into effect. The writer of the Book of Hebrews said that a will or testament goes into effect after someone has died (Heb. 9: 16-17). If you have a will, and you have two or three children and you want to divide your possessions equally among them, when will the children receive the benefits of your will—before or after your death? All of us know that it is “after.” When you die, the will is probated, goes into effect, and the children receive the blessings of that will. The same was true for the thief on the cross. The thief did not live in New Testament times. He lived under the Old Testament. Thus, he is not an example of New Testament conversion. Many people want to bring up the thief and say, “Here is an example of a person who did not do what you are saying we have to do, but was saved anyway—just as Jesus said.” There is no doubt that the thief was saved. But let's remember that the thief did not live under New Testament law. Today, we are going to be judged by the words of Christ. In John 12:48, Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” Jesus taught us that we must hear, believe, repent, confess, and, yes, we must be baptized in order to be saved. Jesus Himself said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16). While the example of the thief on the cross illustrates Jesus' great love for the lost, it is not a proper example, necessarily, for our conversion and salvation today. Remember Matthew 9:37-38? Jesus looked out across the people and said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Jesus looked at those people and saw them as people who needed to be saved because they were lost and needed to hear the Gospel. If you are not a Christian today, then surely one of the impressions that Jesus wants to leave upon your mind is just how much He loves you as a lost individual. But if you are a Christian, then this verse ought to tell you that you need to get busy and tell others about the message of Jesus. Jesus loved the lost so much that He was willing to die on the cross of Calvary for them. We, too, then, ought to have a love for the lost. We ought to want the lost to hear the message of Jesus. Jesus commissioned us, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15, Mt. 28:18). Thus, there are applications from these texts for us as well.

We also see in the seven statements of Christ on the cross Jesus' great love for His mother. The mother of Jesus was at the base of the cross, and you can imagine the horror and agony that she was feeling as she looked up at her precious son, hanging on the cross for nothing that He had done. He died because people were angry at what He taught—even though it was the will of God. What did Jesus say to John, His disciple, as he stood beneath the cross? How did Jesus express His love for His mother? Notice what Jesus said in John 19:26. “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’” Jesus' great love for His mother was exhibited by the fact that He made the care of His mother the responsibility of the disciple whom he loved (whom we believe to be John). Jesus not only loved the lost, and not only showed great forgiveness, but He also—even with His dying breath—took care of those who were closest to Him. He took care of His mother. Why did Jesus do that? It was because that is what the Old Law (under which He had lived) taught that a person should do. Ephesians 6:1 quotes Deuteronomy 5:16, “Honor your father and mother that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.” Children had the responsibility of taking care of their fathers and mothers. They could not simply “cast them off.”

They had to provide for them. In fact, Jesus greatly condemned some of the hypocrites of His day in Mark 7 because of giving to their parents and providing for them, they said, “Cor-ban” (vs. 11). That meant, “Although we should be providing for our parents and laying up for them, we have given everything to the temple.” In other words, their parents were “out in the cold.” The people’s attitude was, “We cannot care for you because we have sacrificed everything for God.” Jesus said, “No, that is not the way it ought to be. You need to take care of your father and mother as well.” There is a principle to be learned here. Parents ought to have a great love for their children. And children ought to have a great love and respect for their parents. Parents, do you really realize the importance of your children? Psalm 127:3 teaches us that children are a gift from God. Children, do you realize the importance and responsibility you have to your parents? Although they nourished and cherished you in the younger years of your lives, sometimes when the roles are reversed, children do not want to take care of their parents. Children need to “be there” for their parents. They need to provide for them and ensure that they are cared for in this life. That is what true love is all about.

Another statement that we see from Jesus on the cross shows that Jesus truly is the Sin-bearer for all mankind. Leading up to this statement, we see that Jesus has suffered greatly. We find in Mark 15:34 that Jesus, in one of His last, dying breaths, cried out, “‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” There is a great question asked here, and no doubt Jesus—in pain and agony—knew why that feeling separation from God had to be part of the greatest agony of being on the cross. What was one of the worst things about being on the cross? Was it that He was unable to breathe, that His lungs were filling up with fluid, or that He was starting to die? Probably not. One of the greatest horrors of the cross for Jesus that we can imagine was the separation from God that He felt because of sin. John 17:1-3 teaches that Jesus and God had been together for all eternity. That is something that is hard for us to understand. Imagine being with someone **always**—and then being separated, not for something that **you** had done, but because of the sins of other people. We know that Jesus was separated from God because the Bible teaches in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us.” The text of 1 Peter 2:24 teaches that Jesus “bore our sins in His own body.” Jesus took our sins and bore them. Habakkuk 1:13 tells us, “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.” Jesus has our sins placed on His body, and the Bible says that God is holy and pure and cannot look upon sin. If Jesus had the sins of the world upon His own body, and if God cannot look at sin, then it is logically true that God was separated from His own Son because of our sins. What does this teach us about Christ? It teaches us once more the great love He had in bearing our sins on the cross. Sin is what separates us from God. But Jesus was so dedicated to saving mankind that He even was willing to be separated from the God of love and life for a moment. That separation was not forever. God and Christ were once again reconciled in Heaven. But sin did separate Christ from God because Christ loved us so much.

We also see in one of Christ’s statements on the cross His humanity. We often think about the deity of Christ, His great power, and how He was Immanuel, which is translated “God with us.” But we also need to realize that Jesus was 100% human as well. The humanity of Christ is seen in the statement that Jesus made, as recorded in John 19:28. The Bible says that Jesus, nearing the end of His time on the cross, “knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’” Jesus was human. When you think about Him on the cross, do not think that He did not feel the pain. When the nails were driven into His wrists, do not think that it did not hurt. It hurt Him, just like it would hurt anyone else. When that cross dropped into the ground, and He felt the pressure of His own weight upon His arms and legs, that was something that hurt Jesus just like it would

hurt us. When Jesus said, "I thirst!," we see His humanity. Yes, He was God. There is no doubt about that. But when Jesus came to this Earth, suffered, and died, He felt pain—just like we feel pain today. Jesus was human. Remember Hebrews 4:15? He was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Here is what makes this such a powerful point. Jesus, being God, "humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Jesus left the glory of the halls of Heaven to come and suffer as a human, to feel the pain that we feel, and to suffer like we suffer so that we could have the hope of going to Heaven. Jesus' humanity is something that ought to encourage each one of us. If Jesus, being fully human, could defeat sin, and could experience pain, agony, and rejection, then His example can encourage us to do the same thing. When we sin, we can pick ourselves up and go on. We can ask for God's forgiveness and we can start again. When there is pain our lives, or when we experience sickness or death, because of the example of Jesus we can be encouraged to keep on striving to do right. Revelation 2:10 says that we need to be faithful unto death, and then we will receive the crown of life.

Another principle that we find in the statements of Jesus on the cross is His great desire to fulfill the will of God. One of the lasting impressions that Jesus has left upon the minds of the world is that He—even in great agony and pain—was still committed to doing God's will. In John 19:30, we find this statement about Jesus' fulfillment of the will of God: "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." Jesus hung in there right up to the end. Those final, dying words had to be words of comfort and encouragement even to Jesus Himself. "I have done the will of God. I have stayed the course. I have given Myself as a sacrifice. Father, it is finished! Everything we have been working on for all eternity is now available to mankind." Those words probably were great words of joy for the Savior, because all the way back to the time of Genesis God had been working on a way to save man. Now, that salvation—at its climactic point—was finished. What a wonderful thought for us today. It expresses to us Jesus' desire to fulfill the will of God. It teaches us that, like Jesus, no matter what cost may come to us, no matter what we have to give up, and no matter what we have to endure, we need to make sure that we fulfill God's will. For the Christian, that entails living faithfully even unto death. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Jesus said in Luke 9:62, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." In Revelation 2:10, Jesus said, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Thus, for the child of God the statement, "It is finished!," teaches us that we need to endure to the end if we are going to be saved. We must never give up. For the person who has never obeyed the Gospel, Jesus' statement teaches that such a person must "get on board" with God's plan. If God's plan was finished by Jesus on the cross, then that means that it is available to us today. It means that everything Jesus suffered, He suffered so that we could have the hope of Heaven. God wants nothing more than for us to obey His will and be a Christian.

Another statement that we see while Jesus is on the cross deals with the submission that Jesus Christ had. There is no doubt about. Jesus was 100% human. But Jesus was also 100% God. He was God in the flesh. He came to this world, and He had great power and great authority. Jesus said that if He wanted to, He could call down legions of angels during His time of suffering and trial in the Garden of Gethsemane and His subsequent crucifixion. But He did not do so because He was submissive to God. Listen to what Jesus said in Luke 23:46 (the last of these seven statements). "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last." Even right up to the last moment, Jesus submitted Himself to the will of God. "Father, into Your hands [under Your control and unto Your submission] I commit My spirit. That suggests to us the submission and humility that Jesus had. He was willing to

follow and obey the will of God. Even if right up to the point His dying—right up to His very last breath—Jesus submitted Himself to the will of God, then we today need to do the same thing. Luke 14:11 says, “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Are you submissive to the will of God like Jesus was? Do you submit into God’s hands? Do you say to God, “God, I realize that I cannot save myself. I realize that I cannot live my life by myself in a way that pleases you. I want you to take my life and make it what You would have it to be.” Are you willing to then live your life according to the Bible? If not, then you do not have the mindset that Jesus wanted you to have. But you can do so. You can do so by obeying the will of God today.

Becoming a Christian is not something that is difficult. It is something that we find in the New Testament that is very simple. We need to know that we are in sin and that we cannot save ourselves. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 10:23, “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” We cannot save ourselves. We must realize that we are in sin, turn to God, and let Him save us. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). We then must be willing to follow up on that by doing what God says we must do. There are five essential steps in the plan of salvation. One first must be willing to hear the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We know that faith is essential, because Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” We get faith by hearing the Word of God. Once we have heard that Word, then we are convicted to believe that Jesus is the Savior and the Son of God. Jesus said in John 8:24, “Unless you believe that I am He, you will surely die in your sins.” Belief is essential, but believing is not all that we have to do. Jesus also taught that we must be willing to repent. In Luke 13:3,5, Jesus said, “Unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” We must change our ways. To repent means that we turn from sin and turn to God. Repentance is a changed will that leads to a changed way of life. Then we must confess that Jesus is God’s Son. Romans 10:10 says, “With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” We must make the good confession of Acts 8:37 when Philip said to the Ethiopian nobleman, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And the Ethiopian answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” We must confess Christ as Savior. And then we must be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. The text of 2 Timothy 2:10 says that salvation is “in Christ.” If salvation is in Christ, then we must ask ourselves, “How do we get into Christ where salvation is found?” Aren’t we thankful that the Bible answers that question for us? In Galatians 3:27, and in Romans 6:3-4, the Bible says that “as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” If salvation is in Christ, and if we need to get into Christ, we need to know that it is baptism that puts us “in Christ.” Baptism is essential to salvation. Peter put it this way in 1 Peter 3:21, “Baptism does now also save us.” I hope that today these seven statements of Jesus will leave a lasting impression on you and help you live closer to Christ. If you are not a Christian, I hope that the realization of what Jesus did and said for you will cause you to obey the Gospel and have the hope of one day living with God forever.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## **STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “JESUS’ STATEMENTS ON THE CROSS”**

1. How many statements did Jesus make while hanging on the cross at Calvary?
2. What important trait of Christ’s life is contained in the statement that He made from the cross, as recorded in Luke 23:34?
3. According to Romans 3:23 and Ezekiel 18:20, why do we as humans need God’s forgiveness?
4. What did Isaiah say (Isaiah 59:1-2) that sin does?
5. What important point do we find in the psalmist’s statement in Psalm 103:10?
6. According to Matthew 7:21, who will end up going to Heaven?
7. Why, according to Luke 19:10, did Jesus come to Earth?
8. What, according to 1 Timothy 2:4, does God want?
9. When, according to Hebrews 9:16-17, did Christ’s will (the New Testament) go into effect?
10. When, according to Colossians 2:14, did the Old Testament become of no effect?
11. By what, according to John 12:48, will all people one day be judged?
12. What did the Jews mean when, in Mark 7:11, they said, “Corban!”
13. What did Jesus’ statement on the cross (recorded in Mark 15:34), “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,” mean?
14. According to 1 Peter 2:24, what did Jesus do for us?
15. According to the teaching found in Habakkuk 1:13, why did God forsake Jesus when He was on the cross?
16. Jesus’ statement in John 19:28 (“I thirst!”) tells us something about Jesus. What does it tell us?
17. According to Paul’s statement in Philippians 2:8, what did Jesus’ obedience to God’s will cause to happen to Him?
18. According to Revelation 2:10, what could our obedience to Christ today possibly cause to happen to us?
19. What important point about humankind is contained in Jeremiah 10:23?
20. According to Paul’s comments in 2 Timothy 2:10, where is salvation found?