

## The Final Words of Jesus – “Father, Forgive Them...” Luke 23:33-37

Picture this scene: Jesus has just been nailed to the cross...

- The Roman soldiers who just drove nails through Jesus' hands and feet are now throwing dice, gambling for his clothes...
- The Jewish leaders are standing there with their arms crossed, with a strange expression of satisfaction on their faces as they mock him...
- **The crowds are hurling insults and taunting him...**
- The disciples have scattered, and Peter has denied him 3x's...

If you were Jesus, what would your reaction be towards the people there?

What was Jesus' reaction? His first 3 words were, **“Father, forgive them...”**

**“Father”** – Jesus' response was to pray to His heavenly Father.

Rather than trying to justify himself, or return insult for insult, He simply responds with prayer! Is that our go to response?

**Jesus made His prayer verbal!**... He intended for the people to hear it!  
Spoken words would have been a struggle... but **He was still instructing!**

What would it look like for us to respond first with prayer before speaking any other words to those who accuse/persecute us?

Prayer is for us... We need God's help!

Prayer is for those we are praying for... They need God's help!

Prayer is for all who overhear it... We all need this faith perspective!

**“Forgive”** – Jesus chose these first words carefully... **He led with forgiveness!**

Even when no one was asking to be forgiven...

Even when the people in the crowd didn't deserve it...

Even when justice demanded a different response...

Is this how we would respond if this happened to us?

Did the people really **“not know what they were doing?”** Yes & no!

But Jesus knew exactly what He was doing... This is why He came...  
**To provide forgiveness for sins & to make reconciliation possible...**

**“Them”** – **Who is the “them” in this prayer of Jesus?**

Did the “them” include the Roman soldiers... the Jewish leaders... the people in the crowd... the disciples... Peter... **John 1:9-13**

**“To all who did receive him, who believed in his name...”**

**His forgiveness was extended to all, but only effectual to those who believe!**

We too, who believe in Jesus by faith today, are included in His prayer!

If we have been included in the “them”, then we need to heed the instruction of this prayer as well... **We can't be the recipients of God grace and forgiveness & not also extend grace and forgiveness to others!** Even if...

*“There Your mercy and Your grace was free... There Your pardon multiplied to me... There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary!”*

*“I'm forgiven because You (Jesus) were forsaken... I'm accepted, You were condemned... I'm alive and well, Your Spirit lives within me... Because You died and rose again!”* Our forgiveness & acceptance is found only in Him!

*“Your forgiveness is like sweet sweet honey on my lips... Like the sound of a symphony to my ears... Like Holy water on my skin!”*

*“Amazing love how can it be, that You my King would die for me... Amazing love, I know it's true, It's my joy to honor You... In all I do, help me honor you!”*

*“I don't want to abuse your grace... God I need it every day... It's the only thing that ever really makes me want to change!”*

*“Savior I come... Quiet my soul... Remember redemptions hill, where Your blood was spilled for my ransom... Everything I once held dear, I count it all as loss!”*

*“Lead me to the cross where your love poured out... Bring me to my knees, Lord I lay me down... Rid me of myself I belong to You... Lead me to the cross!”*

At the cross there is found forgiveness to all who would receive it by faith!

At the cross there is found strength & ability to forgive others as Jesus did!

Have you received God's forgiveness? What's holding you back? **Who do you need to forgive, in light of all you have been forgiven?** \_\_\_\_\_

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