



Passion
Part 5 – The Death of Jesus
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We're in John 19: 17 as we talk about the death of Jesus today. **17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.** Today, we are talking about the man, Jesus Christ, the man on the middle cross. What we want to do today is walk through the seven statements that Jesus made from the cross, and what those seven statements say about Jesus. We're going to look at what the death of Jesus accomplished for you and for me and for our salvation. But in this moment and in this scene, as we step into the crucifixion of Jesus, he is still speaking and teaching and leading. These seven statements tell us so much about our Savior. We're going to walk through each statement and what it says about Jesus as we learn today, and step into this scene.

We're going to start with **the first statement** from Luke 23: 32-34. **32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.** Here's where we get the first statement of Jesus. **34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."** We have to be very clear here what Jesus is saying and what he is not saying. Here, Jesus is speaking of their ignorance, not their innocence. Let me say that again. He's speaking of their ignorance – they don't fully understand what they are doing, but they are not innocent.

Forgiveness is not needed for innocent people. forgiveness is needed for guilty people. To remind each and every one of us in here, before you place faith in Jesus, the scripture says that you are of your father the devil and a child of darkness. For there is none righteous, no not one. For the wages of sin is death. We all stand before God, guilty in our sin. We're not innocent from birth. Sometimes, to get that we have to understand the scripture. We are conceived in iniquity. Jesus is saying, "Father, forgive them." So, this is a declaration of guilt, but it's also understanding that Jesus forgives. And with his death on the cross, he brings us salvation. **And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.**

Statement 1 – Jesus intercedes for us. The first thing we want to learn about Jesus today, from this statement, is Jesus intercedes for us. If you are believer in Christ Jesus – you place faith alone in Christ alone – you need to know that at this very moment, Jesus is interceding for you. He's interceding for me. We talk about the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus next week. We talk about the ascension, but often the intercession gets missed, the intercession that Jesus makes for you and for me.

If you are not a believer – you've never place faith alone in Christ alone – you need to understand the scripture says there is but one mediator between God and man and that is the person of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8: 34 says, **34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.** We are guilty, but Jesus saves. We are guilty, Jesus forgives. We're not innocent and, here, he is talking clearly about their ignorance. They didn't have the full understanding of who they were killing. They acted in this ignorance.

The second statement in is continuing in Luke 23: 24-43 - **39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"**

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." The wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. **"But this man has done nothing wrong."** Jesus is the only perfect one to walk the earth.

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

Statement 2 – Jesus prepares a place for us. 43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Today, this second statement teaches us something great about Jesus. Follower of Jesus, Jesus is preparing a place for us. He said in John 14: 3 - **3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**

There is a clip online , it's an older clip from Alister Beg. It's called *Man on the Middle Cross*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDI8euKhd3U>. This is one of those clips you will never get tired of watching. You'll never get worn out with this clip. It gives me chills when I watch it like it did the first time I watched it years ago. It paints such a beautiful picture of this thief on the cross when he enters paradise. Why do you need to say anything after that? "The man on the middle cross said I could come."

Statement 3 – Jesus cares for us. John 19: 25-27 – To really set this statement up, the agony and the suffering of our Savior and what he's going through... I don't know how you are when you're sick, but when I'm sick – and not even badly sick – I think of nobody else. You know what I'm talking about. Your needs mean nothing to me. How many of you know what I'm talking about? You just want to get better.

We have to step into this scene – the agony and the suffering of our savior. **25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son,"** The third statement from the cross. **27 and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.**

In the middle of this suffering and this agony, Jesus takes the time to make sure his mother is cared for. This is an important understanding for those who are brand new to the church or maybe brand new to the scene of the cross. We need to understand **Jesus cares for us**. This is something to reconcile for those that are like, "He is the creator and sustainer of the universe. He is holding it all together. He is all

powerful, certainly he doesn't care about my little needs." I am here to tell you: Yes. He. Does. "So, with all that takes and all the power that he has, certainly he doesn't want my little whining or my little complaining or the things I get frustrated with or the things I need help with or the things I just want to take to him and be like this is going on..." He cares for you. The suffering servant. The suffering Savior cares for you.

I don't know if you saw this picture. It's been turned in to a meme. Some of the memes have like a mocking tone to them. It's this picture of Mel Gibson sitting on set of *The Passion of the Christ*. Maybe you've seen the meme that says, "This is me telling my problems to Jesus." The tone of some of them that you might have seen, or the way people comment on it is "Don't bother. He's got too much going on. He's saving the world from sin." I'm here to tell you, that's a terrible meme. Jesus wants you to bring your cares to him. He wants you to bring your struggles. He wants you to bring your difficulties. He cares for you.

Statement 4 – Jesus carried the weight of our sin. Matthew 27: 45-46 – **45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.** This was a supernatural occurrence. **46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").** It's this great statement of agony as he takes on the sins of the world and the Father turns his back on his Son. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" The thing we learn from this statement is that **Jesus carried the weight of our sin.** It's very important to understand he was sinless. He was the perfect Son of God.

2 Corinthians 5: 21 helps us understand this. **21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** With his death on the cross, he carried every sin you've committed up until this very moment. He carried the sin that you will continue to commit. He carried that, and that weight is why he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Statement 5 – Jesus understands our weakness. The fifth statement, as we come to the end of his crucifixion, as we come to him drawing his last breath, we read in John 19: 28-29, **28 Later, knowing that everything had now been finished...** Everything foretold of the earthly life of Jesus had been accomplished in this moment and up to this moment, **...and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."** Just how profound this is. The living water, Jesus, saying, "I am thirsty." We see that he is fully God, yes. And he is fully man. This is a statement of Jesus and his humanity. **29 A jar of wine vinegar...** This was different than the first wine he was offered that would have numbed him, and he wanted to be fully conscious for what he was about to do. **...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.** Why is this statement important? **Jesus understands our weakness.**

God took on flesh. There is so much theology in these statements and what has been accomplished through the death of Jesus on the cross for us.

Hebrews 4: 15 says, **15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses...** Empathy is saying you are hurting and that matters to me. And we have one... Going

back to Jesus cares for me. He understands what we go through. **...but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.** The sinless one.

Statement 6 – Jesus fulfilled the prophesy of scripture and the will of his Father. The sixth statement from the cross in John 19: 30 - **30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.”** It’s very important for us to understand. He is not saying, “I am finished,” He is saying, “It is finished.” **With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.** We learn from this that **Jesus fulfilled the prophesy of scripture and the will of his Father.**

Statement 7 – Jesus gives us access to the Father. Luke 23: 44-46 - **44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 for the sun stopped shining.** Catch this in Verse 45 **And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.** This is now making a statement of access to the father. **46 Jesus called out with a loud voice...** This is his final statement. **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.**

What great care this is for us in Jesus. With his death, with this scene that we have, gives us access to the Father. Complete and full access to the Father.

If you’ve been in an airport, you have seen this scene (a picture of the lines to board a plane – one says Priority access and one says General Boarding) I think about his almost every time I see this sign because it’s like... And I’m going to really build this up so this is me thinking thoughts of people, this isn’t just me. But it’s like all the gems like diamond, ruby, emerald, your medallion, successful people, you come over here and you take that red carpet ride.

You people who have done nothing with your life, you are general boarding. You’re just general boarding. You know what? Priority boarding is just groups one through four. Raise your hand if you’ve ever been Group nine. Do something. Let’s move you up to Group seven or eight. I don’t know what we have to do. I’ve been in this scene I don’t know how many times. I’ve been with a whole family... You’ve seen Tim Hawkins; he jokes about this too. He’s like, by the time you get to Groups seven, eight, and nine, people are walking on with their chickens and like... You unwashed masses, you go to the right. You stay off our red carpet.”

But our culture can get wrapped up in this. I’ve been there, standing in line at General Boarding at some gates where they only have one lane. They’ll say the number that’s boarding, and they come out and they’ll close it off after they get the important people on the plane. I’m like, I have a good marriage and a good family. I feel I’ve succeeded at some things. Maybe not the things that make me medallion or highest priority ruby.

I was actually at one... and this is not a lie. I don’t know what her issue was that day, but after the super successful, elite people took the red-carpet ride onto the plane... And I’m not exaggerating. It’s only happened once in my 25 years. She actually went out before Group Five and rolled up the red carpet. I don’t know who made her mad. She put that carpet over to the side. I’m looking people at the gate going *we don’t want your feet touching. You people haven’t bathed in weeks.*

I think this is exactly how people look at the church. There are super, elite, special, commando Christians. They have studied the Bible; they know it. There is a certain way to read the Bible, there is a certain way to preach the Bible; I've been fighting those guys my whole life. And there is a certain way to do this and a certain way to do that and it's like we are groups one through four. Let me tell you, Jesus had the strongest words to say for Group One when it came to the people that thought they had the best access to God. He had his strongest words to say to them because guess what? There are no groups in the church. There are no super, elite, commando Christians.

And you go, "Oh no, no, no, that's not true. Certainly, I'm going to be way back in line from that guy who spend his life studying the Bible." No, you won't. That's called folk theology. It's bad theology for you to think your place in line is determined by the amount of money you gave to the church. No, Jesus determines your access to the Father, not your giving.

Church attendance does not determine your access to the father. Jesus gave you full and complete access to the Father. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." And there are no Groups one through nine. You're like, "Ted, that can't be. She knows the Bible better than me. Certainly, she has better access." Nope, she doesn't. "He's been a believer longer, certainly he has better access than me." Nope, he doesn't have better access. "He's a leader in the church. She's a leader in the church, certainly they have better access." Nope, they do not have better access. "Comes from a better family." Your family does not gain you access in to God's kingdom. Jesus did that with his death on the cross, and when the veil tore, that was the statement of Jesus is now your access. You have 100% access through him.

I think Billy Graham was making that exact statement. If you watched his funeral, you saw that his coffin, his casket was made by Louisiana prisoners. I thought what a great last illustration for a sermon for Billy Graham. Some of you are like, "I ain't Billy Graham." Guess what? You have the exact same access to the Father that Billy Graham had. There are people who don't buy this. "I have to get more miles, more upgrades." He was making the statement that these prisoners have the exact same access to the Father that he does. You have access.

Romans 5: 8 says, ***8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

1 Peter 2: 24 – He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

John 19; 35 – ***35 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.***

1 John 5: 13 - ***13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God...*** And this is what we want for everyone. ***...so that you may know*** You may have confidence in your walk with Jesus in knowing what he did for you. We want you to know ***...that you have eternal life.***

R.C. Sproul says, " In any church gathering, at any gathering of God's people where there are the lost and there are the believers gathered together, there will be four types of people in every gathering and only four types.

1. The one who is not saved and knows it. That person will be here in our three services today. They are not saved, and they know it and they are clear about it. They're asking question and saying, "This is my first time. I've been brought here by someone else." And you know you've never placed faith in Jesus. That today would be the day that you would leave here knowing that you repented of your sin, you repented of your ways that lead to destruction. You turned to one who was on the middle cross. And he gives you full and complete access to the Father.

2. Those that are not saved, but think they are. It's because you've been counting on your ways. Your family, your giving, your attendance, your knowledge, the good things that you've done in the community, the way you treat people. You have all sorts of reasons why you believe you're saved. You think you are, but you are not.

3. You are saved but live with doubt. This is when we can start to drift. We see it all the time. People begin drifting in their faith, they place faith in Jesus. I think you see so many of the epistles that Paul wrote where he's going back to the church and he's saying, "Don't drift." Like Jesus said in Revelation to the church at Ephesus. "You're drifting. You're doing a lot of great things still, but you've forgotten your first love." Faith drift happens all the time. People come to know the Lord, they are fired up, they are in church and in Bible study, they're praying they're reading their Bible, they're spending time with other believers. And then give it time and they start to drift away. When they begin that drift, they begin to think well maybe I'm not a Christian. We don't want you living with doubt. We want you to know that you are saved.

4. You are saved and you know it. You have confidence in it. We had these evangelists come into our church when I was growing up. I loved a lot of them, but there were a couple of them that just absolutely wore me out. I can remember getting frustrated with them at ten years old. We were a small church. They would give an altar call, the evangelist would step down, and he'd start asking people to come forward for salvation. No one would come forward. This guy would get ticked off. He was mad and you could see it all over him. I would look around and I knew everybody in there. We were all saved! Not only are we saved, but we've been saved multiple times! We've been saved and baptized and we're here Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night! But with the third or fourth verse, if no one came down, he would go after us. It wore me out.

I'm ten years old and my mouth always got me in trouble because... He'd go, "Do you know that you know that you know that you know? At ten years old, I'm going "Well I thought I knew. You put it like that, I don't know. Probably not." I'd be like, "Dad, if I go up there, can we go home? I'll take one for the team. Let's get this thing going. I'll get saved and baptized again." this was my ten-year-old brain. Looking at these guys going, "What are you doing? Why are you wanting us to doubt? That makes absolutely no sense to me. But I'm here. I decided to follow Jesus. I'm marching in the Lord's army. I'm flying o're the enemies. I'm fully here. I'm in. I've placed my faith in the man on the middle cross. His name is Jesus. Quit giving me all this garbley goop about how I'm not.

I hope we have no visiting evangelists with us today. Just do it the right way. That you may know. Your job is not to cause people to doubt. Point them to Jesus. We shouldn't end messages with just keep pointing to our works. My works are filthy rags. It's the man on the middle cross. And that's the invitation for every single one in here who has never placed faith in Jesus today. I'm not going after the believers who know. If you know, we're praising our Father in heaven. For the one who has never placed faith in Jesus, here's the invitation for you today and it's this simple: the man on the middle cross invites you to be with him for eternity. It's that simple. It's that simple that you would receive that invitation today.

Would you pray with me? I'm going to pray a prayer for those online, for those here in the room. If you've never trusted Jesus as your savior that today is the day you stop the first person and you turn to the third person because he is Jesus. Where you're at, whether that is at home or in this room or outside, repent of your sins and your ways that are leading to destruction. The wages of sin is death; let's repent of it. Cry out that Jesus is Lord, believe in your heart that he has been raised from the dead that you would be saved. Call out the name that is above every name. He invites you to spend eternity with him. He went to the cross so you could.

Father, I pray for believers who may be in drift. We've seen it a lot over the pandemic with getting out of habits and disciplines. For the one who is in drift, that that drift wouldn't be something that leads them to doubt but would just challenge them to lean more into you that we would be sure of our salvation because of what Jesus did for us. Today, we have remembered his death, we remembered his death last week as we took the Lord's Supper together and we are grateful. We are a grateful people. For the one that is not saved that today is the day of their salvation. For the one who is, that they would live with the confidence and an understanding and a gratefulness for what the man on the middle cross, Jesus Christ, did for us.

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... Amen.