

THE WORD OF TRUST

Today's message is the last part of the seven-part series called "The Seven Greatest Words of Love" we've been doing the past several weeks. We have been looking at the seven statements that Jesus made on the cross while he was being crucified. Those are the famous seven last words of Jesus.

Last words are important. When it comes to Jesus Christ, the last words of Jesus Christ are extremely important. Today we come to the last word of the last words. The very last thing Jesus said before he died on the cross. I've entitled this message, "The Word of Trust".

The Bible says it like this in Luke chapter 23.

It says, Luke 23:44-47, *"It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 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. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, 'Surely this was a righteous man'".* In the book of Matthew and the book of Mark it adds, "Surely this was the Son of God."

This is pretty amazing, that a hardened soldier would look up and say, the guy we just crucified, surely he was innocent. But something's different here. As a centurion he would have already have seen literally hundreds and hundreds of crucifixions. This is not a new thing. One of the tasks of Roman soldiers was to crucify people. And literally in those days of the Roman Empire they were crucifying hundreds a day. This is not a novel thing. They crucified criminals, they crucified political figures and things like that. So he had certainly seen hundreds of crucifixions.

But this one evidently is unlike any crucifixion he's ever seen. And this hard bitten, hardened Roman centurion, when he hears Jesus say the last of the seven phrases he says, he must have been innocent. He must have been the Son of God. Something's different here. Something's unique.

What made this crucifixion so different from all of the other ones he had seen? The seven things that Jesus had said on the cross that we've been looking at now for seven weeks. Nobody ever spoke like Jesus spoke when they were being murdered, when they were being crucified. This Roman centurion had heard Jesus say, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." He's never heard anybody being hung on a cross forgiving the executioners who are crucifying him. Yet he heard that. He had never seen anybody refuse the painkiller that Jesus was offered which Jesus refused.

He heard Jesus say the word of assurance to the repentant thief on the cross dying by him saying, "Today you'll be with me in paradise." Nobody had ever said that on a cross. Nobody had ever said the word of assurance, the word of love, the word of substitution, the word of victory – all the things we've been looking at now for seven weeks. And certainly nobody had ever shouted in his last breath on the cross, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Nobody had ever said that before.

This is very different. Folks, people don't die like this. Normal people don't die this way. Jesus actually gave us a model of how to die.

So actually there are **three characteristics of Jesus' death**. Please take a note of this. First,

1. Jesus Christ gave up his life voluntarily. Voluntarily.

When the movie The Passion came out there was a big debate: Who killed Jesus? Was it the Roman soldiers who killed Jesus? Was it the temple religious

leaders who killed Jesus? Was it the crowd who killed Jesus? The fact is who took Jesus' life?

The answer is Jesus gave up his life. He came for the purpose of dying. He had said that from the very beginning. In fact he said nobody can take my life from me. He gave it willingly for you. And believe me, if Jesus had not wanted to die on the cross because he was God in human form, it would not have happened.

In fact, here's what he said. Look up here on the screen. John chapter 10, verse 18 (NIV). Jesus said, *"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. This command I received from my Father."*

Jesus gave up his life voluntarily. The second thing

2. Jesus Christ gave up his life confidently.

Confidently. In other words he shouted the words. *"Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit."* He shouted.

Let me say this to you. I have been at the bedside of many people as they took their last breath. I will tell you this: Dying people don't shout. I've never ever heard one dying person shout. They whisper. Not one in my entire life have I ever heard shout. Because in their dying moments they don't have the strength. And usually they whisper out a few words at the very end.

And normally, certainly, at a crucifixion where you're having extreme torture and extreme punishment and in the last phase of crucifixion, a normal person wouldn't have had the strength to even shout out, beyond a weak groan.

When Jesus shouts out the final word on the cross, he's not shouting out in anger. He's not shouting out in bitterness. He's not shouting out in fear. He's not shouting out in despair. He's not shouting out in defeat. He is shouting out in victory. It is a shout of confident, convinced, rock solid trust. *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."* And he says it at the top of his voice. It's a shout of

victory and it's a shout of trust. He gave his life up voluntarily. He gave his life up confidently.

And the third thing,

3. **Jesus gave up his life trusting God.** Trusting God.

When Jesus says this phrase, "*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*" this is actually a quote from the Old Testament. In fact it's a quote from Psalm 31:5.

"Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God."

And not only is it a quote from Psalm 31:5 it's a phrase that every single Jew would know by heart. Because this is the bedtime prayer of every Jewish child. Like the prayer we learned when we were children, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, and if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take."

Without a doubt Mary probably taught this to Jesus as a little baby boy. Every Jewish child, in fact Jews would regularly pray this as the evening prayer. At the end of the day you say, "Father, I am entrusting my life, I'm entrusting my spirit, I'm committing myself into your hands." And I'm going to bed. It's a common Jewish prayer. And Jesus uses what he has seen saying every night since he was a little boy as his last words on the cross.

What's going on here? I want you to write this down. **He focused on the Father, not his pain.** In a minute, when we get into what to do in your dark days, that's one of the things you need to learn how to do. Jesus was in his darkest days. He's on the cross. It is literally physically dark. He focuses not on his pain. But he focuses on the Father and he has no fear and he has no regrets. He has just trust. Into your hands I commit my spirit. Into your hands I entrust my life.

This phrase that we're looking at today has been said by Christians ever since for 2,000 years. It's very, very common. A lot of Christians throughout history have used this phrase when they're facing danger, when they're facing persecution,

when they're facing discouragement and death. That's a phrase that has been used for literally thousands of years.

In fact the very first Christian martyr, a guy named Stephen who was stoned to death in Jerusalem for following Jesus, he says a version of what Jesus just said here. It says as they were killing him. Stephen says, "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" And that's the last thing he prayed.

Now, what do we learn from this last statement of Jesus? It's this: Every single word has an important truth. That's what I want us to look at right now.

When you are going through your darkest days there are **3 truths you need to remember.** Please take a note of these.

Number one, the first thing to remember is...

1. I HAVE A FATHER IN HEAVEN WHO LOVES ME!

I have a Father in heaven who loves me. This is the first thing you need to remember when you're going through a dark day. That's why Jesus starts his last statement on the cross with the word, "Father."

Remember a couple weeks ago we talked about that when Jesus was taking the punishment for every sin of mankind on himself he cries out, "*My God, my God.*" Remember that? "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" It's the only time in the Bible when he doesn't call God "Father." That was because he was separated, taking all of our sins on himself.

When Jesus taught us to pray he said you're to pray like this: "*Our Father, who art in heaven.*" That blew everybody's mind. Because up to this point every faith, every religion taught that God is distant. God is big, he's powerful, he's cosmic, he's mighty. He may be merciful but you certainly don't call him father.

But Jesus changed it all. He blew the stereotypes. And he said when *you* talk to God you talk to him like he's your daddy.

In fact the word he used in Aramaic, *abba*, literally means daddy, papa. It's the first word every Middle East child learns. *Abba*. Dada. Papa. It's easy to say.

So Jesus told us when you pray start with praying Father. And when Jesus is dying on the cross his last words there he starts with the word Father.

The judgment period for sin is all over. He's now reconciled to God. He's not talking to some impersonal force, some uninterested distant deity. He's talking to Father.

The Bible says this, John 16:28. Jesus said, *"I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."*

So what do we know about God since he wants us to call him Father?

The Bible says in Psalm 103, verse 13, *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."*

I don't know what you're going through today. You may be having a financial crisis, a physical crisis, a conflict in your marriage. I don't know what you're going through but I would say this: You have a heavenly Father in heaven who is close, caring, competent, capable and consistent. And he cares. If you're going through dark days you need to get your eyes off the pain and onto the Father. God who knows everything that's going on in your life, sees everything that's going on in your life, cares about everything that's going on in your life, has the power to change everything in your life and will help you if you will trust him.

And no matter what you are facing right now you need to say, I have a Father in heaven who loves me.

That's how he starts. But he doesn't just love you. And here's the second thing you need to remember. It's in this sentence. Not only do I have a Father in heaven who loves me....

2. MY FATHER IN HEAVEN CAN BE TRUSTED.

My Father in heaven can be trusted. You may have had a physical father who couldn't be trusted. And inconsistent fathers produce insecure children.

I talked to a guy one time who said, I didn't know from week to week whether my dad was going to slug me or going to hug me. I didn't know. Just whether he was drunk or not or whatever. Whatever mood he was in. But your heavenly Father is not only one who loves you, he's one you can trust. And this is the word of trust. Jesus says, "Father, I commit my spirit, I entrust my life into your care." That's why I call this the word of trust.

One of the greatest decisions you're going to have to make in life is this: Who are you going to trust? You have to make that decision. Who are you going to trust? Are you going to trust your political leaders? Are you going to trust the media or even social media? Are you going to trust your emotions? Are you going to trust popular opinion?

I want to make a recommendation. I recommend that you put your trust into someone who a) who knows everything, b) will always put your interest first and c) will always tell you the truth even if it hurts.

There's one person who is always going to do that. God. Because he's perfect. And I want to suggest that you always put your trust in him. Father, I entrust. I'm going to trust you with my life. I'm going through this dark period right now. I don't know which way I'm going. I don't know which way is up. I don't know where I'm going to be in the next five days much less five months. But I'm going to entrust my spirit into your care. Psalm 33:4 in the Bible says this: *"For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does."*

Friends, you can't say that about anybody. You can't say that about me, your pastor. I love you but you can't trust everything I do because I'm a fallible human being. You can't trust any human being to always do the right thing. But you can trust God.

When Jesus says this, “*Father, I commit my spirit into your hands.*” the word “commit” or “entrust” in other versions, is *Paratithemi* in Greek,. *Paratithemi* actually means to deposit. It’s the word that they would use for a safety deposit box. You know what a safety deposit box is. You go to the bank, you rent a box and you put your most valuable property in that box for safekeeping. In that safety deposit box it’s locked, it’s safe, it’s secure and nobody’s going to get at it. You’ve made a deposit in that safety box. That’s what this word means – to entrust.

The point is this: Whatever I give to God I can trust him to take care of. I can give stuff to other people and I can’t always trust them to take care of it. But that’s one of the things that God says in this verse. I have a track record of faithfulness. He says I want you to make a deposit in the safety deposit box in heaven. And I want you to trust me with stuff.

So here’s the question: What do you need to entrust to your heavenly Father? What do you need to trust or entrust to your heavenly Father?

You say, I don’t know. Let me give you a little hint. Anything you worry about. That’s what you need to entrust to your heavenly Father. Anything you worry about! You worry about your health? You need to entrust that to your heavenly Father. You worry about your future? You need to entrust that to your heavenly Father. You worry about your marriage or getting married or having a baby or raising the kids or a new job, you need to entrust that. Anything you worry about you need to entrust to your heavenly Father.

The most difficult time to trust God of course is when you’re in pain. Remember Jesus is on the cross. He’s just had six hours of torture on the cross and hours and hours of torture before that. He’s in enormous pain. Loss of blood, loss of sleep, no water, dehydrated, bleeding to death. In his worst pain he says, I entrust. And that’s when you’re in pain you need to trust the most. That’s what it

means to trust God. God, I'm going to trust you to do what I can't do. I'm going to trust you.

Folks, remember this, my father in heaven loves, he can be trusted and third, this is the reason why can you trust God,

3. MY FATHER CAN HANDLE ANYTHING I PUT IN HIS HANDS

My Father can handle anything I put in his hands. He loves me, he's trustworthy, and he can handle anything I put in his hands. Jesus says, "Father, into your hands..."

This phrase "into your hands" is a beautiful expression of care and security. There's a well-known TV commercial, "You're in good hands with Allstate." What in the world does that mean? What they're implying is our insurance company will take care of you. You're in good hands with Allstate.

Have you seen the hands of Michael Jordan? Those hands must be big. But how about the hands of Shaquille O'Neal? They're bigger, right? Probably, he can pick you up just by one hand. But my heavenly Father has even bigger hands. He's got the whole world in his hands. Somebody ought to write a song about that! That's how big his hands are.

So I just end with this. Write this down real quick.

How big are God's hands?

- **God's hands are big enough to bless me.**

God's hands are big enough to bless me. In Isaiah 62:3 it says, "*You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.*"

They're big enough to bless me.

God's hands are also strong enough to keep me eternally secure.

- **God's hands are strong enough to keep me eternally secure.**

If I put my life in that lock box, in that safety deposit box, it isn't going anywhere. Jesus said it like this, a very important verse. In John 10:28-29, he

says, *"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."*

You cannot lose your salvation once it's been given to you. Nobody can snatch you out of Jesus' hands. Nobody can snatch you out of God's hands. I call that double security. Even Satan can't snatch you out of God's hands.

There's a third thing you need to know about the hands of God.

- *The hands of Jesus are scarred with the nail prints so that he cannot forget me.*

Do you know that in heaven you're going to have perfect body? There will be no scars in heaven. Aren't you grateful for that? No flaws on your body in heaven. No warts. No pimples. No scars. None. The only scars that will be on anybody in heaven will be on Jesus. From his hands and his head, and his side and his feet. They're going to be there for eternity to always remind us of what it cost him to pay for our salvation.

The Bible says this Isaiah 49:15-16. *"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me."*

When you look at the nail prints Jesus says this is how much I love you. I love you this much. I've engraved you on the palms of my hands. God has a tattoo of you. You get a tattoo of people you love. God has a tattoo of you. I've engraved you on the palms of my hands when they were nailed to the cross.

I don't know what you're going through but I'd advise you to do this. The last verse, Paul says this: *"I think you ought to know, dear brothers, about the hard time we went through in Asia. We were really crushed and overwhelmed, and feared we would never live through it. We felt we were doomed to die and saw how*

powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us, for he can even raise the dead.” (2 Cor. 1:8-9 TLB)

Friend, give your life to God. Commit it. Deposit it in the safety deposit box. Folks, this last word of Jesus, this is a theme that you need the rest of your life. It's not something just to say when you're dying – Father into your hands I commit my spirit. It's something to say every single day of your life. When you are fearful – Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands. When you're angry – Father I entrust my spirit into your hands. When you're worried, Father I entrust my spirit into your hands. When you're depressed – Father I entrust my spirit into your hands. When you're confused – Father I entrust my spirit into your hands. When you're in despair and you don't know which way to go – Father I entrust my spirit into your hands. When you have a big decision – Father I entrust my spirit into your hands. You need to use this theme every day the rest of your life.