



## The 'Last Words' Series – Message One

In the lead up to Easter we look at the seven statements Jesus made from the Cross, which continue to change the world today.

### **Luke 23:33-34**

*And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, “**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**” And they divided His garments and cast lots.*

Interestingly, the first thing that Jesus does on the Cross is pray. He could have cursed, spat or complained but instead He chose to pray. The amazing thing is that He didn't pray for Himself, but for others!

When Jesus' hands and feet were tied and He was almost completely restricted, He could still pray. Nothing can ever restrain us from the privilege of prayer.

Four aspects of Jesus prayer in Luke 23:33-34:

#### **1. The Person – “FATHER...”**

- Even in trial Jesus knew that God was His Father
- At our lowest points in life we can still call upon our Father
- Our circumstances don't change the fact that God remains our loving Father

#### **2. The Petition – “FORGIVE THEM...”**

- In Matthew 5:44 Jesus had taught to love our enemies; at the Cross He lived it
- Jesus said 'Father, forgive them'; which implicitly meant 'Father, condemn me.'
- We no longer pay for our sin because Jesus stepped in and paid for us

#### **3. The Plea – “THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY DO”**

- Not only did Jesus ask our forgiveness, He goes on to ask for a lessening of judgement on our behalf (i.e. 'Forgive them, they don't really know what they're doing.'
- This shows the heart of God! Jesus didn't grudgingly take our sin; He steps into our corner and pleads our case before the Father

#### **4. The Answer**

- Jesus never offered a prayer that went unanswered
- Acts 2:42 shows us that many were forgiven, baptised and added to the Church
- Acts 6:7 says that many of the priests were saved, the very people who had orchestrated Jesus' crucifixion

## **Discussion Guide:**

- Which point from the message spoke to you most? Why?
- Do you agree that we often fail to see God as 'Father' when things are going wrong? Why do you think this is? How does our understanding of God as 'Father' change our attitude in hard times?
- Jesus said 'Forgive them', in essence saying 'Condemn Me'. What response does this evoke in you?
- How can these verses help us to live free of condemnation? Why is it so important to understand that our sin has been fully paid for by Jesus?
- Why do you think that forgiveness is such a powerful force? What encouragement would you give to someone who is finding it difficult to forgive another person?

Make sure you're in church this Friday night as Pastor James Macpherson continues the Last Words series.

## **Pray:**

While you're together as a group pray for:

- Any needs within the group
- Our Senior Pastors James & Sam Macpherson
- People to continue to say 'yes to Jesus' in our Friday night and Sunday morning services. Perhaps you can pray specifically for a friend who you can invite to church during the Easter season.