

**Seven Last Words From The Cross:
Father, Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit!
Luke 23:44-46**

Our text for meditation, from Luke's Gospel, the 23rd chapter, verses 44-46: It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46 ESV) So far the text.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Tonight, Jesus resigns Himself into the hands of His Father before He breathes His last breath. Calling out in a loud voice, Jesus says, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"

There is so much in this Word of Jesus upon which we could meditate. First, there is the loud voice Jesus calls out in. Have you ever been with someone as they breathe their last breath in death? A dying person does not have a loud voice. In order to hear someone who is dying speak, you need to kneel beside them to hear their words. As death approaches, one gets weaker and weaker. Calling out in a loud voice requires strength. And, in hearing Jesus' words by faith, we understand why His voice is loud and strong. He says, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"

Jesus' word from the cross in our text, reflects what He had said earlier. This is His entire purpose. He is dying, but **He** is the One giving up His life. While it appears that His life is being taken from Him, He is actually giving His life unto death, for a purpose.

Jesus, speaking to the Pharisees, foretells this event, "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." (John 10:17-18 ESV)

And so, from the cross, Jesus boldly proclaims this truth, He speaks with a loud, clear voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" In the midst of His suffering, we have seen the past few weeks that He is most concerned about the salvation of all mankind. He knows that His suffering and death are for a purpose. As the author of life, nobody can take His life from Him, but, for His perfect life to be yours, He needs to give it up unto death. He also knows that the Father will raise Him from the dead, even as He told His disciples. So, in perfect faith in His Father, He speaks and breathes His last and commits Himself into His Father's hands.

How often do you struggle against doing just that? You and I are so afraid of so many things, that we refuse to leave our lives and future in the hands of our heavenly Father. We are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things, but so often we are caught up in what we see with our eyes happening in our lives, that we forget the very Giver of life. He has promised to take care of us and supply all our needs, but we fight that.

Sickness clouds sight of God, concerns over financial matters obscure our faith to trust that all we have is God's gift to us. When we consider the future, sometimes faith falters, especially when death seems to stare you in the face – yours or someone else's. When things do not go the way we would like, we may parrot Jesus' earlier words from the cross – words we talked about a few weeks ago, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Jesus suffered hell on the cross, hell, separation from the Father. You and I may speak similar words in doubt and unbelief; Jesus spoke them so that you would never be forsaken. He and the Father are One, yet the Father

could not abide the presence of His own Son because He bore in His own body the vile stench of your sin and mine, our doubt and mistrust.

Now we come to these last words of Jesus from the cross. Even as death approached, and Jesus had expressed the dismay of being forsaken by His Father, He now commends Himself into His Father's hands. Is He losing His mind? The Father who had forsaken Him was now going to embrace Him? He knew He had been forsaken. He knew what He was to endure. He speaks to bring you comfort and confidence.

Jesus again fulfills the righteous requirements of the Law for us, the first commandment is here fulfilled, as Jesus trusts God above all things. Even in His darkest hour, He trusts. We, in our darkest hour, too often doubt and may even curse God.

Christ's words are words of purest comfort for you. Not only do they teach you to trust, but because you are united to Christ's death in baptism through faith, they become your words. Christ fills you with Himself, and His trust in the Father becomes your faith.

How often have you wanted to echo the words of the father of the demon possessed boy when confronted by Jesus. The man told of what the demon had done to the boy, and there is this exchange. *And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"* (Mark 9:21-24 ESV)

How often have we wanted God to be there, to strengthen our faith, to remove fear and doubt? Christ does so for you, for with man this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.

Christ, on the cross speaks boldly and loudly, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" You are in Christ, and so, in these words, knowing that He is making atonement for your sins, Jesus is commending you as well, into His Father's hands. "Here Father, in my life, in my suffering, and in my death, I take Todd's sinful life, Pauline's sinful life, Hertha's sinful life, and that lives of all, I take the suffering they deserve, and the death they ought to die, into My very own flesh. I make full atonement for them and commit their spirit, united to Mine – to you! As you have loved Me, so love them."

And having said this He breathed His last. Christ, having come to the point of fulfilling all things, having come to the finishing of the work of your salvation and mine, He dies. He truly and really dies!

You know the rest of the story, it will be continued on Easter Sunday. But in today's work of Christ on the cross, the head of Satan is crushed. You and I can look at death and laugh. You are in Christ! Christ commended you into the Father's hands. You know the rest of the story, you will live, even as He does. Christ's faith in the Father was not in vain.

Through your unity to Christ, you are forgiven all your doubts and failings of faith. From the cross today, hear Christ's Word in your stead, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" With Christ's Word in your heart and mind, look expectantly to your heavenly Father, place all your cares and your future into His gracious hands, and know that you are in His kingdom, both here and hereafter in heaven. Amen.