

FORGIVENESS REALISED Sunday April 19

Two of the most precious statements from Jesus on the Cross.

- The first from Luke 23:34 – *“Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”*
- The second from Luke 23:43 – *“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

Jesus was fully man and fully God. He laid down His life with God and He laid down His life as a man, for man.

Philippians 2:5-9: *“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name,”*

Christ emptied Himself – when He said ‘Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing’ – He didn’t say it flippantly; these aren’t reactionary words or emotional words cried out in a crisis. Only humility can pray this. Only humility can accept that people could not possibly understand the depth and depravity of sin; or the terrible separation that it brings. There is years of preparation – just in the few days He walked upon the earth He saw humankind turning on each other in hatred; devouring each other; using each other; but every response He made was inline with why He came. Consider the woman caught in adultery; think about His response, His words to her *“Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more.”*

This is where the two statements merge. Jesus brought the forgiveness necessary for men to be with God.

In righting the wrongs that sin created (forgiveness) He bridged the gap so men could come to God.

See it on the cross; He was using His last moments to pray for those who were murdering Him; He was ministering to those alongside Him - bringing assurance of salvation; still displaying His concern for His mother; and at what must have been for Him the darkest hour of His suffering He draws from the Word... mindful of a psalm David penned:

He was enduring what had been foreshadowed in Psalm 22; mentioned in Luke 23 – one thief hurling insults ... mockery ... people casting lots for His garment... the physical torture of the Cross ... I encourage you to read all of Psalm 22; not all of it applies to David and not all of it applies to Jesus but it does bring some understanding of how Jesus would come to a conclusion that mankind could not possibly know what they do ... and He calls out just the first line?

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Jesus had been prepared for this moment – He prepared Himself for this moment – He was carrying the weight of the sin of the world and all the depravity that goes with it; He bore every sickness – He never retaliated – forgiveness reigning; the great love of God for humanity was on display for all the world to see.

And while we were still in that state, **Colossians 3:13-15** puts it like this: *“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”*

Forgiveness accomplished:

- ‘He forgave us all’ the root word is grace – pardon, rescue. He stooped down, loved us and released us, saved us from sin.
- ‘Having cancelled our debt’ – He remitted our debt – gave us a legal right standing with God again; we are no longer condemned.

- ‘He took away everything that was contrary to us’ – He lifted every weight of sin that was upon us by nailing it with Himself to the Cross.
- In doing that, He disarmed evil.

Father forgive them; they do not know what they are doing!

HE PAID IT ALL. IT IS FINISHED.

If you read to the end of Psalm 22, David also declares **“He has done it”**

See His love. Forgiveness: Realised.

- Sin forgiven
- Debt paid
- Condemnation notice revoked
- No blockage
- Heaven open
- Father’s arms ready to receive

This is why He could say pronounce forgiveness to a thief turned believer on the Cross and say:

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

I can only ask that you try and imagine the look, the love in the eyes of Jesus as He spoke this to the men on the Cross? The same love for them both. Can you imagine His heart for the one who refused Him? Can you imagine His heart for the one who believed?

Both men recognised Jesus as the Messiah but only humility could see Christ was sinless and only Humility could say, with confidence even at a most cruel moment, this day you will be with me.

LOVE BROUGHT FORGIVENESS AND OFFERS LIFE.

For God so loved the world, He went the distance and forgave that we could have eternal life with Him (John 3:16 paraphrased)

Today: what can we be confident of:

2 Corinthians 5:8 *“We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”*

John 14:1-3 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 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”*

John 14:6 *“⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

The promise is for TODAY – no more pain, or suffering – this is a heavenly reality.

When we turn to Him – like the thieves – both recognised who He is; the Christ – anointed to be Saviour –

- One recognised His need for forgiveness – personally
- When we receive His forgiveness, He receives us to Himself – all sin cancelled; everything that was against us is taken away; demonic authority disarmed...

It is finished. He has done it. Forgiveness is fully realised in Jesus Christ and truly, we can be with Him, here and now.

‘Father, You have made known to me the path of Life; truly in Your presence, there is a fullness ... at your right hand...’