

Series: Walking Like Jesus Did

# FORGIVENESS

## LUKE 23

Text: Luke 23:34

### **Luke 23:34**

*<sup>34</sup> Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

Introduction:

I haven't the vocabulary or ability to describe the scene before us in this passage. Christ the King of kings, and yet the sorrowful Substitute for sinners, has been stripped naked. The mocking soldiers have unconsciously fulfilled the Scripture.

### **John 19:24**

*<sup>24</sup> They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

He has been throw roughly to the ground; his legs and arms have been stretched out upon the wooded cross. Rough hands have grasps the cruel nails; and stern blows have been dealt, with the heavy hammer. Our

Lord begins to feel the physical sufferings of the crucifixion.

He looks down to the faces of the men who have been putting him through all of this extreme and undeserved torture, and opens not His mouth to complain, but rather to breath this prayer, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

May we be reminded that the saying on the cross have a deeper meaning than that which appears upon the surface. These words were no common words.

There are three things that we will look consider though much more could be said and preached about this passage.

Note

## **1. THE BLINDING POWER OF SATAN – “THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.”**

The Words spoken was not only spoken about the soldiers who violently drove the nails in our Saviour’s hands and feet, but for all who sin.

A. Who among us knows the full and real meaning and nature of sin.

1. Most have an understanding of what sin is, but do we consider how the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

- When you sin you call God a fool. You say that God's law is not the best thing for you, and you know what is best for you.
- When you sin you call God a liar. He tells us that sin is bitter and an evil thing, but you say "No it is sweet, it is pleasant; and at any rate I want to taste it."
- When you sin you call God a tyrant. You act as if His laws are hard and arbitrary.
- When you sin you take a blow at the crown of God. You refuse to let God be the King.
- When you sin you take a blow at the very existence of God.

B. Who among us know how much God really hates sin.

- In order to just get a glimpse of God's hatred for sin look at the cross and what took place there in our Saviour taking mine and your sin upon Himself to pay the debt thereof.

C. Who among us knows sins terrible consequences?

Note not only “The Blinding Power of Satan” but also:

## **2. THE BLESSED PROVISION FOR SIN - “FATHER FORGIVE THEM”**

A. Our Saviour prayed for those who nailed Him to the cross.

B. He also has prayed for you and I as well.

### **2 Peter 3:9**

*<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Note not only “The Blinding Power of Satan” and “The Blessed Provision for Sin” but lastly:

## **3. THE BELOVED PATTERN FOR THE SAVED**

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do,"

On no other occasion did Christ make such a request of the Father.

Never before had he asked for the Father's forgiveness of others.

Up to now he forgave himself.

To the man sick of the palsy he had said:

**Matthew 9:2**

<sup>2</sup> *And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

To the woman who washed his feet with her tears in the house of Simon, he said:

**Luke 7:48**

<sup>48</sup> *And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.*

Why then should he now ask the Father to forgive, instead of directly pronouncing forgiveness himself?

Forgiveness of sin is a divine prerogative. The Jewish scribes were right when they reasoned "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7).

You say, Christ was God.

Yes, but He was man also - the God-man.

He was the Son of God that had become the Son of Man with the express purpose of offering himself as a sacrifice for sin.

And when the Lord Jesus cried "Father, forgive them" he was on the cross dying as a man.

On the cross he was acting as our substitute; He was hanging there as our representative.

When the Lord cried, "Father, forgive them," we see him absolutely being identified as man in this.

In this He left us an example to follow.

- When His hands were no longer performing any acts of kindness, He prayed.

As long as we have breath, we can pray.

- The Lord taught us never to regard any beyond the reach of prayer.

If Christ prayed for his enemies, surely we have encouragement to pray for our enemies and the vilest of sinners!

Does it seem a waste of time for you to continue praying for that man, that woman, that wayward child of yours?

Does their case seem to become more hopeless every day? Does it look as though they had gone beyond the reach of divine mercy?

Remember then the cross. Consider none beyond the reach of prayer.

When His hands were no longer healing the sick, for they are nailed to the cross, notice how he occupies himself?

In the ministry of prayer!

What a lesson for us.

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord taught his disciples, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you," (Matthew 5:44).

Above all others Christ practiced what he preached.

In all things he has left us an example.

Close:

When did Jesus pray "Father, forgive them?"

When man had done his worst.

When with wicked hands had dared to crucify the Lord  
He prayed "Father, forgive them."

When Samson came to his dying hour he used his great strength of body to bring about the destruction of his foes; but the Lord, demonstrated the strength of his love by praying for the forgiveness of his enemies.

Even Stephen failed to follow completely the example set by the Saviour. Stephen's first thought was of himself, and then he prayed for his enemies - "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:59,60).

But with the Lord the order was reversed: he prayed first for his foes, and last for himself.

In all things he must have the pre-eminence.