**FAMOUS LAST WORDS SERIES**

**“Father, Forgive Them”**

**Pastor Wayne Driedger**

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**Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. 33 When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. Luke 23:32-33**

**34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”**

 **And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.**

**Luke 23:34**

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PRAYER**

1. **JESUS FULFILLED PROPHECY.**

**…because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels.
He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels. Isaiah 53:12**

***Many people ask “Why did Jesus have to die? Couldn’t God just forgive us?” This is what many ask, but now we see that no one “just” forgives if the evil is serious. Forgiveness means bearing the cost instead of making the wrongdoer do it, so you can reach out to seek your enemy’s renewal and change. Forgiveness means absorbing the debt of sin yourself. Everyone who forgives great evil goes through a death into resurrection, and experiences nails, blood, sweat and tears.***

***On the cross we see God doing visibly and cosmically what every human being must do to forgive someone, though on an infinitely greater scale.***

***It is crucial at this point to remember that the Christian faith has always understood that Jesus Christ is God. God did not, then, inflict pain on someone else, but rather on the Cross absorbed the pain, violence, and evil of the world into himself. Therefore the God of the Bible is not like the primitive deities who demanded our blood for their wrath to be appeased. Rather, this is a God who becomes human and offers his own lifeblood in order to honor moral justice and merciful love so that someday he can destroy all evil without destroying us.”* pg 200 The Reason For God**

1. **JESUS MODELED THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.**

**Pray like this: Our Father in heaven,…Matthew 6:9**

1. **JESUS REVEALED HUMANITY’S GREATEST NEED.**

**…for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many. Matthew 26:28**

**This one lone, deserted, vulnerable man decided, *I know what I must do. I will not fight. I will not run. I will not deal. I will not dazzle. I will die.* Then he prayed, “Not my will but yours be done.” He came to believe that the real messianic fate, the real messianic calling, was not to conquer but to die out of love for others, and so he did.**

**Put aside theories and theology. Jesus knew that rebels were killed by Rome. If he did not die, a rebel name Barabbas would. Jesus died on the cross in place of Barabbas.**

**Jesus knew the crowds even now were waiting for a word from him to march against the Romans. Many Roman soldiers were just boys from nearby Syria working for the Roman government. Jesus did not say that word. Instead, he went to the cross and died. And a whole legion of Roman soldiers would live. Jesus’ death saved them.**

 **~ John Ortberg**

**JIM STEELE PIC**

**WHEN SOMEONE HURTS YOU, PRAY**

1. **PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HURT YOU.**

**Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. Luke 6:28**

* **My prayer for others may or may not change them, but it always changes me.**

**You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! Matthew 5:43-44**

1. **PRAY FOR RESTORATION.**

**Never pay back evil with more evil. …Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Romans 12:17-18**

**Timothy Keller:**

***“Only if you first seek inner forgiveness will your confrontation be temperate, wise, and gracious. Only when you have lost the need to see the other person hurt will you have any chance of actually bringing about change, reconciliation and healing. You have to submit to the costly suffering and death of forgiveness if there is going to be any resurrection.”* Pg 197**

**Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Colossians 3:13**

**JESUS IS PRAYING FOR YOU**

***…*for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us.Romans 8:34**

**A FORGIVENESS PRAYER:**

**“Father I also forgive them … forgive him … forgive her. God, I keep coming back to this issue of forgiveness. At times I try to ignore it and live on. I don’t like thinking about the places in my life where forgiveness hasn’t happened. Or where it needs to happen again. Sometimes I forgive easily. Other times even the thought of forgiveness seems impossible. My reluctance becomes a poison, eating away at my insides. In those times I’m not really blocking out the pain. It’s you I’m blocking out. Help me understand. Help me want to forgive. And then, Lord, help me know how.”**