

April 2, 2023

Pastor Joe Hess

Study Guide

Famous Last Words

The Seventh Word



Luke 23:44-46

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon,

⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**"

When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Ice Breaker Question:

Share a time you stepped into something you weren't quite ready for.

What were some of your takeaways from that experience?

Thoughts & Questions to Fuss With:

1. Some folks have said COVID helped remind us of what was most important. Having a loved one diagnosed with cancer can do the same thing. In your life right now – what are the things most on your heart? What do you spend time worrying about? What's really most important? Are you spending enough time on the important things?
2. Review these "Father" passages:
 - a. 12-year-old Jesus: "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be about my **Father's** business?" (Luke 2:43-52)
 - b. Jesus teaching the disciples to pray: "Our **Father**..." (Matthew 6:9-13)
 - c. Jesus in the garden: "Abba, **Father**, everything is possible for you..." (Mark 14:32-36)
 - d. Jesus on the cross (The First Word): "**Father**, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34).
 - e. Now today's word from the cross (The 7th Word): "**Father**, into your hands..." (Luke 23:42). Compare and contrast these "**Father**" verses... What's similar about each verse? What's different? What's Jesus teaching to us in each of these verses? How is the 12-year-old Jesus "about my **Father's** business" connected with the 33-year-old Jesus "**Father**, into your hands..."
3. We've been looking at the Seven Last Words of Jesus. Which of these last words of Jesus is toughest to understand and then, toughest to put into practice? Share thoughts on this.

Word 1: "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**" (Luke 23:34)

Word 2: "**Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.**" (Luke 23:43)

Word 3: "**Women, this is your son... This is your mother!**" (John 19:26-27)

Word 4: "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" (Matthew 27:46)

Word 5: "**I thirst.**" (John 19:28)

Word 6: "**It is finished.**" (John 19:30)

Word 7: "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**" (Luke 23:46)

4. We've been talking about "bids for connection" and sharing that any time we try to connect with someone relationally – that's a bid for connection.
(Remember, we have 3 ways to respond to a "bid for connection": Towards; Neutral; or Against.)
Can you remember the first time you held hands with someone that you liked?
What was that like?
How vulnerable and scary was that for you if you initiated it?
5. Does anybody remember when you were small - jumping into a pool or off of a dock and someone was there promising to catch you?
Who was that person?
Why did you jump?
Was there a time you didn't jump?
What do you think it means when Jesus says, "Father, into your hands..."?
How hard it is for us to jump into the Father's arms?
Is it easier to jump into Jesus' arms?
Why?
6. Joe shares his thought that this seventh word is Jesus reminding us of our ultimate bid for connection back to the heavenly father.
Reflecting on St. Paul's words below... how do these words challenge us?
How do these words encourage us?
"I want to know Christ – and the power of his resurrection, sharing in the fellowship of his suffering, becoming like him in his death." (Phil 3:10)
7. Joe shares the story of his dad struggling with saying these words out loud: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."
Why do you think he struggled so?
What do we have to give up to be able to say these words?
8. We've all committed to something and failed (diets, learning a foreign language, a relationship, etc.).
Can you share something you've committed to and been successful?
9. Joe shares a final blessing from Acts 20:32: ***"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."***
This is a farewell from St. Paul to the church in Ephesus.
What does it mean to be committed to God?
Pastor Deral shared this text in his final message to us back in October 2016.
What was Deral's intent?
What was Joe's intent?
10. Joe assigned homework for this Holy Week: To start each day with ***"This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."*** (Psalm 118:24).
And to then to end each day with this: ***"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."***
Both are prayers – which prayer is harder to say and why?