



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion
93 – The Last Words of Jesus

Announcements:

11/8 @7:30 -

Prayer

11/9 @6:30 -

Grace Group

11/12 @8:30 -

Sunday School

11/12 @6:00 -

Family Night

SMALL GROUP

ICE BREAKER: What phrase would you want on your tombstone?

When reading through any of the Gospels, one tool that can be a little bit helpful is what is called a “harmony of the Gospels”. Here some person is trying to lay out, in perfect chronological order all the events of all the gospels. The thought is that you will get the full and larger picture that all four writers each only have one point of view of. But often harmonies are difficult, because the same event seen from a different perspective will be told slightly differently. We saw this last week when we noted that Luke relayed to us the repentance of one of the thieves whereas Matthew was silent on that subject. And we see it again this week as we will wrestle with the Question: “What were Jesus’ last words?”

READ: Matthew 27:50

Matthew (and Mark, his is the same thought in Mark 15:37) does not give us any “last words” but rather a “last cry”. On Sunday we noted that this showed the depth of pain that he was called to endure. As we work our way through the book of Matthew, a lot of weight has been put into the voice and words of Jesus. In Matthew 7 his words left the people “astonished”; in Matthew 8 his voice calmed the storm, through the whole book the words of Jesus are given a particular power and authority and here, at the very end, Matthew wants us to see that the same voice that calmed the sea calls out in a loud cry of pain and anguish. This is what the savior endured for YOU. We will get into more theological depth as we turn to Luke and John’s tellings of this event, but it is appropriate for us to start here: with the depth of pain and suffering of our savior. It was so severe that his voice, that was once full of life and power is now reduced to a loud cry as he gives up his spirit. This is the depth of his love for us!

DISCUSS: Why is it important for us to see the depth of Jesus' pain and anguish?

READ: Luke 23:44-46

Luke gives us some more words: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” While there is a TON going on here (almost as much as John... but we will get there) for us I would like to focus on just one. What we see clearly here is the trust of Jesus. It is almost astounding that even here, in the very last seconds of his life he was willing to trust AND SUBMIT to the will of the Father. We struggle trusting God when one or two things are not going our way. Jesus perfectly trusts God in the midst of even his crucifixion. We noted a similar thought last week when I said that the Pharisees mocked Jesus by saying: “He trusts God; Let God deliver him now” (Matthew 27:43), when in reality it was his perfect trust in God that led him to the cross. This should be a great inspiration. God is working, God is sovereign, in all things we should commit ourselves to God, trusting in his goodness and grace!

DISCUSS: How can we foster this spirit of trust?

READ: John 19:28-30

John hits us with what are probably the most famous, and also the most important, and also the most loaded, of all the sayings of Jesus. There is a whole lot packed into three little words: “It is finished.” (In Greek it is actually only one!) The biggest question that we should wrestle with is “what is ‘it’?” What is Jesus referencing here? The simple answer would be that he is speaking of the crucifixion itself. With these words and the breathing of his last breath, that historical event is finished. And while that is true, that is a far too shortsighted way to read this. Because what is really finished here is so much more. God’s plan for the salvation of his people was finished here, because the perfect sacrifice, made once for all time, was made. Jesus' time of humiliation was finished because after this he will rise in glorious power. We could go on and on because, in some sense, EVERYTHING was finished.

DISCUSS: What do you think of when you hear “It is finished”? What truths does it speak to your heart?

So as we end we can re-ask the question: “What were Jesus’ last words?” and I think we can say that it is probably some combination of all three of these. If I were writing a “harmony” of these passages I would think it goes something like this: *Then crying out with a loud voice Jesus said: “Father into your hands I commit my spirit, for it is finished”*. So each one is highlighting a particular part of this. I think that Matthew and Mark were getting to the heart of the savior. The words fall into the background as the pain and agony in his voice come through. Then Luke highlights his trust in the father, that this was his will. And John ties all these thoughts together with what were (probably, in my opinion) the VERY last words of Jesus. No matter how it all played out the thought we should land on is praise and adoration of our savior!