



EASTER BOOKLET 2025

Transformative Words of Jesus



Transformative Words of Jesus

A Spiritual Journey: Delve into the Meaning of the Seven Words from the Cross

The Lenten season is an important part of the church's liturgical calendar and the Christian faith journey. Lent, derived from the word "lent" or "*lengthen*," meaning "spring season," is a time when we anticipate the victory of Christ's light over the darkness of sin and death through His resurrection. Lent is a crucial moment for us, not merely to lament our sins and commit to letting go of worldly things that hinder our hearts from experiencing God more fully. But how do we reevaluate and recalibrate the values of our hearts to align with the values of Christ?

We embark on a spiritual journey, one week at a time, during Lent, guided by this booklet. Our focus will be on unraveling the profound meaning behind the seven words spoken by Jesus on the cross, spanning from Palm Sunday to Holy Week. This exploration will be facilitated through daily reflections, fostering a deeper encounter with Christ and a resolute commitment to following Him with unwavering faith and obedience. Therefore, take the following steps to embark on this transformative journey:

- Take a moment from your daily routine to set aside the best time each day. This pause is highly beneficial for reorienting your life's compass in the right direction by reflecting on God's Word.
- Read each reflection material provided, focusing on Christ and your desire to know Him better. This is a significant chance for you to refocus your life on Christ.
- Write down your responses to each reflective question on a separate sheet of paper you've prepared beforehand. Then, concisely summarize your commitment in a brief statement.

24-29 March 2025

Confession and Self-examination

The beginning of Lent starts with Confession and Self-Examination using the 10 Commandments.

- Read the given Bible passage.
- Write down the sins related to that commandment.
- Pray, ask God to forgive and transform you.

Monday, 24 March 2025	Exodus 20:3-7
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Tuesday, 25 March 2025	Exodus 20:8-11
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Wednesday, 26 March 2025	Exodus 20:12
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Thursday, 27 March 2025	Exodus 20:13-15
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Friday, 28 March 2025	Exodus 20:16
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Saturday, 29 March 2025	Exodus 20:17
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31 March - 5 April 2025

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina. Read and meditate on God's Word to seek His presence and immerse yourself in His special words.

- Read the Bible passage slowly. What part speaks to you the most? Is there a word, phrase, sentence, image, or idea that catches your attention or touches you in a special way? Write it down.
- Read the Bible passage slowly a second time. Why does that part (word, phrase, sentence, idea, or image) speak to you so much? Write down your reasons.
- Read the Bible passage slowly a third time. What do you think God wants you to respond to or do? Write it down.

Monday, 31 March 2025

Matthew 8:5-13

Tuesday, 1 April 2025

Mark 5:25-34

Wednesday, 2 April 2025

John 5:1-9

Thursday, 3 April 2025

Matthew 14:22-33

Friday, 4 April 2025

Lukas 18:18-23

Saturday, 5 April 2025

John 4:46-54

7-12 April 2025

Service

- Read the given Bible passage and write down one message from God's Word in that passage.
- What practical action can you take today for a specific person?
- Pray, ask God to enable you, and take concrete action.

Monday, 7 April 2025

Matthew 14:15-21

Tuesday, 8 April 2025

John 4:28-42

Wednesday, 9 April 2025

Lukas 10:25-37

Thursday, 10 April 2025

Mark 2:1-12

Friday, 11 April 2025

Matthew 25:31-46

Saturday, 12 April 2025

Matthew 9:35-38

13 April 2025

FORGIVENESS

Unconditional Forgiveness

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

If we imagine the scene where Jesus is on the cross, the atmosphere is crowded with people who want to witness Jesus' execution. Voices of mockery can be heard from the crowd, and among them may be people who have seen or even experienced Jesus' miracles. But the people seem to have no conscience; they are not disturbed by the brutal sight of Jesus being tortured, humiliated, and hung on the cross. And Jesus does not resist at all, as if He truly deserves all of it. Why doesn't Jesus fight back? He could easily turn the situation around in an instant, summoning an army of angels to annihilate those ungrateful individuals, causing them to deeply regret their actions.

But the unexpected turn of events occurs: Jesus instead utters, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Jesus prays for forgiveness for those who are humiliating Him, treating Him carelessly, and torturing Him. Sometimes, those who are hurt do not take revenge because they lack the strength to do so. But Jesus is different; His level is far above the humans present there. With a snap of His fingers or a word, they would all be finished. It is not because Jesus is powerless that He forgives them, but because of His immeasurable love, forgiveness is given to those who are undeserving.

Have you ever imagined these words being spoken in the most miserable and painful circumstances? Jesus, in the pain and agony of His wounds, gathers His strength to utter those words of forgiveness. People often say, "time will heal us and enable us to forgive," when our situation is much better, perhaps even better than the person who hurt us, only then do we forgive. Jesus shows that forgiveness is not like that; it is not time that gives us the ability to forgive, but Jesus Himself who gives forgiveness in the most painful moments. It doesn't end there; after uttering those words of forgiveness, people continue to hurt Him, as recorded in Luke 23:34b: "And they cast lots to divide His garments." Forgiveness given does not always make the situation easier; sometimes, the bad behavior of others continues.

We are people who have been forgiven by Jesus through His sacrifice, at our worst moments, when we hurt Him the most, living in sin. Therefore, as people who have received the invaluable forgiveness in Christ, we can forgive others, even those who have left deep wounds in our lives. [rr]

Reflective Questions

- Are you aware that you, too, are someone who is undeserving of forgiveness but has been forgiven by Jesus Christ?
- Who is it that you find it hard to forgive right now? Are you open to praying for God's presence and the strength to forgive that person?

Prayer

Lord, You know that forgiveness is not easy; the pain caused by that person often lingers in our minds. But now we look at the cross of Christ, where You have forgiven us, who are so undeserving of forgiveness. Lord, we want to forgive, as You have forgiven us; accompany and help us. Amen.

14 April 2025

SALVATION

Eternal Hope

"Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Is there any statement more comforting and soothing to the soul amidst life's uncertainties and sufferings caused by sin than the words, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise"? This statement has the power to dispel all fear, anxiety, and pessimism in the hearts of sinners. Even the most sinful person can find forgiveness, mercy, and divine grace in Christ.

As experienced by one of the criminals crucified with Jesus. His life was hanging by a thread; there was nothing he could rely on, with his life shattered by his own wickedness. He could not help himself. His condition was truly helpless and hopeless. His body was nailed stiffly as a cursed man. Evil had become ingrained in him. He had no other choice but to accept the punishment that matched his sin. The cross was a just punishment for him. It was too late to start something new in his life. It was too late to change his life by doing many good deeds to outweigh the evil he had done. He could not turn a new page and live a better life in the path of righteousness. That opportunity was gone.

But not for God. His encounter with Christ on the cross became a transformative moment that changed everything. The awareness of his helplessness, sinfulness, and the divine punishment awaiting him (vv. 40-41), culminating in his declaration of dependence on Christ, was not a natural process that should have happened. Rather, it was a touch of God's grace that created the miracle of a heart change, drawing him closer to Christ, the Source of Hope. His faith was clear and striking through his cry, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" (v. 42). This was a declaration of great and bold faith. With full hope, he asked to be remembered by the King, even though he was someone who was most likely forgotten by his relatives, family, and closest friends. His absolute need was to receive mercy from Christ, whom he always knew he did not deserve. Only He was most needed for the future of his eternal soul! Jesus was the final solution to his essential problem.

Jesus responded to this cry of faith with a guarantee of salvation, expressed explicitly and giving rise to an eternal and certain eschatological hope, *"Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise."* Jesus gave something higher than the thief's hope. A promise of a future that is amazing. His sins were fully forgiven, and he received the greatest spiritual blessing, namely, to be reunited on that very day with Christ in paradise forever (John 14:3; 2 Cor. 12:1-4; Phil. 1:23-24). Spurgeon wrote that "that man was the last friend of our Lord while He was on earth and the first at the gates of paradise." This incident is one of the greatest biblical illustrations of the truth of **justification by faith**. Salvation is absolutely not because we do something to achieve it, but depends entirely on what Christ has done for us at Calvary. This is the essential principle of salvation, "We are not saved by our own doing but by what He has done for us on the cross."

Let us place our hope only in Christ, the holder of the keys to paradise. In Him lies the guarantee of immediate (*immediacy*) and certain (*certainty*) salvation. All because of God's great grace for us (saved by grace). It is never too late for us to ensure that the same faith as the thief is also in our hearts. Make the most important decision, now and not later, to believe in Christ. It may be that today is the first and only opportunity we have. Like the thief, he was saved not in the last opportunity of his life, but in the first and only opportunity he had. Essentially, to determine the ultimate goal of our lives, the issue is not how great our sins are, but the *wholeheartedness* of our hearts to believe in Christ and be embraced by the grasp of divine grace. [da]

Reflective Questions

- Reflect on the kind of relief you experience when you hear Jesus' words. Express your feelings in two or three sentences on the prepared sheet of paper.
- Have you tasted the grace of salvation in Christ? In what moment? Reflect on one part of the lyrics of the hymn by William Cowper titled *There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood*, which says ***"The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day; An there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away."***

Prayer

We thank You for the eternal hope that Christ has provided for us. Not because we deserve it, but because of God's great grace that has embraced our lives. Teach us to be a blessing and able to show the testimony that Christ has redeemed our lives. Amen.

15 April 2025

VULNERABILITY

Embracing Vulnerability

"I thirst" (John 19:28)

Indonesians live in a community that highly values "what people say" (shame-based culture). This culture is not bad, but at the same time, it makes us allergic to vulnerability or weakness, which is certainly also possessed by everyone. This drive also makes us feel the need to appear perfect before the all-knowing God, who actually knows every vulnerability we have. Interestingly, the Bible has a different view of this vulnerability, as exemplified by Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

"I thirst" is Jesus' shortest statement on the cross, yet it carries profound significance and purpose. This declaration reveals Jesus' vulnerability as a genuine human being who embodies God's divine plan for the world. By embracing human vulnerability, Jesus introduces a path that leads to authenticity rather than falsehood, ultimately glorifying God.

Jesus, the true God who incarnated as a fully human, acknowledges human vulnerability without denying it. Despite His omnipotence, He doesn't deny the human experience of thirst, even though He could have avoided it. Instead, He chooses to embrace vulnerability, manifesting it in the form of thirst. Jesus's example demonstrates that even as a human, He is willing to embrace discomfort and vulnerability.

Human vulnerability can be used as a tool to glorify God. The Gospel writer John writes that Jesus said, "I thirst," to fulfil the prophecy from Scripture (Psalm 69:22). Jesus is the righteous one (Heb. 4:15) who suffers; He bears sin so that we can be justified (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24).

Jesus embraces human vulnerability so that we who are vulnerable may receive strength. This is His promise to the Samaritan woman, *"the water that I will give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life"* (John 4:14). This is the grace poured out because the Savior embraces vulnerability to fulfill God's plan of salvation.

The extraordinary example of the Savior embracing vulnerability to glorify God serves as a powerful reminder to us during this Easter moment. Let us reflect on life as Jesus exemplified, drawing inspiration from this profound act of self-sacrifice.

First, embrace the vulnerability of life to witness the sufficiency of God's grace. The Apostle Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" that he prayed to be removed. But God said that His grace is sufficient and allowed the "thorn" to show the perfection of His power (2 Cor. 12:9-10). Acknowledge your vulnerability, bring it to God in prayer, and witness His perfect power.

Second, surrender your vulnerability to God's use. For instance, a child brought five loaves and two fish to Jesus, and He used them to feed five thousand people (John 6:8-13). Our vulnerability might seem like a weakness, but God can transform it into a blessing for others..

Jesus accepts vulnerable people, strengthens them, and uses them to be extensions of His love to the world (Matt. 11:28-30). [jp]

Reflective Questions

- What are your vulnerabilities that you find hard to accept, even refusing to acknowledge them before God? Why do you find it difficult to embrace these vulnerabilities?
- Are you sure that God can use your vulnerabilities to bring glory to Him? If yes, seek a mature believer to help you.

Prayer

O God who is all-knowing and all-powerful, we come bringing all our vulnerabilities as sinful humans before You. You know, O God, that we have struggled with these vulnerabilities for so long, but in this glorious Easter moment, we long to follow the example of the Savior. Embracing our vulnerabilities and surrendering them to You to bring glory to You. Accept, O loving God, Amen.

16 April 2025

ABANDONMENT

Trusting In The Darkness

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

(Matthew 27:46)

John J. Pasquini, in his work *On God's Existence*, states that for atheists, suffering proves that God does not exist. Is that true? Actually, when suffering and darkness come into our lives, they do not automatically negate the reality/existence of God, and this is proven when Jesus cries out, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*" on the cross.

Jesus' cry shows that God does exist—because if God did not exist, let alone be a mere fiction, then Jesus' cries to the Father would be in vain.

Moreover, the statement "My God" shows an intimate relationship between Jesus and the Father. Jesus knew exactly who the Father was and His trustworthy plan. In this regard, Larry Chouinard once said, "**His (Jesus) petition does not express hopelessness or utter despair, but a trust in God's ultimate vindication.**" A.W. Pink, a reformed theologian, also said, "**It was a cry of distress but not of distrust.**"

Even though God exists and is real, this part is still difficult for us to understand in our logical thinking. Why and how could God forsake Jesus? This part is certainly a divine mystery that happened on that day ("Deepest Mystery"), when Jesus bore the sins of mankind and had to enter death on the cross. Paul in Galatians 3:13 says that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us..." In another part, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

Although what happened that day is a divine mystery that transcends our understanding, at least we can understand that what Jesus said represents the cry of sinful man experiencing separation from God, so that for us who believe in Him, we no longer need to experience what Jesus said—yes, we will never be abandoned and forsaken by God, no matter how dark the life we are currently facing and experiencing. Are we willing to trust Him? [yc]

Reflective Questions

- While Jesus endured the heaviest suffering and darkness on the cross, how do you respond to His love?
- When you go through difficult times and feel far from God, how can you emulate Jesus in surrendering yourself completely to Him in faith?

Prayer

O Lord, thank You for Your work...

Because of You, we will no longer be forsaken,,

Because of You, we will no longer walk alone,

In You, we find rest,

In You, we find salvation,

We will not be forsaken, we will not be neglected,

Thanks, praise, and honor only to Your name,

From now until forever. Amen.

17 April 2025

LOVE

Selfless love

"Woman, behold, your son!" (John 19:26-27)

The person closest to us, even before we were born, is our mother. When we fall and our knees are scraped, when we are hungry, when we are sad and disappointed, she is the first person we turn to. No wonder that among the thousands of words in the dictionary, the word "mama" is the first to come out of our mouths. The mother knows all our helplessness and weaknesses. When the Son of God became a man, He was certainly not immune to such experiences. Jesus knew what it was like to be a helpless child who had to be cared for by His mother, Mary.

As time went by, this situation reversed. It is not known exactly when, but we can be sure that Joseph had died, as his name is never mentioned again in the Gospels. A widow, especially a poor one, was one of the most helpless groups at that time. Fortunately, this fate did not befall Mary because she was not alone. Now Mary depended on Jesus. As the eldest son, Jesus was Mary's mainstay because the responsibility as the head of the family was transferred to Him, according to Jewish customs at that time. Jesus became a carpenter and provided for His mother and siblings. Even before His ministry began, when He attended a wedding feast of a relative in Cana that ran out of wine, Mary relied on Him to solve the problem (John 2:3-4).

Isn't it strange? Jesus' ministry lasted only 3.5 years, while for 30 years He lived with Mary and served her as her eldest son. This closeness is often overlooked because the Bible only gives a few clues. One of the clearest and most beautiful clues is in this third word from the cross.

Jesus had to leave His mother to fulfill the Messianic prophecy of saving all mankind, including Mary herself. However, He understood that Mary needed Him not only as her Savior, Messiah, Lord, and King, but also as her son who provided for her and ensured her well-being. Therefore, Jesus said to Mary, "Woman, behold, your son," and to John, "Behold, your mother." This way, His mother would not live in poverty without Him.

Jesus loved Mary, not only as her Lord and Savior, but also as her eldest son. That is why, even in the midst of extreme pain, He could still give comfort and assurance through John.

In our daily lives, we tend to be overly focused on grand ambitions or extraordinary tasks. However, what about the simple yet profound act of loving those closest to us? Every individual God places in our lives is someone He has entrusted to our care and love. Regrettably, we often neglect them in favor of perceived more significant pursuits.

If Jesus, who carried the task of saving the whole world, could still remember His mother, shouldn't we, whose tasks are much smaller than His, be able to emulate His love and direct it to our families? [do]

Reflective Questions

- How have you expressed your love to those closest to you, particularly your family and parents?
- Are there things that have caused you to fail to love them or even forget and neglect them? What can you do to improve this?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, forgive us for frequently forgetting to love those You have placed close to us. Help us always remember that You have entrusted them to our care, and strengthen our love for them.. Amen.

18 April 2025

COMPLETION

Redemption Accomplished

"It is finished." (John 19:30)

"It is finished" is the sixth of the seven last words spoken by Jesus. These words have intrigued prominent church thinkers throughout history, prompting them to unravel their meaning and the significance behind their utterance as Jesus reached the zenith of his suffering on the cross.

In Greek, these two words are derived from the word *tetelestai*. The root word, *telos*, signifies the completion of a task with a specific purpose. Within the context of religious rituals, it denotes the fulfilment of a ritual with a predetermined meaning.

There are several meanings of *tetelestai* that we can learn in the context of Jesus' crucifixion. First, the journey of His life in His incarnation as a man on earth is finished. He knew that in a few moments He would give up His spirit. Second, His suffering on earth is about to end. As the King of kings, He chose to be confined in Mary's womb. He was born not in a place worthy of the King: in a manger, in a small town. He grew up in Galilee, which was considered 'less religious' by the Jewish religious leaders. He experienced various rejections, mockery, and humiliation in the last few years. He was betrayed by His disciple, and when arrested, He was abandoned by His disciples. He endured extreme suffering in the last few hours. All of it will be finished. He will no longer suffer. Third, it also means He has completed the mission given by His Father. In John 4:34, Jesus says that His food is to do the will of Him (God the Father) who sent Jesus and to finish His work. The work assigned by the Father to Him is also the fulfilment of many Old Testament prophecies about Christ and the gospel of salvation He brought. Various prophecies have been fulfilled through His life and work (Isa. 7:14; Gen. 22:18; Mic. 5:2; Ps. 69:4; Isa. 53, Ps. 22, etc.). Jesus was aware of all these things, and at the end of His ministry, Jesus said: "I have glorified You on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do." (John 17:4) And the word *tetelestai* very briefly summarizes that completion.

The text of John does not provide a description of how Jesus uttered the word *tetelestai*.

However, Matt. 27:50, Mark 15:37 state that after being given a drink, Jesus cried out with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. Many interpreters say that this was the word *tetelestai* that Jesus cried out. This is a voice of victory, a voice that declares the consistency of obedience to the task given by the Father from eternity and His love for sinners.

Jesus was willing to suffer for sinful man and initiate the restoration of creation that had been tainted by sin. There is nothing more that needs to be or can be added to His wonderful and perfect work. We only need to accept with faith all His work of salvation, faithfully carry out the fruit of that salvation, and work to complete what is God's will for every believer as written in the Bible. At the end of life, by God's grace and on a much smaller scale compared to Jesus, may we also be able to say 'it is finished'. [tdk]

Reflective Questions

- How does Jesus' statement affect your understanding and heart about God (especially the Persons of the Father and the Son) and the way of salvation that God has opened for sinful man? How did you come to be on that path of salvation?
- If you have been saved, what do you know about God's purpose and plan for you who are walking on that path of salvation? Have you been involved in God's purpose and plan for you? What steps do you need to take further to be obedient to the end in doing what God wills? Think, for example, of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, good works in Ephesians 2:10, spiritual life in Galatians 5:16-26, and so on.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your wonderful love and the beauty of the plan of salvation that You worked through Your Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit so that we may be saved. We thank You that You are faithful and that Jesus is also faithful in completing the work of salvation perfectly. Lead us so that we may live the life of salvation sincerely and obediently so that we may complete Your will and purpose for our lives well until the end. Amen.

19 April 2025

SURRENDER

Total Surrender

"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46)

In the religious beliefs of the world, there's always a concept of a loving and merciful God. However, it's only on the cross of Jesus that we witness the manifestation of this love beyond mere words, teachings, or promises. God, driven by His boundless love for humanity, extends His embrace to us even in the depths of death. Despite our initial betrayal, abandonment, and replacement of God with materialistic pursuits like wealth, power, and honor, which ultimately led to our downfall, God, the embodiment of love, chose not to abandon us but embraced us even in our destruction.

This profound expression of love is what we witness in the final words of Jesus from the cross. As the divine being who descended to humanity, He willingly surrendered His life and embraced death, offering salvation to those who are lost and perished due to our sins and transgressions. Through His sacrifice, we can be embraced, found, restored, and receive eternal salvation. There is no greater expression of love than the one God demonstrated through the death of Christ.

In this great expression of love, we also encounter the greatest betrayal ever on earth. Namely, by those who reject even the love that tries to embrace even to the point of death. As humans, because of the depth and extent of our corruption due to sin, we distance ourselves, and even blatantly reject the love expressed on the cross. Here we can see how deep and rooted the impact of sin is on us humans. Sin is not just an act against God's will and command; sin is a power that binds, blinds, and kills us so that we cannot feel and respond to God's love for us. Not only that, sin even makes us able to reject that love.

In this last word, we also witness the mystery of the Triune God revealed to us clearly, where Jesus, the Son of God, surrenders His spirit to God the Father as a distinct person of the Triune God. [dk]

Reflective Questions

- God's love has been manifested not only through words but also through actions, even to the extent of His sacrifice on the cross. Have you experienced God's love? Take some time to reflect on any obstacles that may have prevented you from fully experiencing God's love in your life.
- In what profound way does the expression of God's love, even to the point of death, inspire you to fully trust and surrender yourself to Him? Are there any obstacles or fears that prevent you from making this radical commitment to God?

Prayer

O loving and merciful God, once again allow us to feel the depth of Your love and sacrifice for us. Forgive us for often being unable to feel Your love because we are too busy focusing our lives not on God but on what is not God. May we once again turn and surrender our lives completely to You who first embraced us beyond death. Amen.

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