



# Jesus' Words on the Cross

FaithBuilder 4 | Lesson 25 | Easter

## Lesson Overview

### 1. BrainBuilder

Why are first and last things important?

### 2. Read

Read the Lord's Seven Last Words and basic explanations about their meaning, pp. 1-2

### 3. Discuss

Respond to the implications of Jesus' words on the cross in your own life. p. 3

## New Church Concept God's Mercy

From pure love, and thus from pure mercy, the Lord assumed the Human, and endured the most grievous temptations and finally the passion of the cross, that He might save the human race. By this merit and righteousness became His. From this it is clear that the good of merit is mercy. Mercy is the Divine love toward those who are set fast in a state of misery. *Arcana Coelestia* 9528

## BrainBuilder—First and Last

The Writings say that when you're trying to understand the Word it's important to pay attention to the first and last things said.

1. Why is this?
2. The Gospel of John begins with the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) What do these words reveal about Jesus?
3. The first and last chapters of Revelation the Lord said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." (Revelation 1:8; 22:13) What does this communicate about the Lord?
4. The last words a person says before dying are considered to be important. They may communicate what a person cares about, what he or she stands for. What were Jesus' last words in the world?

## Read

The seven statements Jesus made while He was on the cross are sometimes called the "Seven Last Words". As you read them, think of Jesus' love for the human race.

1. Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. Luke 23:34
2. Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43
3. Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother. John 19:26-27
4. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34
5. I thirst. John 19:28
6. It is finished. John 19:30
7. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Luke 23:46

As the Lord was on the cross experiencing feelings far beyond our imagining; experiencing pain in body and attacks from terrible forces in hell, His first words were about forgiveness. His concern was not for Himself, but for those who were harming Him. The Writings tell us that "He prayed on the cross for His enemies, and thus for all in the whole world." (*Arcana Coelestia* 1690)

The Lord's thought was for the whole human race *and* for each individual. The next thing He said on the cross was spoken to one man—to one of the thieves who was crucified with Him. The thief had said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Earlier in His life, He had said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12: 32). The Writings say that the Lord "wills to save everyone and to draw him with mighty power to heaven, that is, to Himself" (*Arcana Coelestia* 1038).

The third thing the Lord said on the cross showed His concern for Mary, His earthly mother. We read: "When Jesus therefore, saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."

Although the Lord was truly thirsty when He said, "I thirst," there was more to it than that. In the past He had told His disciples that His food was to do the work He came on earth to accomplish: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34). The Writings say, "Because He came into the world to save humankind, He said, "I thirst," which means that from Divine love He willed and desired the salvation of the human race" (*Apocalypse Explained* 386.30).

To accomplish the salvation of the human race was the Lord's one task in His life. It was the cup He came on earth to drink, and the part that was very hard was a bitter cup. It was so bitter that He had prayed that He would not have to drink it: "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). But despite the bitterness, the Lord did each and every thing He came on earth to do. And when on the cross He said, "It is finished", that great work of His was done.

The accomplishment of this great work brought a wonderful peace. That is why when He had risen from the tomb in which His body had been laid, He greeted His disciples with the words, "Peace to you" (see Luke 24:36; John 20:21,26). And in the Heavenly Doctrine, we are told that

When the Lord had united His Human to the Divine Itself, He had peace, for then the combats had ceased, and all things in the heavens and hells had been reduced to order; and thus not only He had peace, but the angels in the heavens and people on earth also had peace and salvation. *Arcana Coelestia* 10730.2

Adapted from *The Lord's Words of Love on the Cross*, a talk by Rev. Donald Rose

## New Church Concept The Lord's Temptations

As regards the Lord's temptations in general, some were more external and some more internal; and the more internal they were, the more grievous. The inmost ones are described by the Evangelists. See what has been said before respecting the Lord's temptations, namely:

- That the Lord first contended from goods and truths which appeared as goods and truths
- That He contended against the evils of the love of self and the world from Divine Love toward the whole human race
- That He alone contended from the Divine Love
- That all the hells fought against the Lord's love, which was for the salvation of the whole human race
- That the Lord endured the most grievous temptations of all
- That the Lord became righteousness from His own power by means of temptations and victories
- That the union of His Human Essence with His Divine Essence was effected by the Lord by means of temptations and victories.

*Arcana Coelestia* 2819

## Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. Who was Jesus calling “Father” while He was on the cross? His inner soul? A separate Being?
2. How do Jesus’ amazing words of love, “Father, forgive them,” apply today? For what does the Lord forgive us? Is there anything He can not forgive?
3. Have you ever felt that God has abandoned you? Is it possible for God to abandon you?
4. Jesus experienced the most challenging temptations of His life on the cross. How might He have felt abandoned (forsaken) in the fight to overcome evil?
5. Did Jesus die for our sins?
6. Are people today guaranteed salvation because Jesus died on the cross?
7. What had Jesus accomplished when He said, “It is finished?”
8. What is the difference between Jesus’ work of redemption and our salvation? (see *True Christian Religion* 126, below.)
9. How are our spiritual battles similar to the Lord’s temptations? In what ways are our battles different?
10. Did the events of the cross unfold in the way that the Lord had told His disciples? In what ways were the events different than they had expected?
11. What do the Lord’s last words on the cross reveal?

There are two things for which the Lord came into the world, and by means of which He saved people and angels—redemption and the glorification of His Human....The work of redemption was a combat against the hells, a subjugation of the hells, and a restoration of order in the heavens. But glorification is the uniting of the Lord’s Human with the Divine of His Father. This was effected gradually, and was completed through the passion of the cross.... The union itself was made complete through the passion of the cross, because that was the last temptation endured by the Lord in the world; and it is by means of temptations that conjunction is effected. *True Christian Religion* 126

It was through union with His Father—completed through the passion of the cross—that the Lord became the Redeemer to all eternity. See *True Christian Religion* 127

True faith is...in the Lord God the Savior Jesus Christ and this is held by those who believe Him to be the Son of God, the God of heaven and earth, and one with the Father. *True Christian Religion* 379:1