

Seven Words from the Cross – A Reflective Service of Prayer

Father, forgive them.

They do not know what they are doing.

Before you die, Jesus Christ,
And the world goes into deep darkness,
Take from our lives,
From our souls,
From our consciences
All that has offended you,
All that has hurt others,
And the intransigence
Which has made us numb to the plight
Of those whom we could help or heal.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
Grant us your peace.

On this day, at this time,
Irrespective of our faith or lack of it,
We accept deeply in our hearts
The only words that can set us free:

Your sins are forgiven,
Your sins are forgiven,
Amen.

Today you will be with me in paradise.

Lord Jesus, remember us
When you come into your kingdom.

Remember us,
Not for our impressive CV,
Nor for the things
Which we hope will appear in our obituaries.

Remember us, not for the virtues we occasionally display
Or for any credit
We think we have in our moral account.

Remember us,
As one of the criminal community
Who hung by your side,
And if life will not let us be in paradise with you today,
Keep a place for us.
Amen.

Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom
Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom

Mother, here is your son...

For our families,
Where they are open, loving, supportive,
That their joy might be kept safe,
Lord hear us.
Lord graciously hear us.

For our families,
Where they are tense, troubled, fragmented,
Seething with suspicion,
That they may find a way through pain,
Not a path away from it.
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For our churches,
Where they risk welcoming the stranger,
Were in language, hospitality,
Evangelism and service,
They employ the imagination rather than the rule book,
That they might be encouraged and surprised by joy,
Lord hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

For our churches, where they have become introverted,
Suspicious of the stranger,
Obsessed with dead rather than living stones,
Suffocated by tradition,
That they might be redeemed
From the pawnshop of past glory
And moved by the power of the Holy Spirit,
Lord hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

For ourselves, in this place of worship,
Surrounded by people
Whose journey we have not travelled,
Whose depth of faith we do not know,
Whose potentials we cannot imagine,
That we might somehow know we belong to each other,
Lord hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

And before you leave the cross and we vacate this holy place,
If there is one of your family
for whom we should care more fondly,
Direct our gaze to them,
As you turned Mary towards John.
Amen.

Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom
Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Lord Jesus, by your cry of desperate honesty,
Rid us of superficial faith
Which is afraid of the dark.
Not so that we might be justified pessimists,
But so that we might discover profound joy,
Give us, when we need it, the courage to doubt, to rage, to question, to rail
against heaven until we know we are heard.

We do not ask for easy answers to hard times;
There are many who can offer these.

We ask for a sense of your solidarity,
That will be enough to let us know that we do not walk or cry alone;
That will enable us to go through the dark
And find light again in the morning.
Amen.

Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom
Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom

I am thirsty

You have made us for yourself.
We know it, even if we cannot name it.

We have had these bodies and these minds long enough
to learn to live with our limitations.

Yet despite this,
Something in us hankers, years, thirsts for something better,
Something greater which we know is there.

Beautiful music end and we wish it could continue.

We embrace, then refrain from embracing
And wish that we could be held for ever.
We think deeply or feel deeply
And wish that this sense of being caught up in living
Would not be interrupted
By the mundane things in life.

We sense the disappointment in dashed hopes
That deserve to be fulfilled,
In missed opportunities
Which should have led to joy not frustration,
In people whose potential
Has been buried or denied and deserves to flourish.

So much of life demands a resolution.

So thank you for this incompleteness,
Thank you for this yearning,
Thank you for this thirst.

Thank you for giving us enough of you to want more,
And so to sense the fullness of eternity within the limits of time. Amen

***Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom
Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom***

It is finished.

Now, Lord Jesus, you can let go of us.
You have convinced us of our sin
And you have forgiven it.
You have convinced us of your way
And have engaged us on it.
You have shown us a foretaste of heaven
And made us members of its commonwealth.
You can let go of us now.
Having overcome the sin of the world,
Death will be a small obstacle.
Just as you foretold that you would be handed over to be crucified and this
has come true;
Also as you foretold,
On the third day you will rise again.
And we will be your witnesses.
Amen.

***Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom
Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom***

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Go, silent friend, your life has found its ending.
To dust returns your weary mortal frame.
God, who before birth, called you into being,
Now calls you back,
His accent still the same.

Lord Jesus, we let you go.
You cannot cling to life forever,
Nor can we cling to a dying frame,

Nor do we grudge you that peace which passes understanding which you have promised us.

So go to heaven,
Where you will welcome those who die in your faith,
Whose death, with your death, we remember.

Tell them that we love them,
That we miss them,
That they are not forgotten.

And cheered by the prospect of a day
When there will be no more death or parting,
And all shall be well, and all shall be one,
Any that have died before us be among the first to welcome us into heaven
Where, with you enthroned in glory
We will share in the everlasting feast of your family.

Till then,
Keep us in faith,
Fill us with hope,
Deepen us through love,
To the glory of your holy name,
Amen.

Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom
Jesus, remember me as you come into your kingdom