

## I.N.I.

Good Friday  
March 29, 2013  
Luke 23:46

In Christ Jesus, our Crucified Savior, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We have been listening in on Passionate Prayers of our Savior and we have heard from the cross that Jesus ended as He began, praying to His Father. He began by praying, **"FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY DO"** and He ended by praying, **"FATHER, 'INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.'"**

This evening we will be discussing both Jesus' last words as well as His last act before He died. What a blessing it is for us to hear these words of Jesus. A blessing for two reasons. A blessing because it assures us of Jesus' complete sacrifice for us and a blessing when we too face our own departure from this life.

Remember that Jesus had just endured 6 hours of agony on the cross. The last three hours being forsaken by His Father suffering the eternal torments of hell and damnation. How Satan must have been tempting Jesus, whispering into His ear—"give up on your Father. He is laying all of this on You. He doesn't really love You. Curse God and die." How severely Christ's love for His Father was put to the test.

How severely Christ's love for sinful mankind was also put to the test. The people around Him, for whom He was dying as their sacrifice, were ridiculing Him—**"YOU WHO DESTROY THE TEMPLE AND BUILD IT IN THREE DAYS, SAVE YOURSELF! IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS....HE SAVED OTHERS; HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE. IF HE IS THE KING OF ISRAEL, LET HIM NOW COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS, AND WE WILL BELIEVE HIM. HE TRUSTED IN GOD; LET HIM DELIVER HIM NOW IF HE WILL HAVE HIM; FOR HE SAID, 'I AM THE SON OF GOD.'"**

They made fun of His trust in His heavenly Father. But Jesus withstood the temptation, passed the test and clung to His heavenly Father, even after being forsaken by Him, clung to Him to the very end, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

What an example also for us when we are going through trials, temptations, tests of all kinds. When Satan tries to get us to believe that God has forsaken us, doesn't love us, doesn't care for us so we should cease our prayers, give up our trust, despair for it is all useless. Let's look to Jesus as our example of trusting in God our dear Father, no matter what may befall us in this world, even to our dying moment and last breath.

Jesus had been delivered by His own people into the hands of the Roman soldiers. They tortured Him, ridiculed, mocked and taunted Him. They beat and bloodied Him, but He didn't die in agony, with teeth clenched in despair and fear, He died peacefully in His Father's arms with these words on His lips: **"FATHER, 'INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.'"**

Jesus was quoting Psalm 31:5. These were words that the Old Testament Jews used for their evening prayers. As an evening prayer the thought was that their heavenly Father would stand watch over His child during the coming hours of darkness and bring them safe and refreshed to the dawn of a new day.

By this prayer Jesus indicates that He is calmly and peacefully falling asleep into the loving arms of His heavenly Father confident of His resurrection from the dead.

Indeed blessed is the person who can from the heart make these words of Christ his own on his death-bed. Stephen spoke these words when he was being pummeled by stones, dying he prayed: **LORD JESUS, RECEIE MY SPIRIT.**

The martyr John Hus, who lived about 100 years before Martin Luther, prayed while he was being led to the stake to be burned for preaching Christ crucified: **I commit my spirit into Your hands, O Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed it.**

And Martin Luther as he lay dying and knew death was near spoke these last words: **Father, into**

**Your hands I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O faithful God.**

What a wonderful prayer for:

**A BLESSED DEPARTURE FROM THIS LIFE**

Jesus departed from this life in such a way that we need never, never fear our own departure. It is a fact of life—that in the midst of life we are in death. But thankfully because of Christ Jesus, it is also true that in the midst of death we are in life.

Christ has bestowed on us a blessed departure. Though faith in Him we will follow the same path He took. Through His blessed death we are assured of our own blessed, peaceful death, placing our body and soul into our heavenly Fathers' loving arms.

How each of us dies may be different---cancer, sudden heart attack, in our sleep, or fiery car crash; but how we meet death in Christ will all be the same. In peace! We need not be filled with fear. How can death be frightful when we know that we shall place our souls into such loving hands as our heavenly Father who created us and sent His Son to redeem us. May these words be in our hearts and upon our lips as we breathe our last: **"FATHER, 'INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT."**

We also see in our text this evening that Jesus' death was different from other people's deaths. Of Stephen was are told—**HE FELL ASLEEP**. Of others it just says they died. But Jesus' death did not come about because of exhaustion or man's cruel execution. We are told that Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and then breathed His last, gave up His spirit.

When people die, they cannot help themselves, their time has come and they must submit to the higher power of death. They cannot keep death away any longer. But Jesus is not conquered by death. To the very last moment His power is superior to the power of death. He is in possession of all of His vitality and strength. Remember what He said: **I LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THE SHEEP. I LAY DOWN MY LIFE THAT I MAY TAKE IT AGAIN. NO ONE TAKES IT FROM ME, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MYSELF. I HAVE POWER TO LAY IT DOWN, AND I HAVE POWER TO TAKE IT AGAIN.**

His breathing His last was His last act on our behalf to secure our salvation. He willingly gave Himself into death. One commentator picturesquely wrote: **"It was as if the angel of death was standing afar off, afraid to approach, but Jesus beckons him and commands him to stretch forth his icy hand. It was a voluntary act, an act of His own choice and free will when He breathed His last."** For so it had been ordained from eternity that the Lamb should be slain willingly.

With these words and in this way Jesus closes out His perfect life here on earth. Perfect in everyway. Perfect in His obedience to God's Laws and perfect in His fulfillment of all of God's prophesies. It is clear that the dying Lamb of God took a blessed departure out of this life, not only for Himself, but for us. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep---the sheep that loved to wander and stray away in disobedience.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, can we ever sufficiently praise and thank our dear Savior for all that He did for us on this Good Friday. Are we not all poor, damnable sinners? Have we not all deserved death and eternal damnation because of our sins? Would we not all be eternally lost if our Savior had not come to our rescue and suffered and died for us?

Oh, how He must love us in perfect love to endure the bitter pangs of the eternal torment of hell itself, and then to give Himself into death so that we might live forever. What a blessed treasure we have been given in Christ.

**A BLESSED DEPARTURE FROM THIS LIFE**

May all of our hearts and voices be moved to proclaim:

**GLORY,  
PRAISE,  
THANKSGIVING,  
HONOR AND POWER  
TO THE LAMB  
THAT WAS SLAIN**

**FOR US!**

**Amen.**