



river west church

Seven Words From the Cross

Luke 23:34

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3.17.2013

Easter morning explodes into view. Read the Gospels and see. Bright and early they came to the tomb. Then, suddenly they were sprinting away, the bearers of Good News. He's alive!

In contrast to this, the story of the cross unfolds slowly. It inches along, exquisitely distilling the anguish of Christ; pressing us to gaze hard at the epicenter of our redemption.

God designed the Gospels this way for a reason. The power of God pulses through the story. This is the Gospel on display. He highlights the wonder of both cross and resurrection. The resurrection calls forth a sudden burst of celebration and sets lives on mission. The cross calls us to a serious season of reflection, to ponder every nuance of the suffering of Christ, to plumb the depths of its significance for our lives.

So this is our moment. Two weeks to press into Gospel truth.

For the next two weeks we'll dive deep into the wonders of the cross of Christ. We'll do this by focusing on the "seven words from the cross." These are the seven phrases that Christ spoke during His crucifixion. Each one is deep with meaning. Each one reveals something of the heart of God, the work of Christ, and the wonder of our redemption.

Both this Sunday and next, the sermon will be taken from one of the seven words. On each of these Sundays we will be taking communion as a church. Then, on Good Friday we will have a special service in which we will meditate together on all seven of the "words" from the cross. Our prayer is that God will use these services and these "seven words" to guide our way to Easter morning and that explosion of life, joy and power that comes with it.

Here are the seven Words:

- 1) "Father, forgive them, for they know not 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... (John) Behold your mother." (John 19:26-27)
- 4) "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
- 5) "I thirst." (John 19:30)
- 6) "It is finished." (John 19:30)
- 7) "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46)