

TITLE: JESUS' GREATEST SERMON: ACTIONS AND WORDS

INTRO: It's said that actions speak louder than words. This is generally true, because many times people say, but don't do. Today's sermon is about Jesus' final words. But when we read them and think about them, I think we'll see that they were really actions. Jesus preached many sermons to many multitudes, and taught many people in more personal settings as well. But perhaps His greatest sermon was witnessed (not just heard) through his words on the cross – words that clearly showed who He was throughout His life. *Actions may speak louder than words, but in *this* case, there is no difference between the two!

I. WORDS OF COMPASSION & FORGIVENESS (LUKE 23:34):

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

- A. “Forgive” – Over & over we're told to forgive! **Mt 18:21-35**–“70 times 7.” **Mt 6:12** – “*forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*” Our example is to forgive, just like we have been forgiven. Yet Jesus, being sinless, shows that this is an example, but not the main **reason**. If Jesus' compassion in forgiveness was predicated on His being forgiven, He wouldn't have been able to forgive anyone, seeing that nobody forgave Him (He had nothing to forgive)! In other words, He had no reason to ask God to forgive them, other than His compassion! In this He was the ultimate example of forgiveness.
- B. Why ask *God* to forgive them? Didn't Jesus have power on earth to forgive sins? He did (**Mk 2:10**), and in **Lk 23:43** (#2 below), he *did* forgive the thief. But these two had shown at least an early form of repentance. But here, Jesus is not just speaking of the Jewish & Roman leaders or the Roman soldiers, etc., but of all the world (whose sins put him there). Here he is referring to the ultimate plan of forgiveness & salvation, which would come later (**Acts 2**), when it was offered to all.

II. WORDS OF FORGIVENESS, SALVATION, & PEACE (LUKE 23:43):

“Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

- A. Is there a more beautiful sentence anywhere in Scripture? Could there be better words of peace & comfort than these?
- B. This man was not subject to the **baptism** of Jesus, which was part of Jesus' **will**, and Jesus had not yet died. What he was subject to was the requirement of **repentance** (as under any covenant of God). And this he did. After he had mocked him in telling him to come down from the cross (**Mt 27:44**–& context), he changed his mind (he repented) and asked for forgiveness.
- C. Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins, and that He did, showing compassion on someone who didn't deserve it! This was the very purpose of his coming to earth!

III. WORDS OF AFFECTION & RESPONSIBILITY (JOHN 19:26-27):

When Jesus saw his mother & the disciple standing by, he saith, “Woman behold thy son!” And to the disciple, “Behold thy mother!”

- A. In **Lk 7**, Jesus raised the widow's son out of compassion for the widow, who had been left on her own (no husband or son). Mary was most likely a widow, Joseph having already died (no mention of him after early years). And though having other children, Mary may have been in a needful situation (her other children weren't followers of Jesus til years later).
- B. With everything on his mind, Jesus didn't forget 2 things: **1)** His responsibility to take care of her, & **2)** his love for her. John, the disciple He loved, was one of Jesus' closest friends, and was also affluent enough to take care of her. So he left her in good hands.

IV. WORDS OF ANGUISH & DISTRESS (MATT 27:46; MARK 15:34):

“Eli, Eli, lama sabbach-thani” (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?)

- A. This is from **Psalms 22:1**–“*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*” Christ's words are a fulfillment of this prophecy.
- B. Did God forsake (desert, abandon) Him? This is what Christ said. Christ was sinless, but carried the sins of the world (including yours & mine) to the cross (**2 Cor 5:21**). God could not be a part of sin (**Hab 1:13**–“*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity...*”). Our sin caused Jesus to be forsaken by God the Father! And this emotion comes out here.

V. WORDS OF HUMANITY (JOHN 19:28):

“I thirst.” Then they filled a sponge with vinegar (sour wine) and gave it to Him to drink.

- A. **Psalms 69:21**–“*they gave me vinegar to drink.*”
- B. Word of humanity – Jesus came to live as a human & experience humanity completely. He could've satisfied this thirst Himself. But His miraculous abilities were not for taking care of Himself. They were always used for the benefit of others. This statement shows His humanity – His ability to know how *you* feel when *you* thirst (**Heb 2:17-18; 4:15**).

VI. WORDS OF COMPLETION & TRIUMPH (JOHN 19:30):

“It is finished (end, complete, perfect).”

- A. Completion – *It has been completed* (perf. tense). His mission to die was complete. He finished drinking the cup He came to drink.
- B. Triumph – He's not just saying, “I'm done,” but “I've won!” I've completed my task successfully! No temptations could stop me!

VII. WORDS OF CONTENTMENT (LUKE 23:46):

“Father, into thy hands I commend (commit, place, put) my spirit.”

- A. *Father, I put my spirit in your hands.* **Psa 31:5**–*Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.*
- B. This is death (**Jam 2:26**). **Jn 10:17-18**–*No man taketh it from me...(I) take it again.* Having been obedient to God at all times, Jesus can now have this contentment in knowing it is finished, & that God will take His spirit. We can have this same contentment!

CONCLUSION: **1 Pet 2:21**–“*Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow his steps...*” We should have the same love & compassion that Jesus had. Jesus, while dying at the hands of his persecutors, blessed them, forgave them, & prayed for them. Could we do this? Jesus promised the thief he would be in Paradise. Many today offer this same promise, even preaching the dead into Heaven. But Jesus' promise was (& is) conditional upon obedience to the plan. The thief obeyed (he repented). Will you (believe, repent, & be baptized)?