

Every Man in His Place

John Glenn - unusual plea, Rediscover the individual -

Individual initiative.

Team achievement in point of scientific accomplishments opened the space age - Multitude played part -

Book Numbers

Moses - Sinai March, 2 million

Sea - wilderness.

Scout - Jewish Issachar, Zebulun 186,000  
400 fighting men on flank -

Fighting force well organized.

"So shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standard".

Individual effort -

Goal's Program - told what will they have to do?

Personal attendance, witnessing it -

Powerful

Powerful possibilities.

Not do gooders -

Peril

2 sisters - Refrigerator - tragedy - someone  
neglect -

Many people supporting spiritually - Nicholas Strand

John Glenn  
Every man  
in his place

# What Do You Think of The 1<sup>st</sup> Xmas Gift.

Give your first Xmas impression

## 1. What Others Thought & Said.

- Angel - Luke 2:11 - Saviour
- Shepherds - Luke 2:18, 20 - wonder - praised.
- Simon - Luke 2:30 - Salvation
- Anna - Luke 2:38 - Redemption
- Mary - Luke 1:47 - My Saviour
- Joseph - Matt. 1:25 - Jesus - Saviour
- Wise Men - Matt. 2:11 - Gifts - King
- Herod - Matt. 2:16 - Hated
- J. Baptist - J. 1:7 - Light  
1:29 - Lamb.

## 2. What is This Gift to you?

S.N. Oct 4, 1970 A.M.

THE FIRST WORD FROM THE CROSS

Luke 23:34

The seven words of Jesus spoken from the cross enabled us to trace somewhat the story that is sacred to all of us. The cross is where we begin. And we want in these first Sundays to take our stand beneath the cross of Jesus and to examine these words. There are seven of them, in which he spoke.

The first word had to do really with prayer and the place was most unlikely. The last place perhaps in all the world that anyone would have expected to hear a prayer. And perhaps the last people on earth expected to hear anyone praying were the Roman soldiers, who had just crucified Christ. They were accustomed to their victims cursing their spectators, condemning the soldiers.

During the lifetime of Jesus he had taught men forgiveness. He had told men to bless the men who cursed him and do good to those who hated them, and to pray for those who persecuted them.

The word uttered here was a word from the cross from the lips of death. And words are like pictures. They help us to see.

First of all we notice the place was unlikely. The crucifixion was the most painful method of execution that evil minds ever devised. So terrible was it that the Roman law forbade its use in the case of Roman citizens.

It consisted in an upright piece with a beam across it. The upright piece was placed first in a hole in the ground. With the cross piece lying flat on the ground. The victim was made to lie down with his arms outstretched.

And they say after jerking the arms and legs out of joint to render the victim helpless - his arms were bound by ropes to the cross beam. Then nails were driven through the feet, hands, and into the wood. After the victim had been drawn into position, the beam was fastened to the upright - with the body perhaps about 2 feet above the ground. Finally the victim's feet were crossed and an iron spike driven through them into the upright beam.

In all probability it was while this was taking place, they were nailing him to the cross, that he began to pray. While the men spoke words of hatred to him, the thief cursed him, he was praying.

Actually they say that Jesus prayed this prayer many times. That is, he prayed it over and over again. This tells us something of his love and his mercy.

The word was directed to the Father. This was a moment of triumph. Amidst all the strife, he addressed God as Father.

This was the attitude of Jesus toward all men who walked in darkness. While man was doing his work, he was praying for man.

Now this was not a word too many, or a word too few.

There are some who would try to take away or to add words to the list. But before the darkness descended, Jesus spoke, Father forgive them for they know not what they do. We must remember that he will speak other words - verily, I say unto thee, today thou shall be with me in paradise. Woman, behold thy son, behold thy mother. My God, my God, why hath thou forsaken me. I thirst, and it is finished. And Father into thy hands I commend thy spirit.

The most amazing thing - this was neither the time nor the place of prayer as we would consider it. Even the Roman law would have said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But here is a most unusual man. While those men curse him, he prays for them.

Gethsemane, you have a place of prayer. It was a good place. There were no nails in his hands, no curses, no crowd. And here he prayed thy will be done.


The crucifixion a place of death, pain, of the nails - no one would have ever thought that was a perfect place for prayer.

Jesus held fast to his mission. He was concerned for others and for people. And this was sincere.

He prayed, Father forgive them. The Centurion who had crushed him to the ground, the blood spike that had torn the palms of his hands, the crowd that had cursed him, the soldiers that were parting his garments and gambling for them. This prayer went up to Heaven and reached the Throne.

Where can one find a greater inspiration for faith than this. It was not unusual for a man being crucified to speak on the cross. But his words usually were wild expressions of pain. Curses against God and against those who were causing him to suffer.

The prayer proves to us that the faith of Jesus was unshaken in all of this experience. The salvation of the world was come out of this prayer and this cross.

 Second, notice the petition offered

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Now I am not sure that we all understand this prayer.

First I do not think it was a blanket pardon. That is Jesus was not praying a request to cancel all of the penalty, of all the sins of those who were standing around the cross.

We remember, he said to the women on the way to the cross, of Jerusalem - weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children.

V. 28-30. This was a prophesy of the coming wrath upon Jerusalem.

Such a request would have been inconsistent to man's freedom. And to divine justice. Forgiveness and pardon could not be thrust upon them.

Jesus never granted pardon except to individuals who petitioned it by faith. And he will grant pardon to you or to any man, if you ask it. But he will not force it upon the crowd.

Second, it was not a petition as justifying all ignorance. Now Pilate may have been ignore of Jesus and his eternal son-ship. The Jews may have been ignorant to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. But they knew that it was for envy and not justice that they had brought Jesus to Pilate.

This, in the third place, was not a petition of special reward. Jesus was not asking that this was especially for those taking part in the crucifixion. The cross was the instrument that put him to death. And it was to be an agent of blessing. It would have been contrary for him to say, Father, destroy them.

But we know that he could have summoned a legend of angels to his rescue.

Jesus in the past had often granted the forgiveness of sin and called on the Father to forgive them.

Now this does not have preference only to the four soldiers who carried out the order. He is praying for his enemies. Those immediate responsible for his death. The false witnesses, Pilate, the mob, the soldiers who were cruel. Peter, who had denied him. There was enough guilt for all.

Who really crucified Jesus. Was it just those people around the cross in Palestine at that time? Were we not present, standing there, in the midst of that group. And cannot you not see you were among the crucifiers. Christ was reviled, he reviled not again. He knew everyone who had beaten him, nailed him on the cross.

He answered his crucifiers with silence. He did not call down to them. But he called up to God, for the power to forgive.

Did not God commend his love toward us in that yet while we were sinners. Christ died for us. He prayed for the lost man, who by either deliberate choice or indifference, or denial has gone into godliness.

The soldiers had nailed an inscription which Pilate had caused to be written - Jesus of Nazareth -- The King of the Jews. The charge was written in a national language, Hebrew. In the official language, Latin. Common language, Greek. The language of religion. So the language of government, the language of culture - all of this demanded his crucifixion. The Romans applied the power.

The Greeks ignored him. The religious people rejected him.

In the New Testament it is said of the Gentiles who knew not God. They had a knowledge of him, they had heard of him. But they do not know him in their souls. Thus, these crucifiers, Jesus is saying, that in their souls they do not understand what they are doing. It was a deliberate sin.

Now Jesus did not pray a prayer just for Judas. Or sin against those who had knowledge. To the Roman's Jesus was a pretender to the throne. To the Jews, he was blasphemous. To the soldiers he was merely and simply a criminal. And to the mob, he was just a dreamer.

But remember Jesus had his heart in it. One word "forgive". And that is is tremendous word. The pardon of his enemies.

Herod had disdained him.

Pilate played fast and loose with him.

The mob had howled at him.

He had long taught men to love their enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you. Pray for them who despately persecute you. Few of us know perhaps what it really means to forgive. We have never been as deeply wronged as Jesus was.

Revenge to some people is one of the sweetest satisfactions. One of the laws that some practice is love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. Curse those who have persecuted and wronged you. Jesus prayed, they know not what they do.



This is something ~~of~~ the depth of love - did not Judas know. Did not the high priest know. Did Herod know. Did the soldier's know or was it just a day's work for them.

Jesus knew that they needed forgiveness.

### III. The Pardon Sought.

Now as Jesus spoke this from the cross, the first word - I think two or three things we can summarize.

First, Jesus was praying that the crucifixion might continue. He wanted to assume their debts. He wanted to be their saviour. And he was willing to pay with the last drop of his blood.

It is now in progress and the angels couldn't come and rescue him. He was laying down his life and they were held back.

In the second place, I think he was praying that it might not be layed to their charge. You remember Stephen was expressing the same thing in the hour of death as our Lord - lay not this sin to their charge. Acts 7:60.

The idea is to wave certain taxes that were used as a debt or a burden upon men. And so here was a compassionate plea - loose this man, forgive him of his debt. Take this burden away from him.

Jesus was not asking that their sins be ignored. A righteous God could not do that. Now, he was calling upon the Father. Knowing that they had great need

for forgiveness.

Judas knew that Jesus was innocent.

Pilate knew that Jesus had no evil in him.

The soldiers were not ignorant all together.

Those who passed by were not ignorant.

The thieves were not unmindful of Jesus.

The point, they did not understand the significance of sin and its consequences.

The Third place, this first word from the cross, the word of forgiveness. It sought to, through intercession, that judgement be held back for a moment. Now this was really the heart of the request, that the Wrath of God wait for a little while. The word used here is the same word as Matt. 19:14 - suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me. But the Disciples were directed to insist that they not interfere with the children. We see that on the cross here. That these may have been ignorant of the tragedy of the cross and the tragedy of the Gospel message.

Jesus did not wish that immediate doom like the flash of the lightning, and earthquake, or God's wrath come down upon them and cast them into justice and judgement. No man would have had a chance for salvation because no man deserved a chance.

But Jesus said hold back the winds of wrath.

He said, Father postpone the day of judgement. Give them a chance.  
And because of that prayer, the Gospel has been proclaimed to many unworthy sinners. And they have been saved.

Why does not God's judgement strike them when we ~~do~~ sin. Why does God seem to pass by the wicked men of this nation. Now they do not deceive God, but God may postpone that men may escape. But unless they turn to Jesus, they will never escape their sin and be saved.

That they might have an opportunity was the cry of Jesus from the

*God cross. always gives opportunity for Repentance - all Lot, Sodom & Gomorrah - Abraham Prayed for city - God waited, Heavenly Visitors sent to Lot's house in the after noon - Town so wicked evil men wanted to abuse the angels, wicked men struck blindness - Judgment waited all night. Lot had time to get his family together - Sun rise they departed - safely away before*  
If God answers the prayer of Jesus, God let him stay on the cross.  
If someone commits a wrong against you, you may immediately forgive him. *judgment.*

But until he repents of his wrong, and asks for your forgiveness, the broken fellowship cannot be mended.

Now the forgiveness of God cannot become effective until you repent of your sin.

We often wonder why it is that God delays his judgement against us and against nations born in sin.

Pilate washed his hands of the matter. Thousands recognize that there is sin in their lives and yet they are not saved. Still God through his mercy has delayed his judgement, and if you will repent, then you can have this pardon which is willing to forgive.

During the war between Russia and Finland 7 Russians were held prisoners in a little town hall of a Finish village. They were to be shot at sunrise.

They were communists, godless, unbelievers. They had not hope of time or eternity.

Some of them even cursed God and beat on the wall with their fists.

But one voice began to sing "Safe in the Arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast, There by his lover's shadowed, Sweetly my soul shall rest. Hark, is the voice of angels, Born in a song to me. Over the fields of Glory, over the Jasper Sea."

When the verse was finished, one of the fellows broke out - where did you get that from? Are you trying to make us religious?

This was the song of a man by the name of Koskinen. And he replied in tears, listen to me a moment.

When I first heard that song from the Salvation Army, I laughed too. But the song got me. It is a coward that would hide his beliefs. The God my mother believed in has now become my God.

I layed awake last night, and suddenly I felt I had to find a Saviour to hide in. Then I prayed, like the thief on the cross. That is our second word from the cross for next month. And Christ cleansed me and he made me ready to die.

During that night many Bible verses came, and many verses from hymns. And they brought the message of the crucified Saviour to my heart. And I have been saved - within a few hours will meet my Lord. And his face will shine Silence

followed.

Very soon one of the condemned men said, you are right. If I only knew that there was mercy for me too. But these hands have mine have shed blood and I have reviled God - I have trampled on Holy things. Would you pray for me. He sank to the ground in despair. The two men prayed.

About 4 A. M. - all 7 men were praying and soon all of them found the Saviour as the joy of his life filled their souls. They sang old hymns.

The clock struck 6 - the 7 men were marched out to face the end with their hands lifted up to Heaven, and at last they went to meet God.

They had one night to turn back to him. Jesus is <sup>still</sup> praying - Father, hold back the judgement. We can not expect this for long. We need to accept his mercy even now.