

# CHRIST'S PRAYER FROM THE CROSS

By Keith Greer

*“Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’ And they divided His garments and cast lots.” {Luke 23:34}* Jesus spoke these profound words as He was dying on the cross for the sins of the world. Let us examine some lessons we can learn from these profound words:

**Great Contrast.** *“For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. Pilate answered and said to them again, ‘What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?’ So they cried out again, ‘Crucify Him!’” {Mark 15:10-13}* The religious leaders of the day did not pity or have mercy on Jesus. Their goal was to protect their positions and rid themselves of a threat to their power. Their only concern was themselves – not others. Their attitude was just the opposite of the Lord’s.

**Human Magnanimity.** *“Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?” {Matthew 26:53,54}* The word magnanimity is defined as “courageously noble in mind and heart; generous and forgiving.” Jesus, by His willingness to die for sinners, demonstrated His great love for them. *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” {Romans 5:8}* Because of God’s great love for humanity, He sent His son {John 3:16}. Stephen showed the same type of character when he suffered death for the cause of Christ {Acts 7:60}.

**Inexcusable Ignorance.** *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” {Ephesians 5:15-17}* *“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.” {Acts 3:17}* The Jews were ignorant of the fact that their wish to have Jesus put to death fulfilled the plan that God determined before time began. But that didn’t excuse their behavior. *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” {Acts 3:19}* Jesus’ prayer, which He offered from the cross in their behalf, did not mean their forgiveness was automatic; He prayed for time that those who took His life would have opportunity to repent. Jesus provided plenty of evidence that He was the Messiah – God’s Son. Their prejudice blinded them to that great truth.

**Christ Living What He Taught.** *“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” {1 Peter 2:21-23}* The character that Christ exemplified during His life on earth followed Him even to the cross. In death He illustrated what, in life, He taught – service and concern for others before self.

**The Need of the Lost for Prayer.** *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” {Romans 10:1,2}* Jesus understood the need to pray for the lost to come to

repentance. We need to pray that the gospel will touch sinners' hearts and cause them to obey before it is too late.

Jesus was the supreme example of righteous character. In His teaching, in His personal dealing with men, personal dealing with the Jews, and all dealings with His enemies, He left an example for us to follow. God's Son always did and said the right thing. Why? So we would have an example we could turn to for encouragement and instruction. Is He your example in all you do? If so, are you striving to follow Him by walking in His paths? \*\*\*