



Last Words of Love

Seven last words from the Cross
In Readings, Prayers, Music and Silence

24th March 2024

6pm



ST MARGARET'S

PUTNEY

Welcome to St Margaret's, Putney

St Margaret's is a haven of peace in bustling Putney. A space to reflect and meet God. To connect with others, celebrate life and find support when we need it most. To grow strong bonds with our local community and make positive change.

Our services and music are rooted in the traditions of the Church of England. We want church to be inclusive, thought-provoking and fun, and we strive to make God's Word relevant and connected to everyday life. Children fully participate in Sunday Mornings, with weekly Sunday School and regular all-age services to energise and encourage their spiritual growth.

Whether you want to feel part of something bigger or need a quiet moment to yourself, there's a warm welcome waiting for you, here at the heart of your community.

St Margaret's Putney. Reflect. Connect. Grow.

*Welcome to St Margaret's.
Please take a moment before our service begins to pray.*

Introduction

Today, we stand at the foot of the cross and we hear for ourselves the last words of Jesus. We open ourselves to share in his suffering, his arrest and trial, his torture and death. Through his last words we share in his passion and his redeeming love for our broken world.

Words of welcome may follow.

Opening Prayer

Jesus, in your cross we see the casual brutality of our world,
in your living and in your dying
you meet our violence with your tenderness,
our hatred with your pity.
Have mercy upon us
when our hearts and hopes, our bodies and beliefs, are breaking
and give us grace to let go into your embrace.
Jesus, by your cross,
save us and help us, we pray.

All **Amen.**

**My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me;
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be.
O, who am I,
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die?**

**He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow:
but men made strange and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O, my friend,
my friend indeed,
who at my need,
his life did spend!**

Sometimes they strew his way
and his sweet praises sing:
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then 'Crucify!'
is all their breath
and for his death
they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries!
Yet they at these
themselves displease
and 'gainst him rise.

In life no house, no home
my Lord on earth might have;
in death no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say?
Heav'n was his home;
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.

Here might I stay and sing,
no story so divine;
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine!
This is my friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days
could gladly spend.

LOVE UNKNOWN
Samuel Crossman 1624-83
John Ireland 1879-1962

I – FATHER FORGIVE THEM

Luke 23:32-38

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Jesus. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

Reflection followed by Silence

What do we find hard to forgive?

Where has our hurting caused us to lash out?

Is there someone we need to reach out to?

How can we help ourselves to see beyond hurt and pain, still noticing goodness and beauty?

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
All **all you who wait for the Lord.**

Lord Jesus,
You took our very worst and gave your very best.
Help us to recognise our human instincts and drives,
to hurt others when we have been hurt.
Help us to walk with you in the way of forgiveness,
transforming hurt to hope,
noticing beauty and goodness,
as we are shaped by your last words of love.

All **Amen.**

There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good;
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood.

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

O, dearly, dearly has he loved,
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.

HORSLEY
Cecil F. Alexander 1818-1895
George Coles Stebbins 1846-1945

II - TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding Jesus and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The choir sing "The Love of Christ" by Tom Hewitt Jones

*What are some of the hard times we have had to face?
Have there been times when we or others have been isolated
and lonely in our suffering?
Have there been times when we or others have been able to
reach out, making connections in truth and generosity from a
place of pain?
How far are we able to let the love, rather than the pain, be
the abiding memory?*

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
All **all you who wait for the Lord.**

Lord Jesus,
In the hardest times of our lives,
help us not to become hardened.
In the pressure and stress of life,
help us not to react with anger or aggression.
Give us grace to respond with generosity,
to allow the memories of love to endure,
as we echo your last words of love.

All **Amen.**

III - HERE IS YOUR SON

John 19:25-27

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

The choir sing "The Crucifixion" by Samuel Barber

*What are our own memories of loss, grief, aloneness?
Who do we picture within our own circle of friends and family?
Where are we being called into new patterns of community?
How far do we notice and value the established networks of
love that anchor our lives?*

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
All **all you who wait for the Lord.**

Lord Jesus
You draw us into new patterns
of relationship and care.
You help us to rebuild our broken communities
through your generous, inclusive love.
Help us now to open our hearts and our homes
to find new ways to belong together,
and help us to notice and value our core networks of love,
as we are shaped by your last words of love.

All **Amen.**

IV - MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

Matthew 27:45-49

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."

The Choir sing 'Be near me Lord, when dying' by J.S. Bach

What have been the darkest times in our lives?

When have we felt forsaken or abandoned?

Have there been times we feel God has not answered our prayers?

In silence, what's the mix of presence and absence for you?

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
All **all you who wait for the Lord.**

Lord Jesus,

you share our humanity,

you understand our doubts and fears,

you know what it is to feel abandoned and alone.

Help us to voice our honest feelings,

to ask the hardest questions,

to plunge deep into silence ready to notice presence

and to hear your words of love for us.

All **Amen.**

V - I AM THIRSTY

John 19:28-29

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

Reflection followed by Silence

*When have we known real thirst?
Are we in touch with our own deepest needs?
How easy do we find it to receive?
In our daydreams or dreams, how do we hear the voice of
love?*

After the silence we respond:

All Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the Lord.

Gracious God
you know our deepest needs:
help us to hear them too.
Amid the clamouring voices of want and desire,
we thirst for your unconditional love.
help us to receive you now,
and to give space for your love as we dream dreams,
through your word of love from the cross.

All **Amen.**

**Cross of Jesus, cross of sorrow,
where the blood of Christ was shed,
perfect Man on thee did suffer,
perfect God on thee has bled!**

**Here the King of all the ages,
throned in light ere worlds could be,
robed in mortal flesh is dying,
crucified by sin for me.**

**O mysterious condescending!
O abandonment sublime!
Very God Himself is bearing
all the sufferings of time!**

Cross of Jesus, cross of sorrow,
where the blood of Christ was shed,
perfect Man on thee did suffer,
perfect God on thee has bled!

CROSS OF JESUS
W.J. Sparrow Simpson
John Stainer

VI - IT IS FINISHED

John 19:30

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished."
Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The choir sing 'Es ist Vollbracht' by J.S. Bach

*What do we feel about death, our own sense of mortality?
What do we feel have been our own accomplishments?
When are we most able to tune in to the still small voice of
God's love?*

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
All **all you who wait for the Lord.**

Gracious God
accomplish in us your purposes,
complete in us your work of healing love,
that, though we walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
we may hear your words of love,
and find you, one step ahead of us,
recognising your still small voice
leading us home.

All **Amen.**

VII - FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS

Luke 23:44-49

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."

Reflection followed by silence

What will we be remembered for?

Have we walked the talk of our faith?

Can we let go of all else but love?

Are we aware of the matrix of souls, endless and unbreakable, of which we are part?

After the silence we respond:

All Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the Lord.

Lord Jesus,

We bring to you our deepest selves,
we thank you that we are spiritual people,
children of God, made in God's image and likeness.

In our living and in our dying,
give us grace to grow into our true selves,
and to let go of all that is not love,
recognising that we are part of an endless
and unbreakable network of souls
as we make your words of love our prayer.

All **Amen.**

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
O – sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
O – sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
O – sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
O – sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
O – sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

The service ends. Please leave when you wish.