

Jesus Models Forgiveness

Read Luke 23:32-48

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”
(Luke 23:34, NIV)

Imagine that you are Jesus on the day of His death. Look around. Who do you see?

- the religious leaders, proud, self-righteous, angry, blind to their own murderous jealousy
- Judas, a close friend whose heart had wandered and who turned you in for a few pieces of silver
- the disciples, who lived with you for three years then fearfully deserted you in your time of trouble
- Pilate, who sensed the truth but was too weak to act on it
- Herod, who held your life in his hands but was only concerned with his own entertainment
- sadistic soldiers, to whom you were cruel sport
- a thief hanging next to you, taunting You in an effort to save himself
- the crowd of people, a mixture of mindless mob and curiosity seekers.

In short, you're surrounded by humanity. To them, you're a criminal, a blasphemer, a financial opportunity, a pawn, a scapegoat, a fool, a buffoon. Your pain is their afternoon's entertainment. You've given yourself for these people, and they're crushing you with their indifference, injustice, torture, humiliation, and the most agonizing death they can devise.

Every fiber of your being is screaming in pain and begging for relief. You are in your final moments. What is on your mind?

Most people being crucified would have filled their last hours with angry curses and bitterness. Read Jesus' words. Listen as He speaks them. What is on His heart during these moments?

Forgiveness. Forgiveness fills His mind, His heart, and His words. Forgiveness for the proud, the cruel, the ignorant, the fearful, the weak. Forgiveness for us.

In Him, pain and injustice never overwhelmed love. In His final moments, with His final life breath, He completed His beautiful portrait of our loving, forgiving Father.