



Luke 23:44-46

Good Friday, April 3, 2026
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It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour,⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"

And having said this he breathed his last.

We talk about death every night in our household. My wife and I, together with our children, we all talk about death every evening. In some circles, people might find that morbid and macabre. Many might believe that type of thing to be psychologically unhealthy and inappropriate for young children. In our house, it is normal. And I'm guessing it's normal in yours too, or perhaps it has been in the past. Here's how our nightly discussion goes: *"If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take."*

Those are words that we use as a family, spoken to our Savior in our evening prayers. And perhaps you've used that prayer before too. That prayer echoes our *Savior's* words—His *final* words before breathing His last: ***"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"***—*"I pray the Lord my soul to take."*

I've prayed those words as far back as I can remember. And as far back as I can remember, while acknowledging the reality that it's *possible* I die before I wake, I've always held strong opinions about *how* I would want that to go. I've never been too interested in dying in a house fire, for instance, before I wake. Peacefully drifting away in my sleep? That's always sounded just fine to me.

There are ways that we want to go, and there are ways that we do *not* want to go. Peacefully, surrounded by family, in our own beds? These things are good. *Painfully*—not so much. And so, I can't imagine death by crucifixion would be considered a good way to go by any of us here this evening. Flesh pierced through, bones coming out of joint, dehydration, exhaustion, respiration becoming more and more impossible until ultimately suffocation takes you—that's not how I want to go.

More or less, that is how Jesus died. Jesus took on human flesh in order to die, and *that* is how He chose to go. But for Jesus, it was a good death. And it was those final words, ***"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,"*** that made this a *peaceful* way to go. And I'm glad we get to hear those words.

There were many other things going on in these final moments that *could* have drowned out Jesus' final words—darkness over the whole land, the temple curtain torn in two, the earth shaking and rocks breaking, as Matthew describes.

Now, these things did tell people *something* about that One who had died such a gruesome death. The centurion saw everything and said, ***"Certainly this man was innocent!"*** (Luke 23:47) The crowds, too, absolved Him: ***"When they saw what had taken place, [they] returned home beating their breasts."*** (Luke 23:48) At the very least, they had to acknowledge that this was a *gross* miscarriage of justice perpetrated against Jesus. And so, they joined Pilate and the weeping women in their assessment that this Man was innocent, He did not deserve a death like that.

But if we remain focused while all of these things are going on, and if we listen closely at the foot of the cross, we can hear *Jesus* speak as well. And when we hear these final words, they not only show us that *Jesus* was innocent. They show us that *we* are innocent. They show me that *I* am innocent too. ***"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"***

When set in contrast with those words He had addressed to His Father *previously*, we find what *these* words mean. *Formerly*, Jesus had cried out, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** (Mark 15:34) The close communion between Father and Son had been suspended, because Jesus had become the sin-bearer. Isaiah writes, **“Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you.”** (Isaiah 59:2) And as Jesus bore your sin and mine, even *becoming* sin for us, the high price was that He hung there all alone.

But *now*... now He addresses the Father once more. **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”** Father has once again turned His face *toward* His Son, has lifted up His countenance upon Him, and even in the agony of death, gives Him peace. The sins have been dealt with, taken away. The punishment is over, the sacrifice accepted. The only thing that could separate Father and Son who are one together (cf. John 10:30)—is now no more!

And the same is now true for you. The same is true about you. The only thing, the *only* thing that could separate you from Your Father is now no more—guilt taken away, sin atoned for. Which means that I am innocent too. You are innocent too. Which means that the Father has His face turned also toward us, lifts up His countenance also upon us, and gives *even us* peace.

There are ways that we want to go, and there are ways that we do *not* want to go. The way we *want* to go, is in this way: like a little child, simply placing our souls into our Savior’s loving hands. *“Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep; If I should die before I ‘wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.”* And in my house, we always add, *“And this I ask for Jesus’ sake.”*

And for Jesus’ sake, the Father sees you and your children with your little hands folded upon your soft pillows, and He hears you echoing your Savior’s final words, and He says, “Yes, my little child. I will, for Jesus’ sake.” Amen.