



# **Seven Last Words** Weekly Prayer Guide

*“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” ~ Luke 23:34*

## Invitation to the Seven Last Words:

***"Seven last words ... they begin with words addressed to the Father, find their centre in a cry at the absence of that Father, and return to address Him again at the end. The words that Jesus addresses to us are held within that relationship with his Father, just as it is there that we shall find our home, within the life of the Trinity. We nestle within that divine conversation." ~ Timothy Radcliffe***

This daily guide is designed to encourage you to slowly contemplate and respond personally to the meaning and implications of Jesus' sayings from the cross. Resources of scripture, reflective writing, a daily prayer and questions for deeper personal application and conversation are provided in order to support and guide your meditations.

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## Daily Readings/Reflections

**Monday:** *Romans 5:8*

"Jesus, the only Son of God, alone has the right to ask the Father to forgive people like us who would kill rather than face death." ~ *Stanley Hauerwas*

**Tuesday:** *Luke 6:27-29*

"In the first word from Jesus on the cross, he does not pray for the good and innocent. He prays for people doing terrible things." ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

**Wednesday:** *Matthew 18:21-35*

"We are at once drawn to these words, but we fear taking them in our hands, realizing that we can't comprehend their power." ~ *Stanley Hauerwas*

**Thursday:** *Psalm 19:11-13*

"Jesus' death contains a theological explanation, but it is not that. His prayer is not an explanation but an invitation and an embrace. We do things and think things and, even in our best piety and actions, do not, from Jesus' point of view, truly know what we do." ~ *Christopher R. Seitz*

**Friday:** *Psalm 51:1-9*

"There is a suggestion here that human beings are in the grip of something that they do not fully understand. The evil that lodges in the human heart is greater than we know.... It means that there is nothing that you or I could ever do, or say, or be, that would put us beyond the reach of Jesus' prayers. Nothing at all." ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

**Saturday:** *Psalm 130*

"His prayer for the worst of the worst comes from a place beyond human understanding. From the sphere of divine power we hear these words today as though they were spoken for the first time, as though they were being spoken at this very moment by the living Spirit, spoken of each one of us: Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

## **A Daily Forgiveness Prayer:**

Father, you have revealed your forgiveness to us through Jesus; a deep forgiveness that I cannot fully comprehend. Please continue to show me the depths of your love for me and for everyone.

Jesus, thank you for making forgiveness possible through your death on the cross and thank you for speaking forgiveness out so clearly.

Thank you for forgiving those who crucified you, so that I can know how just how real forgiveness is.

Holy Spirit, help me to receive forgiveness, especially for those areas where I find it hard to forgive myself.

Shine your light on the places where I need your mercy; dark, hidden places of the heart that I am so blind to and unaware of.

Work your forgiveness into my attitudes and my relationships.

Help me to forgive those people in my life that I do not want to forgive.

Please forgive those people I find it impossible to forgive. People who are motivated by politics, religion, race and greed, and who are committing acts of unspeakable, unforgiveable acts of violence this day.

Help me to see that forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus is your way of saving and shaping the world.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, may forgiveness have its way today in my heart, in my family, in my community, my church and in this city today.

Help me to live by forgiveness everyday because you are a forgiving God.

Amen.

## **Questions for Personal Mediation and Group Reflection**

1. What is your initial reaction to this word from Jesus on the cross?
2. What unique things does this word reveal to you about who God is?
3. What is the significance that this is the first word of Jesus from the cross?
4. How do you wrestle with the implications of this word for yourself, for other people and for life in the world?
5. How do you feel called to live out this word today?