

# Praying the Words of the Cross in a Season of Pandemic

*This resource, based on a prayer originally published in the *The Worship Sourcebook*<sup>1</sup> provides prayer language to correspond with the words of Christ from the cross. It is adapted here in light of COVID 19. It would be suitable for congregational, household or private prayer. Use each time of silent prayer to expand the prayer in your own language, or simply listen quietly for God's Word. -Rev. Sean Baker, Pastor Church Resources*

## Opening

Holy and Living God,

As this pandemic continues to awaken our fears, to disrupt our lives, and to reduce the health and lives of those we love, we struggle to find words to say to you. And so, in this dark hour we join with your Son, in praying the words he spoke in the very darkest hour.

## The First Word

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Loving Father, we are uncertain and afraid. In our fear, we look for someone or something to blame: institutions, leaders, neighbors, and even family members are all easy targets of our resentment. As our frustration toward others grows, we ask that you forgive them, and then we ask you to forgive us, also.

Make us aware of the ways, small and big, that our own sin makes this situation harder for us and others, and forgive us.

*Silent Prayer*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

## The Second Word

"Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Eternal God, as this pandemic brings our mortality and the consequences of sin into sharper relief, we thank you that you have made a way by your death and resurrection that we may repent and receive your grace to save us in life and in death. We thank you that, in Christ, you make all things new.

*Silent Prayer*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

## The Third Word

"Woman, behold your son. . . . Behold your mother."

Son of God, even as you changed the course of history on the cross, you took time to notice and make arrangements to care for the very tangible needs of someone you loved. As we find ourselves caught up in a moment that feels historic and unprecedented, direct our attention to notice and make arrangements to care for the very tangible needs of those around us.

*Silent Prayer*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

#### The Fourth Word

“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”)

Holy Spirit, your Word describes you as our comforter and counselor, but for some of us, you have never seemed so far away.

We feel abandoned, exposed, and left to fend for ourselves.

The most vulnerable among us seem to be most affected by this disease.

Our churches are empty while our hospitals are overrun.

We struggle to see your hand at work amidst the suffering.

We join with the Psalmist in crying out,

“How long, O Lord, will you forget us forever?”

“We are overwhelmed with troubles, and our lives draw near to death.”

“Do you show your wonders to the dead?”

“Do not be far from us, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.”

“Do not hide your face from us. But listen to our cry for help.”

“You have taken from us friend and neighbor--darkness is our closest friend.”

*Silent Prayer*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

#### The Fifth Word

“I thirst.”

Blessed Savior, who faced death thirsty and alone,

reveal yourself to those who face their death

in both physical agony and at social distance.

Heal their bodies and save their souls.

May those overwhelmed by physical and emotional pain, turn to you

and find that you are not distant from our suffering,

but find that you are a man of sorrows who is familiar with suffering.

By your wounds, may we experience healing unto eternal life.

*Silent Prayer*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

#### The Sixth Word

“It is finished.”

King of Kings, as we reach the end of ourselves,

and feel we cannot go any further,

we thank you that you finished the work you were sent to do:  
that your kingdom is secure and not even death can now separate us from the love of  
God in you, our Lord.

Enable us by your Spirit to be faithful to our call in the confidence that you have and will  
accomplish all that you have promised.

Grant us strength to endure our suffering, bear our crosses,  
deny ourselves and live for you, even unto death.

By your Spirit, empower us to live and love so faithfully and selflessly that the good news  
of your kingdom may be proclaimed through our lives.

*Silent Prayer*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

The Seventh Word

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

Holy Spirit, when our lives reach their earthly end,

Help us entrust our deaths, as you have helped us entrust our lives, into your faithful  
hands.

*Silent Prayer*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Adapted from *The Worship Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids, CRC Publications, 2004, pp. 619-22.)