

Father, Into Your Hands

Luke 23:46

Let us pray: Holy Spirit, as your Word reaches our ears, anoint our ears to hear deeply. May it resound in the depths of our hearts, bringing us life and leading us in your ways. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Today, we want to receive the grace found in the last words Jesus spoke from the cross. I hope that we will see not only that our sin was dealt with at the cross of Christ, but that we ourselves are entrusted into God's hands. And so, may we find ourselves making that confession again, committing ourselves to the Father in and through Christ on the cross.

Jesus was thoroughly judged by God on the cross. He endured the agony of being separated from the Father and forsaken. In Matthew and Mark, we hear that cry: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Notice that Jesus cried out "My God," not "Father." That is because at that moment, he was not crying out as the beloved Son, but as one who bore our sin and stood under the judgment of the Judge. This cry reveals the depth of the abyss of abandonment that sinners deserve.

Even creation bore witness to it. From noon, for three hours, the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole land. Through Christ's forsakenness, we gained the full merit of redemption.

But after passing through that darkness of abandonment, Jesus called out to the Father one more time at the very end. The Father's hands had judged him. Those same hands had forsaken him. And yet, as the Son who trusted his Father completely, he made this confession: *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."*

Even in the place of forsakenness, the Son held on to faith and love toward the Father. This was his declaration that God was still the Father, and that the Father's hands were still faithful. The Son believed that those hands would raise him up again and bring forth new creation.

When Jesus committed his spirit into the Father's hands, was he entrusting only his own soul? Not at all. Everything that happened on the cross was not for himself. He

carried us within his soul, and in committing his spirit, he was committing us along with himself into the Father's hands.

Is your soul entrusted into the Father's hands? It is only through the cross, only through Christ, that our souls are committed to the Father. It is only in Christ that we can call God "Father" and rest in him.

The word "commit" is not simply a polite expression, like saying "I leave this in your care" out of courtesy. It means placing something precious into safe hands. Think of a young child who sleeps soundly in a parent's arms, because the child trusts that those arms are safe. In the same way, our souls are entrusted into the Father's hands through Christ. His hands are the most certain, the most faithful, and the most capable hands there are.

This last word from the cross was not something Jesus said only once. It comes from Psalm 31:5, and I believe it was a prayer Jesus prayed regularly, as part of his daily life. He was simply speaking the same word he had always lived by. When Jesus was tempted, he responded with the Word of God. And that other cry from the cross, "Why have you forsaken me," also comes straight from Scripture, from Psalm 22.

Christ himself is the Word, yet even as the human Jesus, the Word of God was always at the center of his life. Jesus' life is a model that shows us how to live and calls us to follow. But more than that, it is a blueprint, a vision of what he intends to make us: little Christs. All we need to do is say yes to his vision.

Psalm 31:5, which Jesus quoted, is David's prayer of entrusting himself to God's hands in the midst of suffering. David's prayer was an act of surrender for all his living days, and Jesus too must have prayed this same verse daily throughout his life. That is why he was able to pray it again at the very end, with his final breath. What is practiced in ordinary life can still come forth in moments of extreme anguish. And by making that confession on the cross, Jesus opened the way for it to become our confession too. This act of entrusting is not something reserved for the moment of death. It is the work of an entire lifetime. The salvation of God's people rests on the complete and perfect entrusting that Christ made into the Father's hands.

Luke tells us that after Jesus said these words, he breathed his last. Word and breath are bound together. His final breath was filled with the Word. May we live lives where

the Word leads and holds every breath we take, all the way to our last, where the Word strengthens our hearts. A deathbed confession is not something that can be manufactured in a single moment. It flows naturally, like a fragrance, from a soul that has been nourished by the Word all along. It is like a burnt offering fully given, a pleasing aroma to God. In Revelation, we see a censer that holds the prayers of the saints. Just as Jesus prayed from the Psalms even on the cross, we too must learn to breathe our prayers through the Word.

The Father's hands are also the hands of the Lord himself. For he is the Everlasting Father. And within the Father's hands are the hands of the Son.

At the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples' feet with his own hands. As he washed them, he was taking all their sins upon himself. Sin does not simply disappear. It had to be carried by Jesus to the cross. In the same way, every time Jesus laid his hands on people to heal them, he was taking their sin upon himself to the cross.

When Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet, Jesus told him, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." Christ, who is the Word, had already bathed his disciples and made them completely clean. And the dirt of sin they picked up as they walked through the world, he washed away with his own hands, because he is the Word. It is the same for us. Because we are one with him, he washes us as though washing his very own feet.

Every day, may you come to Christ, who is the Word, and soak your feet in his touch and in the water of the Word he pours out. And may you entrust all your days to the Father through the daily practice of praying in the Word. Amen.

Let us now pray together a breath prayer of entrusting ourselves to the Father. Call out "Father," and then you breathe in through your nose. Then breathe out slowly through your mouth and say, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." We will do this three times. And when I say "In our Lord Jesus' name," please declare your "Amen" out loud together. It is a declaration of faith.

Let us pray: Father, (*breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth*) into your hands I commit my spirit. (*3 times*). In our Lord Jesus' name. Amen.