



PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE – April 14

Series Overview: As a life ends, words matter. Some bring closure, others fall short and leave us questioning. Some speak healing, others cause deeper wounds. But no matter what is said, last words last. This is no different with the last words of Jesus; but Jesus' last words didn't just last, they changed the world. During this series, we will look at Jesus' words on the cross and how not just his words, have changed our life forever.

OPENING QUESTION: As we look at today's passage, we will be discussing the topic of abandonment. Whether small or big, all of us have experienced this feeling. What are some of the impacts that abandonment can have on people?

PRIMARY PASSAGE

Matthew 27:35-46: ³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" (which means "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*").

GROUP DISCUSSION

1.) One of Jesus final words was “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” There is a lot of conversation around the meaning of this verse. What do you think it means?

2.) How can we be confident that God will not forsake us? What verses give us this confidence?

3.) If it is true that God will not forsake me, why are there times where God feels distant?

4.) In Jesus’ darkest moments, he turns to the Word of God (Psalms 22). What verse do you need to recall to remember that God will never forsake you?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Spiritual abandonment is always a product of us drifting from God, not God drifting from us. Often, we believe lies or are living out of line with how God has called us to live. The good news is that James 4:8 gives us confidence that if we draw near to God, he will draw near to us. Three questions to reflect on:

- Why do I feel abandoned? Do these reasons align with what God’s Word says?**
- What lies am I believing about God and what verses will remind me of the truth?**
- Who will I share this struggle with this week and ask for their prayers and encouragement?**