

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

LIFE GROUP LEADER MATERIALS

Lent 2020

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Famous last words come in a lot of different forms. Some are thought provoking and profound, some are ironic and sad, and some are surprisingly ordinary and normal. But no matter what, there's a reason they're memorable. We remember last words not because of what was said, but because of when they were said. These words have power because of their context. For the next few weeks, we're going to look at some famous last words that are definitely worth remembering: some of the last words of Jesus. As Jesus journeyed with His disciples toward Jerusalem, He knew His death was approaching. And the things He said in the moments leading up to, and following His crucifixion are certainly worth remembering. In studying this part of His life, we'll see that Jesus' famous last words can help us take some of the first steps toward living the life God intended for us.

Week 1

REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

Luke 22:19–20

SUMMARY

We all have ways of remembering things. Maybe we make lists, or mark things on calendars, or have certain places we put things so we don't forget them. There are so many things we can do to make sure we remember what's important. Why? Because forgetfulness can cause problems. Not only does forgetfulness make simple things in our day-to-day lives more difficult, it can also have a serious impact on our relationship with God. When we forget who God is and what He's done for us, it opens the door for things like doubt, or fear, or uncertainty to creep into our faith. And over time, those things can grow, causing our faith to falter. This week, we're going to look at the last meal Jesus shared with His disciples during His last days on Earth. And as we do, we'll see how Jesus knew our forgetfulness might impact our faith. And instead of leaving us to figure it out, He gave us a way to remember. As we remember, we'll see that God's faithfulness is always greater than our forgetfulness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you knew your time on Earth was coming to an end, what do you think some of your last words would be about?

What is something you regularly forget?

How does forgetfulness impact your relationship with God?

When things go wrong, do you tend to focus on your circumstances or on God? In what ways?

What is something good God has done in your life?

How do you remind yourself of what God has done for you?

How would your life look differently if you remembered God's faithfulness to you in the past?

How can we help you remember, or be reminded of God's goodness?

LEADER NOTES

Week 2

UNITY STARTS WITH YOU

My prayer is not for them [the disciples] alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:20–23

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42–47

SUMMARY

Have you ever noticed that people tend to gravitate toward people that are like them? We all do this in one way or another! Maybe you spend more time with people in a similar life stage as you, or talk more with those who share your interests, or you make friends based on what you have in common. This is true for all of us! But what's also true? We all have a tendency to move away from people who are different. And that reality is what we're going to talk about this week. We're surrounded by people who are different from us every day. Even the people you have the most in common with, are different from you in some ways. God designed a diverse world, but it's up to us to make sure our differences don't make life more difficult. Because as it turns out, Jesus prayed about this exact subject moments before He was arrested. He used some of His famous last words to pray for unity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are some ways you've seen people grow together through shared interests?
What are some ways you've seen differences keep people apart?

Why do you think people's differences and similarities are so impactful when it comes to who we spend our time with?

Why do you think Jesus prayed for us to be unified?

If you had one last prayer, what would you pray for God to do—for other people?

This week, we learned that unity does not mean uniformity. What does that phrase mean and how does it relate to your life?

Read Acts 2:42-47. Does it sound like our church? If so, what made that possible? If not, what can we do to make it possible?

LEADER NOTES

Week 3

TRUST WHO GOD IS, EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,
"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will,
but yours be done."

Luke 22:41–42, emphasis added

SUMMARY

Have you ever watched a TV show or movie, and it was really obvious who the bad guy was? Filmmakers do this on purpose, of course! They give us a strong first impression of the characters right from the start, so we know who we're supposed to cheer for, and who we're supposed to cheer against for the rest of the movie. Sometimes we do the same thing in life. Have you ever made a snap judgment about someone? Regardless of whether or not you were right, we've all met people and judged them based on first impressions. We assumed they were the bad guys based solely on our own opinions. And if we're honest, I think we'd admit that we also do this with God sometimes. At some point or another, we've seen God as the "bad guy" in our story—maybe when a circumstance was difficult, or when doubts felt heavy. Sometimes we think God is distant from us, and trusting Him can be difficult when we feel this way. But with some of His last words, Jesus shows us just how we can trust God, even in the midst of situations we don't understand.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Who is your favorite movie villain? What made them so memorable for you?

If you can use five words or under to describe God, what words would you use?

Have you ever viewed God as something you know He wasn't?

What are some things we know to be true of God? (Leader: Have people in your group read verses about God's characteristics below.)

How does knowing the truth about God affect our ability to trust Him?

Why is it hard to trust God when we don't understand what He's doing or what's going on in our lives?

What would help you to trust God even when you don't understand?

How can our group remind you the truths about God?

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

God is awesome. (Psalm 145:5)

God is kind. (Jeremiah 9:24)

God is merciful. (Lamentations 3:22)

God is beautiful. (Habakkuk 3:3)

God is patient. (Numbers 14:18)

God is near. (Psalm 75:1)

God is our sustainer. (Psalm 18:35)

God is sympathetic. (Matthew 11:28)

God is our counselor. (Psalm 16:7)

God is our deliverer. (Psalm 34:4)

God is wise. (Romans 16:27)

God is our encourager. (2 Chronicles 20:15)

God is our forgiver. (Micah 7:18)

God is gentle. (Galatians 5:22)

God is our helper. (Isaiah 41:4)

God is capable of anything. (Ephesians 3:17)

God is just. (Job 37:23)

God is righteous. (Psalm 145:17)

God is victorious. (Proverbs 21:31)

God is true. (John 17:3)

God is unchanging. (Malachi 3:6)

Week 4

GOD'S GRACE IS UNFAIRLY GOOD

Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."

Matthew 26:31–35

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Matthew 26:69–75

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because. Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

John 21:15–17

Week 4

SUMMARY

No one likes it when life feels unfair. When someone at work gets a promotion over you, it's frustrating. Or when you can't seem to catch a break in your finances, it feels discouraging. But at the same time, we all root for life being unfair when it impacts other people. Like when a car speeds past you on the highway, but you later see that same car pulled over by the police, all feels right in the world. That's fair! It's a strange tension, isn't it? We like it when people get what they deserve, and not when they don't. But we want the opposite for us! We don't want what we deserve when it's negative, right? As we look at how Jesus responded to one of His disciples who certainly didn't deserve a fair treatment, we'll see that because of Jesus, all of us get more than we deserve.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When was the last time you found yourself saying, "That's not fair?"

Why do you think we want life to be fair? Were you upset before when someone you know was treated unfairly? What was it?

How does it make you feel to hear someone say that God isn't fair? Does that sound right to you? Why or why not?

"Grace isn't fair"—what do you think that means? How does it apply to your life?

Read Romans 6:23. Why is it a good thing that God's grace is unfair?

What does it look like in your life to accept God's grace? What is one way you can extend grace to others around you?

LEADER NOTES

Week 5

**IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU
DO OR DON'T DO. IT'S ABOUT
WHAT JESUS DID.**

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:30

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Mark 15:37–39

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2

Week 5

SUMMARY

When you were a little kid, did you ever go to a fair or an amusement park? Maybe you were the type of kid who wanted to ride the craziest rides. You got to the amusement park, and you made a beeline for the roller coasters that went the highest or flipped the most. But as you approach your favorite rides, you know the sign to look out for—the one that divides people from riding the ride or sitting it out—the “You must be this tall to ride this ride” sign. And while that sign can create frustration for kids, it’s something we typically forget about as adults. Funny enough, sometimes we see our relationship with God in a similar way. For many of us, following God feels a lot like that sign. It’s as if there’s a standard that we have to keep in order to be in good standing with God. But no matter what we do or don’t do, we seem to come up short anyway. With three of His last words, Jesus put an end to this type of struggles. And He showed us that in order for us to experience a truly great life story, we need to depend entirely on understanding and acknowledging what He did to make us all right with Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are some experiences in life that made you feel like you had to “measure up,” or live up to a certain standard?

Do you ever view the Christian life as a list of dos and don'ts? How does that affect the way you act and live?

This week, we learned that it's not about what you do or don't do; it's about what Jesus did. What does that mean for your life? Does that sound hard to believe?

What would your life look like if you stopped trying to earn salvation, and started accepting the free grace of God? How would that impact your attitude and your relationships?

What can our group do to help you believe that what Jesus did on the cross was sufficient enough for all of us?

LEADER NOTES

Lent 2020

BIBLE READING PLAN

JOHN

February 27.....Ch. 1
February 28.....Ch. 2
February 29.....Ch. 3
March 1.....Ch. 4
March 2.....Ch. 5
March 3.....Ch. 6
March 4.....Ch. 7
March 5.....Ch. 8
March 6.....Ch. 9
March 7.....Ch. 10
March 8.....Ch. 11
March 9.....Ch. 12
March 10.....Ch. 13
March 11.....Ch. 14
March 12.....Ch. 15
March 13.....Ch. 16
March 14.....Ch. 17
March 15.....Ch. 18
March 16.....Ch. 19
March 17.....Ch. 20
March 18.....Ch. 21

LUKE

March 19.....Ch. 1
March 20.....Ch. 2
March 21.....Ch. 3
March 22.....Ch. 4
March 23.....Ch. 5
March 24.....Ch. 6
March 25.....Ch. 7
March 26.....Ch. 8
March 27.....Ch. 9
March 28.....Ch. 10
March 29.....Ch. 11
March 30.....Ch. 12
March 31.....Ch. 13
April 1.....Ch. 14
April 2.....Ch. 15
April 3.....Ch. 16
April 4.....Ch. 17
April 5.....Ch. 18
April 6.....Ch. 19
April 7.....Ch. 20
April 8.....Ch. 21
April 9.....Ch. 22
April 10.....Ch. 23
April 11.....Ch. 24