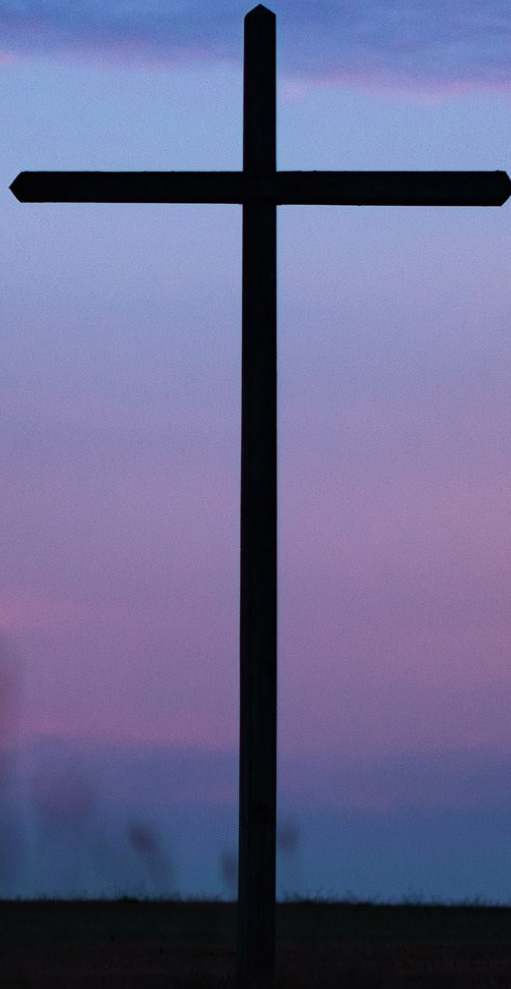


THE CROSS

FAMILY DEVOS



Father, Forgive Them

Scripture: Luke 23:32-38

Memory Verse: Luke 23:34a

“The Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’”

For My Family

Jesus had been put on trial by the Roman governors of Jerusalem, not once, not twice, but three times. In all three trials, Jesus was declared innocent. He had done nothing wrong. There was no cause or justification for His death. The Jewish leaders, however, stirred up the crowd and insisted that Jesus be crucified. Out of fear, “Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested” (Luke 23:24).

In verse 32 we read that Jesus, along with two other criminals, were led away to a place called Calvary, and there He was crucified. God Himself was nailed to a cross of wood with two criminals on either side of Him. Jesus, who had healed the lame, the blind, and the deaf; who had cast out demons, calmed storms, and miraculously fed the crowds; who had taught about loving God, our neighbor, and even our enemy, was crucified.

The crucifixion itself was a terrible act, but it was made worse through mocking and the insults. A large sign was placed above Jesus head saying, “This is the King of the Jews”. It read in three different languages so that anyone who saw it could see the supposed king in this most humiliating position and could laugh at Him. The people sneered at Him, “He saved others, let Him save Himself.”

Then Jesus looked up beyond the crowd into Heaven and spoke. He didn’t yell at the people insulting Him. He didn’t cry in sadness or shame. He looked to God the Father and said the most astonishing thing: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Do you remember what God said to Jonah about the people of Nineveh? He said that they were like children who don’t know their right hand from their left. Jesus looked at the crowd in front of Him, which was yelling vile things, laughing at His pain, and screaming abuse, and He saw children who were lost. He saw sheep without a shepherd. The people were mocking Him and He still looked down on them in love.

Sometimes people feel like they have done things that are unforgiveable. They think that there is no way that God could forgive them or love them anymore. Jesus looked at the very men who nailed His wrists and His feet to the cross, and He asked for *their* forgiveness. He *loved* the very people who killed Him. Over the next two weeks as we look at the words that Jesus spoke from the cross, we must remember that Jesus went through it all out of love so that He could bring forgiveness to us!

Questions for Young Children:

How many thieves were crucified with Jesus?

What was written on the sign above Jesus?

What did Jesus ask His Heavenly Father to do?

Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

Do you sometimes find it hard to forgive people? Why?

What do you think you would have done if you were in Jesus' place? Would you have been able to ask God to forgive the people making fun of you?

What truth do we learn about forgiveness in this passage of Scripture?

Is there anyone who God is unable to forgive?