

## WORDS FROM THE CROSS - PART 3

### Behold the Son

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	John 19:26-27
Subject:	What Jesus said to his mother when He saw her standing at the foot of the cross
Complement:	Behold, your son!
Exegetical idea:	When Jesus saw His mother standing at the foot of the cross, He said to her, “Behold, your Son!”
Preaching idea:	<b>Stay focused on Jesus!</b>
Purpose	To encourage my hearers to stay focused on Jesus, both in times of joy and in times of sorrow.

The Gospel of John is my favorite book in the whole Bible. I love John’s Gospel because John is always talking about Jesus and pointing people to Jesus. There are many saying of Jesus and sayings about Jesus which are only recorded by John. Today, as we continue our series on Words from the cross, we are going to consider some words that Jesus spoke from the cross which are only recorded in John’s Gospel.

This is part 3 of our series on Words from the Cross. I don’t know about you, but it’s been a life-changing journey for me! The first words from the cross are only recorded by Dr. Luke: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” We learned from our study that Jesus kept on saying those words: “Father, forgive them. Father, forgive them.” To the calloused soldiers, to the mocking religious leaders, to the ridiculing crowd, and also to us Father, forgive them!

The second words of Jesus from the cross are also only recorded by Dr. Luke: “I say to you today, you will be with Me in paradise!” What joy must have come to the heart of Jesus when that penitent thief cried out, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom!” And we decided that Jesus wants each one of us to claim the paradise promise. If you missed

any of the first two messages in this series on Words from the Cross, you can get a copy of the sermon manuscripts at [www.powerfulbiblicalpreaching.com](http://www.powerfulbiblicalpreaching.com).

Today, we are going to consider the third sayings of Jesus from the cross. I refer to these words of Jesus as “sayings” because there are really two parts to these words from the cross. Only the apostle John records these words of Jesus from the cross, which I will suggest later in our study is very significant. These words of Jesus are found in John 19:26-27. “When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Dear woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.”

The second half of this third saying from the cross seems very clear: Let’s read the first and last part of John 19:26-27 again, “.....” The disciple whom Jesus loved is a reference to the apostle John, the author of this Gospel record. John clearly understood the request of Jesus. “John, please take care of my mother. Care for her as if she were your own mother.” John understood the request of Jesus. He records in his Gospel record, “From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.”

What a beautiful picture of compassion even in the midst of terrible personal suffering! Jesus has suffered every kind of physical and emotional abuse, but as He sees his weeping mother at the foot of the cross, Jesus longs to care for her. Jesus longs to provide for her, and so Jesus entrusts His mother into the care of His faithful disciple John.

That’s the simple part of these third words of Jesus from the cross. The first part of these words of Jesus from the cross present a greater challenge for us! What did Jesus mean when He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son?” Well, there are two possible explanations here. When Jesus spoke to His mother and said, “Woman, behold your son,” Jesus may have been

directing her attention toward the disciple John who was standing next to her. In other words, “Mother, look at John. He’s your son now.” That’s certainly a possible explanation. As I mentioned earlier, Jesus definitely wanted to care for His mother. John 19:25 tells us that the mother of Jesus was standing at the foot of the cross. Can you imagine the emotional anguish that she was experiencing? This is her son, her only son. That becomes clear in a few moments. She has no other children of her own to care for her, and her husband Joseph is gone. But it’s not the feelings of impending aloneness that weigh heavily upon her. Mary is suffering great turmoil over what is happening to her Son. Jesus has been abused, beaten, flogged, stripped naked, and nailed to a cross. Her son is dying a shameful death, and there is nothing that she can do to rescue Him.

Is it possible that when Jesus says to Mary, “Woman, behold your son!” that he is asking His mother Mary to now relate to John as a son? After all, Jesus follows these words by turning to John and saying, “Behold, your mother.” And John understood the request of Jesus. His own testimony tells us in John 19:27, “From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” It is certainly a possible explanation of the words of Jesus from the cross, “Woman, behold your son!” that Jesus is telling His mother to view John as her son now, and asking John to view Mary as his mother.

But I want to suggest second explanation for these words of Jesus from the cross. I have no doubt that when Jesus says to John, “Behold, your mother” that Jesus is asking John to care for His mother. That is clear, and the text confirms that John clearly understood the request of Jesus. But when Jesus says to His mother “Woman, behold, your Son!”, I want to suggest a second possible explanation—that Jesus is actually appealing to His mother Mary to stay focused on Him. Yes, Jesus wants to care for His mother physically. That’s why Jesus says to John,

“Behold your mother!” But Jesus also wants to care for His mother spiritually. That’s why He appeals to her to stay focused on Him. “Woman, behold your Son!” Stay focused on Me!

Now let me suggest some evidence to support this second explanation for these words of Jesus from the cross. May I remind you that only the apostle John records this third saying of Jesus from the cross. No mention of this saying is found in the Gospel records of Matthew, or Mark, or Luke. Only John. Only John records the words of Jesus, “Woman, behold your son!” Let me ask you a question. Does that appeal to “behold Jesus” remind you of another time in the life of Jesus? It’s another occasion, also only recorded by the apostle John. When else do we find this appeal to “behold”? That’s right. At the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus, when He came to be baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to the river Jordan, what did John the Baptist cry out? John 1:29 , “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” The KJV and the NKJV translate the first word of John the Baptist, “Behold.” Look, behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

That’s the very same word that Jesus uses from the cross at the end of His ministry when He says, “Woman, behold your son!” Is that a coincidence? I don’t think so. The apostle John records both of those sayings, at the beginning and the end of his Gospel record, and I am convinced that both are referring to Jesus! In the third saying of Jesus from the cross, He isn’t saying to His mother, “Woman, behold John, he’s your son now!” Rather, Jesus is saying, “Woman, (which was not an impolite way of referring to his mother, but rather a term of endearment), Woman, behold your Son!” Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Focusing on Jesus is a theme throughout the Gospel of John. Only John records the

words of Jesus, found in John 3:14-16. “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Only John records the words of Jesus found in John 5:39-40. “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

Only John records the words of Jesus found in John 12:32. “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

Only John records the words of Jesus found in John 14:6. “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

And only John records this testimony at the end of his Gospel, John 20:30-31. “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

The message of the Gospel of John is clear. It’s all about Jesus! When you are looking for salvation, focus on Jesus. When you read the Scriptures, focus on Jesus. When you are looking for truth, focus on Jesus.

And now, when Jesus is dying on the cross, He turns to His mother and says, “Woman, behold your Son!” Stay focused on Me.

Why was it important for Mary, the mother of Jesus, to stay focused on Jesus during this terrible ordeal of crucifixion? Because it would have been easy for Mary to have given up in despair. It would have been easy for Mary to have abandoned all hope. Mary needed to

remember the message that the angel Gabriel gave to Mary before Jesus was even conceived in her womb. That message is recorded in Luke 1:31-35. “You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.” When Mary asked the angel how this was possible, since she was a virgin, the angel answered, as recorded in Luke 1:35, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

Mary needed to remember the message that the Lord gave to Joseph in a dream, when he was contemplating setting Mary aside and cancelling the marriage? Those words to Joseph are recorded in Matthew 1:20. “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Mary needed to remember the words of Simeon at the time of the dedication of Jesus in the Temple. Luke 2:34-35 “Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: ‘This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.’”

But most of all, Mary needed to remember the words of John the Baptist when Jesus came to be baptized in the river Jordan. Mary was not present at the baptism of Jesus but I am absolutely certain that the words of this great prophet concerning Jesus were reported to her. What did John the Baptist declare about Jesus? John 1:29 “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

And now, as Jesus is hanging on the cross, is it possible that He is appealing to His mother to keep her eyes fixed upon her Son, to stay focused on Jesus, especially through this most difficult time. “Woman, behold your Son!”

And that counsel is valuable for each one of us. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Behold the Son! Stay focused on Jesus, especially in the midst of life’s most difficult moments. The author of the book of Hebrews puts it this way in Hebrews 12:2-3, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” I like the KJV and NKJV translations, which speak of looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith! But notice, this is not a one-time glance, but an ongoing focus. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

My family has been through a challenging time in the past few months. About two months ago, my father had open-heart surgery to replace his aortic valve. That’s a major surgery. The nurse warned me that when I first saw my father in CVICU that I would be shocked. And she was right! He looked like he was hanging on to life by a thin thread. Slowly he regained his strength, moved from ICU to a progressive care unit and was within a day or two of being sent home when his temperature began to spike and he began to shake. We found out later that my father had three bacterial infections and he was battling for his life!

Our whole family has been reminded of a very important truth through this difficult time. Stay focused on Jesus. Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim

in the light of His glory and grace.

My father was anointed two weeks ago. He was also covered in a prayer quilt from our Forest Lake Church prayers and squares quilting ministry. God gave my father and deep peace to face life or death unafraid! Just stay focused on Jesus. I have seen the miracle with my own eyes. And I'm happy to tell you that my father came home this past week, and today my father and my mother joined us for Hope Sabbath School on the Hope Channel!

My friend Les McCoy was a Air Force pilot before becoming a literature evangelist. Les told me that when your flying a plane and your world turns upside down, you have to stay focused. You can't just trust your feelings. You have to trust your instruments or you'll surely crash and burn. And it's the same in life. When your world turns upside down, stay focused on Jesus. Don't just trust your feelings. Your feelings can be all mixed up. Stay focused on Jesus!

I don't know what challenges you are facing in your life today. Perhaps, like Mary, the mother of Jesus, you are going through the most challenging experience of your life. Perhaps you feel like your world has turned upside down. I appeal to you, "Behold the Son!" Stay focused on Jesus. He is your Savior. He will never leave you or forsake you. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.