

## April Bible Study Synopsis (The 7 Last Sayings of Christ on the Cross)

The April Youth Bible Study was held on Friday, April 11th, at the residence of our Vice-President, Feby Philip. The meeting was set for 7pm but the actual start time was 7.40pm. 9 members of our fellowship (including Achen) were present. Nibi Mathai from Rockland CSI was also present, thus making the total attendance 10 people. We spent about 20 minutes singing. Roshni asked if anyone knew song #32 in our books (Deep down in my heart). Nibi knew and helped us learn song #32 from our book.

We then proceeded to the Bible Study. Tom led us in the opening prayer. For the bible study, we had assigned different people to speak on each of the 7 sayings. The speakers (in order) were:

1. *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34). - **Roshni**
2. *Today thou shalt be with me in paradise* (Luke 23:43). - **Ajo**
3. *Woman, behold thy son!...Behold thy mother!* (John 19:26,27). - **Achen**
4. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Matthew 27:46). - **Asha**
5. *I thirst* (John 19:28). - **Tom**
6. *It is finished* (John 19:30). - **Justin**
7. *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (Luke 23:46). - **Achen**

A summary from each speaker follows:

Roshni (Saying 1): Roshni had handouts which listed several verses pertaining to her topic and a painting of Christ on the cross. She showed the forgiveness of Jesus by pointing out the story in Matthew 9:2 where Jesus heals a paralytic man. She questioned "How many times are we able to keep up our faith in times of trouble?" Jesus came down on our level and he died on our level. Jesus always prayed for his enemies also. The word 'forgive' is a money word. In Greek, it originally meant the cancellation of a debt. Jesus cancelled our debt of sin when he died on the cross for us. He always prayed for us too.

Ajo (Saying 2): Ajo started off by saying that the word paradise is originally a Persian word and was incorporated into the Hebrew language by the Persian conquests of Israel. The word originally meant literally a 'park, or garden.' The word paradise is mentioned only 3 times in the NT. These places are 2 Corinthians 12:2, Revelations 2:7, and the reference to this saying, Luke 23:43. The NT interprets "paradise" to mean the abode of God, or more generally, Heaven. Ajo said Jesus opened up Heaven to everyone by His death on the cross. Not just the rich or the poor, but even thieves and other sinners just like those dying next to him and sinners just like us.

Achen (Saying 3): The 7 sayings can be divided into 3 parts: before the darkness, during the darkness, and after the darkness on that fateful day. During the darkness there is only one saying which is this saying. There were only 2 people mentioned here at the foot of the cross that were sympathetic with Jesus: Mary-his mother, and John. Even though the other disciples and other supporters looked on from far away, nobody else turned up near the cross. Jesus was the eldest of all his siblings. Jesus had so much faith in John and

here he is establishing a new relationship. In John 7:5 we see that all of Jesus' brothers didn't always believe in Him. Jesus is handing over the eldest son's responsibility of taking care of the family over to John. We see that from that day onward, John took Mary into his home and took care of her.

Asha (Saying 4): This saying is almost a word for word quote from Psalm 22:1. At that moment, Jesus was alone more than anyone can be. Jesus didn't complain to anyone else except God. When we are alone, we should stay closer to God in times like this. Our faith is tested in times of difficulties. For example, when can you see a star? You can only see its full brightness in total darkness. Or take a firefly for example, it shines the brightest in the most darkest surroundings. It's ok to ask God questions as to His intentions for us. Job is probably the most classic example of someone in the Bible who never lost faith. Even though Jesus felt forsaken by God, he never left his father's work. The answer to Jesus' question is: "To save mankind."

Tom (Saying 5): The other gospels don't capture this kind of saying at all. John shows Jesus' humanity with this saying. Psalm 69:21 - "They gave me gall for my food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." This shows a fulfilling of a prophecy. An evidence of God being a man, is the thirst that he had on the cross. Thirst really shows the intensity of how much he suffered. Proverbs 17:22 and Psalm 32: 3,4 also mention thirst in different ways. Jesus knew that the Scripture had been fulfilled, and then he said "I thirst." John 4: 14 - "Whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never thirst..." We are always thirsting for that communion with God even though we fill our lives with meaningless things. Jesus thirsts for our connection with him as well. The thirst is symbolic of a more closer fellowship with all of us.

Justin (Saying 6): Jesus said "It is finished" rather than "I am finished." The "it" is referring to our sins. Our sins are finished. Jesus finished his work by atoning for our sins. He paid the price for our sins and was finished. His work on earth was finished. Jesus' saying was of triumph and not of defeat. Hebrews 10:12 - "He offered one sacrifice for our sins forever." This is why "it is finished."

Achen (Saying 7): In biblical history, 7 always stood for completion. Jesus worked very hard and he completely fulfilled whatever his father entrusted to him. Many times people place great importance on the last words of a person. Death for a believer is handing over your spirit into the hands of Christ. He has conquered the fear of death. Jesus' first word recorded in the Gospels is 'father.' This shows the father-son relationship of Jesus with God. He showed us not only how to live but how to die. Psalm 31:5 - "Into your hand I commit my spirit, You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." He lived and died reciting the words from scripture. Hebrews 2:18 - "For he himself has suffered and therefore he is able to help those who are tempted."

After the bible study, Achen opened the floor up for discussion questions and any clarifications on any of the 7 sayings. The discussion lasted about 20 minutes and is not recorded in detail here. After the discussion, we decided to spend some time in prayer.

We decided to have our group prayer since we were few in number. Things mentioned to pray for:

- Asha asked to pray for our upcoming prayer and praise
- Tom asked to pray for his cousin in the Army now fighting in Iraq
- Mary asked to pray for a family she knows in Connecticut who lost their 15 year old daughter recently.
- Roshni asked to pray for the people in schools and colleges and their upcoming finals
- Our Youth Fellowship and its spiritual growth was also asked to be prayed for

We went around the room and everybody prayed a few sentences. The prayer time concluded with Achen's prayer and benediction. The Bible Study ended at approximately 9.10pm. Afterwards, Ajo thanked the participants and speakers and asked the members who had not taken the survey Tom had prepared to do so. He also mentioned that the place and topic for next month's bible study would be decided upon and sent out via email. Dinner was provided afterwards by the host family.

For His Glory,

Ajo Cherian  
Youth Secretary