



## **Jesus said...Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing**

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He was 37 years old. Skinny nearly frail. Partly bald and with glasses. An electronics expert. Law abiding and timid. Not the kind of person you think was a vigilante.

But that didn't stop Bernhard Hugo Goetz from blasting four would be muggers in a New York subway. He instantly became a hero. An actress sent him a love and kisses message. "Thug buster" T-shirts appeared on the streets of NY. A band wrote a song in his honor. People gave and raised money for his legal defence. Why?

This man did what many people want to do. Fight back. He kicked the bully in the shins. He punched the villain in the face. He knocked evil on the head. This unassuming hero personified a nations fantasy: revenge.

It is a response that tends to come easily to us. It's a response we can find ourselves applauding.

**In the face of greater opposition Jesus did not take revenge but said..**  
***Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.***

### **1. Father**

The worst thing humans could have done. They've done in killing Jesus. If that was not enough.

**Read:** Luke 23:35-39

They didn't just yell or speak or scream. They hurled verbal stones. Bitter words. Acidic with sarcasm. Hateful. Wasn't it enough that he being crucified? Wasn't it enough that he as being shamed as a criminal? Were the nails insufficient? Had the flogging been too short?

Who would mock a dying man? Who would make fun of a person who is seated in an electric chair? Or who would point and laugh at a criminal who has a hangman's noose around his neck?

Did you see what Jesus did not do? He did not retaliate. He did not take revenge. He demanded no apology. He hired no bounty hunters. He did not bite back. "I'll get you" "Just wait until after the resurrection."

What is Jesus response? He does speak. What does he say? Is he asking for pity? Is he condemning those who crucified him? No, he is praying. Praying to the Father. It should be no surprise that Jesus prays. His public ministry starts with him praying in Luke 3:21. Right throughout his public ministry he prays.

**Who is he praying for?**

### **2. They do not know what they doing**

He's praying for the people who have done this to him.

This doesn't mean they are ignorant of the fact of the crucifixion. This doesn't mean they didn't know their request had been granted them by Pilate. What does Jesus mean?

They are ignorant of the enormity of their crime. They have no idea of what they've just done. They have killed the King of glory. Yet they should have known.

He had shown himself to be the long awaited Saviour God had promised in the Old Testament. His teaching was with authority even his opposition admitted. He lived the perfect life. He had lived a life that had never been lived on earth before and will never again. He didn't please himself. He did good. There was no selfishness. No

profit. No gain. There was no excuse for their ignorance. It showed the blindness of their hearts. Their rejection of Jesus was evidence that their hearts are against God.

SIN is rejecting Jesus. SIN is like a wall between us and God.

We can be so unaware of our sin it is like walking on a cliff edge when it has been foggy only to go back the next morning and realise you were walking on the edge of a 900m drop.

This tragedy is still being repeated. How you might ask? When we ignore God. When we don't thank him. When we refuse to trust in the one who can save us from our sin. When we refuse to have Jesus rule over us.

**What does he ask for?**

### **3. Forgive them**

He prays for man's great and primary need:- Forgiveness.

Jesus considered this bloodthirsty, death hungry crowd not as murderers, but as VICTIMS. It's as though he saw in their faces not hatred but confusion. The first lesson which we all need to learn is that we are sinners and so not worthy of a relationship with God.

It might be nice for us to make good resolutions and set our own standard of rules to live by but this is useless when there is SIN. We might think we are living to please God but this is not going to win God's favour when there is sin between him and us.

What use are shoes if our feet are paralysed  
What use are glasses if we are blind

It means nothing if we are respected by friends.

It means nothing that we are live a moral life.

It means nothing if I am a well respected and successful worker.

It means nothing if I am moral or religious or if I go to church every week.

If I am not forgiven by God.

How is forgiveness made possible?

Does God just overlook our wrong doing and ignore the punishment?

How can God show mercy and forgive and still be just?

He does this through the one who is praying this prayer. Through the suffering that the one praying is experiencing as he prays. Through the death of the one praying this prayer. In his death Jesus is taking the punishment for sin we deserve. You can be forgiven by believing the punishment for your sin was dealt with by Jesus death.

Death brings a clarity to what's important in life.

When I sat with 91 year old Harold Deakin on his death bed he was thinking about what's important in life. You begin to realise what's important in life. At the point of death what is needed is the reassurance that you can face death with confidence being forgiven by God.

The forgiveness God gives through Jesus is real and lasting forgiveness.

Psalm 103 says God removes our sin as far as the east is from the west.

Never to be brought up against you again.

There's a story told about 3 devils at the Devil University. The 3 devils had to do an essay on how to best mislead humans. They come up with their best reasons to misled men and women. One of the devils just gets a pass. He argued that there was no God. The 2<sup>nd</sup> devil gets just above a pass and he argued there is no sin. The third devil gets a distinction. He doesn't say there is no God. He doesn't say there is no such things as sin. He simply says there is no hurry.

**Have you prayed the prayer: Father forgive me, I do not know what have am doing.**