

He Spoke a Word of Tender Care ¹

✠ A word He spoke for Mary.

✠ A word He spoke for us.

In the name of Jesus, our suffering Savior, dearly redeemed believers:

Introduction: How many exasperated parents haven't scolded their teenager, "I hope someday your kids treat you the way you're treating me!" How many of us grown-ups now look back and shudder at things we said and did to our parents while we were growing up?

We need to spend a few moments kneeling at the foot of the cross. We need to listen carefully to the third time He spoke. He has already spoken twice through Luke, pleading, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,*" and reassuring the dying thief, "*Today you will be with me in paradise.*"

As awesome as those words truly were, tonight we are astounded by this third word of Christ from the cross: "*Dear woman, here is your son,*" and to the disciple, "*Here is your mother.*" Truly, **He Spoke a Word of Tender Care.** The obvious one for whom He spoke we will consider first. But before we finish this evening we must also pause to marvel at the rest for whom this **Word of Tender Care** was spoken. First consider...

I. A word He spoke for Mary.

A. How could Jesus think of anything but his own agony?

1. Review of Jesus' extreme physical suffering.
 - a) Pre-crucifixion torture: Roman "flogging" – merciless, terminal.
 - b) Horrors of crucifixion.
 - (1) Nails → nerve damage.
 - (2) Muscle cramping → suffocation.
 - (3) *Excruciating*: from the Latin for cross, "inflicting great pain."
2. Spiritual agony infinitely worse: God's judgment on a world of guilt
3. At a time of such agony, how could Jesus think of anybody else?

B. What was Mary going through?

1. Did she remember Simeon's words spoken so long ago in Jesus' infancy?
✠ "*A sword will pierce your own soul too.*" (Luke 2:35)
2. Was Mary alone? No Joseph to strengthen her?
3. What about Mary's other children? Wouldn't they help?
 - a) "*For even his own brothers did not believe in him.*" (John 7:5 NIV)
 - b) Still seems to have been their opinion at time of crucifixion.

C. Jesus, the perfect Son, would take no chances.

1. "*Here is your son.*" . . . "*Here is your mother.*"
2. Jesus, the perfect Son of God to the very end.
3. He cared for his mother to the very end.
4. In caring so for Mary, Jesus cared for us.

¹ Adapted from 2006 NPH Series: Seven Words He Spoke, Rev. Glenn L. Schwanke.

Transition: Children angry at their parents can become so cruel that books are written about parental abuse – children inflicting suffering on their aging parents. Some may never go that far but still be bitter and angry at memories of a mother too distant to care about them, too lost in her own world or maybe even addicted to drugs and alcohol. Such memories ought to make us look even more at Jesus’ third word from the cross. **He Spoke a Word of Tender Care** not only for **Mary** but for every mother’s son and daughter. This **Word of Tender Care** is

II. A word He spoke for us.

A. *Passive Obedience* in our place.

1. More than a poignant moment or a bit of relief from horrors of the cross.
2. The perfect Son of God spoke this for us.
3. *Vicarious Atonement* – He did it all in our place!
 - a) The bleeding, dying, paying, sin carrying.
 - b) Jesus let all God’s wrath and punishment be poured out on him.
✠ **“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”** (John 1:29 NIV)
 - c) Jesus carried the load of sins to the cross.
✠ **“Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.”** (Hebrews 13:12 NIV)
 - d) Every last drop of our punishment was poured out on Jesus. No exaggeration:
✠ **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV)

B. *Active Obedience* in our place.

1. As a 12-year-old in the Father’s house, doing the Lord’s business all his life. The perfect Son:
✠ **“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”** (Luke 19:10 NIV)
2. Look to Jesus and this word from the cross to understand all the Fourth Commandment means!
3. **“This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well-pleased.”** (Baptism, Transfiguration)
4. Jesus, the perfect Son of God and Son of Man, kept this commandment, and all others, for us.
✠ For every time our parents said, “Clean your room and we...”
✠ For every time we argued about the curfew...
✠ For every time our aged parents still ask, “Why so long since you called?”

Conclusion: For all the times we fall short of the bar set by our heavenly Father when he commanded us to honor our moms and dads—for all those times there is Jesus, God’s perfect Son. Jesus, Mary’s perfect son. And there is His word of **Tender Care...for us**. Amen.