What They Were Not Told – They Will See
(The seven things Jesus said on the cross)

1. I want to start on this Palm Sunday with a passage that comes right before the one read by the Taylors. While Isaiah 53 is read often – and it should be – there is an amazing and touching passage here in Isaiah 52:13-15.

2. Palm Sunday is the anniversary of the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem. It is how he begins his last week before the resurrection. He will be exalted and acknowledged as the Messiah and he will be beaten and crucified, all in the space of a week.

3. Note that he was exalted on Sunday, and then crucified during the week, and resurrected on a Sunday. I think he showed us on the cross and during the events of this week how to be Sunday people all the time – people who acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

4. We are going to look at what Jesus said on the cross. After going through all of the torture and pain, Jesus had a few things to say. No single Gospel records all of them. Luke and John both record three while Matthew and Mark both record the same one. We cannot be certain in which order these were said, but tradition and scholarship have a preferred flow and we will follow that.

5. Luke 23:34 – "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Have you ever wondered if the grace and mercy of God could possibly cover you and if God really cares about you, look at this. This is God's response to our rebellion. This is Who God is. As Paul said, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Romans 5:8-11.

6. The same love that saved the people nailing Jesus to the cross is right here, right now given freely to you. Now, our task is to become more like Jesus in our words and attitudes, and we are never more like Jesus than when we forgive others (Ephesians 4:32).

7. The second saying was "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Here was a man who freely admitted his guilt. There was no time for acts of contrition. He couldn't set things

right. But he turned toward Jesus and was saved. No better example could be found of this salient fact: God loves you and it is His righteousness that saves us, not any righteousness or actions of our own.

8. Note that these first two sayings are all about forgiveness. Because Jesus IS all about forgiveness. Never hesitate to come back to him.

9. John 19:26-27. We just can't say if Jesus was referring to himself in the "woman, behold thy son" or if he was referring to John. Either way, this is an amazing, gut wrenching moment that, once again, shows the love and care of God. With some of his last breaths, he makes sure his mother is cared for. Women without husbands or sons had no status at that time and could be mistreated if they didn't have money of their own. John was the youngest disciple and the one Jesus assigned to watch over Mary as if she were his mother.

10. John 19:28. There are those who make this a spiritual thirst but I think we should just read this as written. It certainly does make us think of Psalm 69, written as a plea for help from God that includes vv.20-21. It seems to be a fulfillment of prophecy but I would think that would have far from his mind at this moment.

11. Let's just remember that scripture tells us that Jesus felt it all down here. He was thirsty, hungry, in tears, in laughter – all of it. While he did not go through everything you've gone through, he had those emotions and physical pain. That said, I confess that I often remind God that it is hard down here and ask Him to ask Jesus about that.

12. Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. This is the scary part. This is when would have expected the angels unleashed for God seems to be an 11:59 God Who moves at the last second like the appearance of the calvary in an old western. But…no. Instead he, like many of us as we approach death, remembers a song. Psalm 22 begins with "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

13. I want to go on record here as declaring that I wish Jesus hadn't suffered anything at any time. That said, I am a bit of a hypocrite here because it gives me comfort (sorry!) to know that

Jesus felt what many of us have felt or feel right now. We feel far from God or that He has moved far from us. We feel our prayers are just dropping back down, never getting beyond our ceilings. While our faith and scripture say we are not forsaken…we feel forsaken. And God knows exactly what that feels like and will not judge us for that.

14. John 19:30. Again, we can make this all super holy but let's keep things simple. He knew his body was finished but he also knew that he had done what he came to do…with one exception. That one undone thing would happen soon and we will celebrate it next week. I think of Paul knowing that he was going to be executed soon, taking time to write to Timothy and saying "I have finished my course."

15. Before the devil lies to you and says that you will die without finishing your work, your course, remember who is on the cross and what He is like and what He thinks about us. You're good.

16. Luke 23:46. I think of Flight 93. When the hijackers took it over, the passengers heard what their intentions were and decided to take the plane and fly it into the ground rather than let hijackers use it against the US Capitol. There were man heroes on that flight but the most famous was the one heard from last. He and another passenger recited Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer before saying. "Are you ready? Okay, let's roll."

17. I truly believe that if Jesus asked God to send ten thousand angels, He would have and this would have all stopped…but Jesus decided to take the fight all the way to the end. He was going to die and, by so doing, he was headed to take away the devil's last threat and weapon against us: time and death. The next time we see Jesus, death will be defeated.

18. But that is next week. Let's not rush past Friday when so many of us live in or have lived in Friday a long time. Sunday is coming. We heard Jesus' last words on the cross but these are not his last words. Those of you who believe in him will one day hear "well done" from this forgiving, loving, giving Savior. "What they were not told, they will see"