On September 18, 2007, computer science professor Randy Pausch stepped in front of an audience of 400 people at Carnegie Mellon University to deliver a last lecture called “Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams.”

With slides of his CT scans beaming out to the audience, Randy told his audience about the cancer that was devouring his pancreas and that would claim his life less than a year later.

On the stage that day, Randy was youthful, energetic, handsome, cheerful and darkly funny. He seemed invincible. But this was a brief moment, as he himself acknowledged.

Randy’s lecture became a viral video phenomenon which has now been viewed over 15 million times on YouTube.

Randy also wrote a book called The Last Lecture which was a New York Times bestseller for 112 weeks.

Sadly, Randy expressly avoided talking about what he called spirituality and religion and only joked about a deathbed conversion.

But he did say some good things that we all can appreciate.

He said: “Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other.”

He said: “If I only had three words of advice, they would be, ‘Tell the truth.’ If I got three more words, I’d add, ‘all the time.’”

He said: “Luck is where preparation meets opportunity.”

And he said: “A lot of people want a shortcut. I find the best shortcut is the long way, which is basically two words: work hard.”

You could say that his last lecture is a modern day example of someone’s Famous Last Words.

Title slide

Pausch gave his last words in the shadow of his impending death from cancer, yet he chose to stand in the light of a life well lived.

This is similar to something we find in the New Testament in the Bible. When Jesus was in the shadow of his impending death on the cross, the Bible tells us the 7 last things he said.

The Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John record for us 7 statements Jesus makes while he is hanging on the cross. We could call these his Famous Last Words.

That momentous day, Jesus said: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34

He told a criminal on a cross next Him: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” Luke 23:43

He cried out to God: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46

He said: “I am thirsty.” John 19:28


John says his last words were: “It is finished.” John 19:28
And lastly, the one I’d like to talk about today: John 19:25-27 says

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Jesus said to his mother: “Woman, here is your son.”
And to the disciple, who we know is John, he said, “Here is your mother.”

And the implication seems to be, Jesus is saying “take care of her.”
“Since I am not going to be here physically anymore, you take care of her.”

It is also clear that this is what they both understood him to mean because John writes “From that time on, this disciple took her into his home”

While he is nailed to a cross between his wrist bones and his feet, after he has been whipped and beaten and tortured ruthlessly, while he is struggling to lift himself so that he can have air to breathe, Jesus is still taking care of his people ... mother, Mary.

First, can we say, that is amazing?
This is a remarkable expression of his love and care for his mother and a thoughtful provision for her needs in his hour of devastation.

But then, this raises a few questions for me.

The 1st is, What happened to Joseph?
What happened to Mary’s husband and Jesus’ human father Joseph?
Why isn’t he going to take care of her?

Well the last we hear about Joseph is when Jesus is 12 years old.

His parents take him to Jerusalem and Jesus is so smart that his parents kind of lose him & they find him in the temple courtyard teaching the teachers. After that we don’t have any record of what happened to Jesus until he is around 30 years old.

And Jesus is believed to be about 33 years old when he is crucified. So, considering age, his absence, and that Jesus feels responsible for her, Joseph has certainly died.

But then, the next question would be What about Jesus’ brothers?

A couple passages in Matthew and Mark speak about Jesus’ mother and brothers and names them: James, Jose, Juda, and Simon, and sisters.

Why does John need to care for her, if Jesus has brothers who could do it?

Roman Catholic and some orthodox traditions say that Jesus had NO real brothers
- Either that those written of were Joseph’s children from a previous marriage
- Or that they were simply blood relatives – his cousins.

This all only becomes necessary because these traditions teach that Mary was perpetually a virgin - Mary remained a virgin all her life.

But Matt 1:25 makes that quite unlikely, as it says about Mary and Joseph, But he [Joseph] did not consummate their marriage until she [Mary] gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.
Joseph did not consummate their marriage UNTIL Mary gave birth to a son.

This makes perfectly clear that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived but then after his birth, Mary and Joseph consummated their marriage.

So it is most likely, then, that when the gospels say Jesus had brothers, they were all his younger brothers, from both Joseph and Mary.

**Then why is Jesus giving John the responsibility to care for Mary?**

*Why John?*

It is most likely because

John 7:5 tells us  
For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

Jesus’ own brother’s did not believe He was who He claimed to be.

Jesus has John take Mary into his home, so that she doesn’t have to leave the church, the community of his followers to return to her unbelieving sons to be cared for.

**Later, Jesus’s brothers are going to become followers of Jesus.**

*Can anyone tell me why?*

Because 1 Cor 15 says the resurrected Jesus appeared to his brother James.

You don’t believe your older brother is God’s Son, sure.  
But once he is dead, and yet he returns & talks with you, then you will believe.

**Then I have 1 more question to ask.**

*Why did Jesus wait to make this arrangement?*

- Jesus could have taken care of this arrangement earlier.  
- The gospels are clear that he knew that he was going to Jerusalem that week to die.  
- He tells his disciples repeatedly that that is his mission.  
- He prepares *them* for his death and his absence before he is arrested and crucified.  
- Why does he wait til he is on the cross to do this with Mary and John?

The Last Lecture guy, Randy Pausch, when he knew he was dying, he had one singular focus – to do all he could to prepare his family for life without him.

In his book he wrote: “When I cry in the shower, I'm not usually thinking, 'I won't get to see the kids do this' or 'I won't get to see them do that.' I'm thinking about the kids not having a father. I'm focused more on what they're going to lose than on what I'm going to lose.”

When you know you are going to die, you prepare your loved ones.  
Jesus knew he was to die and he was preparing his disciples for a long time.

**But this conversation with Mary and John may have been intentionally** delayed until he was on the cross, because Jesus wanted it to happen there.

I think he does this because everything he says on the cross has bigger meaning.

I think every 1 of these 7 sayings is intended to tell us about what Jesus is doing for us in our salvation by dying on the cross.

- When he said Father forgive them, he was saying the cross is forgiveness.  
- When he said today you’ll be in paradise, he was saying the cross is the way to heaven.  
- When he said My God Why have you forsaken me? He was saying the sins of the world are on my shoulders.
And I believe this saying is meant to show us that the cross is not just some impersonal, sacrificial, theological transaction.
   It is not just a task Jesus performs to take away our sin guilt.
   It is not just a mission that Jesus fulfills to redeem us from death.

The cross is about his love!
The cross is about God’s love.
The cross is about how much God cares for us.

Even when Jesus is at the height of agony, while he is in the midst of torture and the literal destruction of his body by his enemies, Jesus is still caring for other people.

   That is love!

The cross shows the love God has for us.
And this little conversation is meant to point us to this about the cross:
   Jesus loves us and Jesus cares for us –
   in his agony, Jesus is caring for us.

John 3:16 is the clearest and simplest statement of it
For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son [on the cross], that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

   God loves us.
   That is why Jesus died for us.

Romans 5:6-8 says it in another way
You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

   God demonstrates his love for us on the cross.

When he was preparing his disciples for his death, Jesus had said,
John 15:13
Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

His cross was about his love for us.
It is the greatest expression of love that anyone could show or make.

I was talking with my son and he said, Soldiers will lay down their lives for their brothers, even when they don’t care about the mission. Did I know why? Because even if they don’t care about a mission, they do care about their brothers so much they will sacrifice their lives.

**Jesus had a mission from God to die on the cross for the sins of the world, but he did not die for the mission, He died because He loved you and me.**

Jesus taking care of his mother shows us that Jesus didn’t forget to love people, while he was taking care of his mission, to die on the cross. His mission was his love.

I was talking with Pastor Keith about this and he had the thought that that means that today while God is accomplishing his mission to save the world, he can still pause to love us.

That’s what he does when he says “Mother, behold your son.” He pauses in his mission to show his love.

So that if you are hurting today, if you need his help today, God is big enough to keep the whole world spinning while he looks to you and helps you and tells you, I love you, I care. He loves YOU. He cares for YOU.
   He is not too busy to see all of us and love and care for us.
But on top of that I think this saying says something about the kind of love Jesus wants us to have for one another.

1 John 4:10-11 tells us
This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Can we love others in our lives like Jesus loves Mary here?

I have a ministry colleague, a pastor.
He wasn’t really my friend, but I knew him from events we attended together and we had fraternal kinds of conversations together.

Several years ago, he was caught in some kind of immoral activity.
I don’t know what it was exactly, but I was given the impression that it was an inappropriate relationship or immoral conduct. He resigned quietly from leadership in his small church.

Here’s the amazing thing, his wife became the pastor.
**While she was suffering her own hour of devastation,** she was able to allow the Christ in her to love and care for other people – her church and even her husband.

This is the love that we see in Jesus on the cross: to care about the needs of others, even when you are hurting, more than the needs of yourself.

This is love.
The last thing Randy Pausch says in his 75 minute Last Lecture is “Did you figure out the head fake? This talk is not for you, the audience. It was all for his 3 kids Dylan, Logan, and Chloe.”

A man is dying of pancreatic cancer. He is given 3-6 months to live.
And his remaining time in life becomes about making memories and messages that will last his children a lifetime.
That is love.

This is the love that we see in Jesus on the cross: to care about the needs of others more than the needs of yourself.

This is love.
A couple divorces.
A woman is left to do the hard work of day in and day out caring for the kids.
She loves her family by getting up earlier and staying up later.
She loves them by doing her best.
Even though she will make mistakes and it will not be the same as if they had stayed together. She still perseveres and does her best.

This is the love that we see in Jesus on the cross: to care about the needs of others more than the needs of yourself.

This is love.
Age or sickness or an accident takes its toll on a family member’s body
A sister is advancing in age and can’t take care of herself.
But doesn’t want to go into a care facility.
A spouse is losing their memory. And while they once had a great mind, now they are confused more and more.
A parent has lost mobility and needs care.
Or a child was in an accident and needs care.
And with the help of Christ, loved ones are there to care.
This is the love that we see in Jesus on the cross: to care about the needs of others more than the needs of yourself.

Philip Yancey, a renowned Christian author once wrote: “Here at the cross is the man who loves his enemies, the man whose righteousness is greater than that of the Pharisees, who being rich became poor, who gives his robe to those who take his cloak, who prays for those who deceitfully use him. The cross is not a detour or a hurdle on the way to Kingdom, nor is it even the way to the Kingdom; it is the Kingdom come.” -- The Jesus I Never Knew

The cross shows us that love – a love that cares about the needs of others more than the needs of oneself. But more than that, the cross of Jesus doesn’t just show us God’s love, it is God’s love.

This is the kind of love that Jesus calls his followers to give to one another. This is the kind of love he showed us –

a love that cares about the needs of others more than the needs of oneself

This is how you can love others with his help in you.

Will you seek to do that today?
Will you be encouraged if this is what you are called to in life today?

Do you need that love for yourself today?
To have Jesus take time while he keeps the world spinning to turn to you

To remind you that he cares and He loves you?
He loves you and He cares for you too today.

And lastly, do you know that love in your life?

Have you ever let him in to love you?

Have you ever told him you believe in Him and that you accept what He did on the cross for you?
Would you do that today?