

## **The Word Of Committal**

**Luke 23:46**

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Luke records. It was about the sixth hour. Now the sixth hour was high noon, and beginning at the sixth hour, there was darkness over all of the earth until the ninth hour. The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rips in the midst. In verse 46, when Jesus had cried then with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit," and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. We come today to the seventh and last words, Jesus, the suffering Savior spoke from the cross. When he spoke the first time from the cross, it was the word of forgiveness. Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. The second utterance from the cross was the word of salvation. Today you will be with me in paradise. He turned to the repentant thief, and he said, "Today, you will be with me in paradise."

Then, thirdly, he spoke the word of affection. As he turned to his mother, he saw Mary weeping at the foot of the cross, and he said, "Woman, behold your son," referring to the Apostle John, and then he said, "John, behold your mother." From that day forward, John took Mary into his home to be with him, and then we moved to the word of agony. Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then, Jesus spoke the word of humanity. Jesus cried, "I thirst," and then we see Jesus crying the word of victory. It is finished or tetelestai, one word in the Greek, finished or done or complete. Now we come today to the word of committal. Notice it with me in verse 46, Jesus cried with a loud voice and said, "Father, into your hands I commit or I entrust my spirit." Now, as we look at the seven utterances or the seventh utterance of Jesus from the cross, and believe me, I'll get through them in time, don't freak out, I have seven points I want to make.

So, if you're taking notes, I want you to write these down, and then we're going to conclude or summarize the accomplishments of the cross. Number one, these were the Savior's last words before he died. When Jesus cried, "Father, into your hands, I commit or I deposit my spirit," they were the actual last words that Jesus uttered as he died. So Jesus cries, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Now, his seventh utterance is the ground communication of his calvary death. So he comes to this point where he dismisses his spirit, or better yet, he breathes his last, and he committed his spirit into the hands of the Father. Seven is the number of completion. So, Jesus now has completed his work upon the cross. It's an interesting comparison with Genesis chapter one and two, because in Genesis chapter one, we find that God created the heavens and the earth in how many days? Six days. I'm going to give you the answer, because first service got it wrong, okay? I don't want you to do any embarrassed. Pray for them.

Then, I went Seven. No, 6. I'm not saying another word. They don't want to say it. 6. By the way, this is a footnote. I believe, and I'm not ashamed to say this, I believe that they were 6 literal days, 24 hour days, not 6 billion years, Not 6 geological epochs of billions of years. 6 literal years. Do you think it's too hard for God to create everything in six days? Not at all. As a matter

of fact, he did it with his word. Theologians call it fiat. God has divine fiat. It means he can speak things into existence. What doesn't exist? God can just speak it, and it exists. What a powerful thing. In six days, on the sixth utterance, what did Jesus say? You're scared now, right? "I ain't saying nothing. I ain't saying nothing." It is finished. As a matter of fact, I hope by the time we finish this series today, you have memorized the seven words from the cross. Without even looking at anything or thinking of it, you can just systematically go through and you can quote all seven utterances that Jesus made.

So, on the sixth utterance, he said to Telestai, "It is finished." Genesis six days, he finished everything. What did he do on the seventh day? I know you're scared to death, and you're not going to answer. Rested. You get an A. He rested. What does Jesus do in the seventh utterance? "I commit my spirit into your hands. I entrust my spirit into your hands," and in that sense, he rested in the Father. He trusted in the Father," so this is the culmination of his Calvary communications. Secondly, it was a prayer. Write that down. It was a prayer. Three times Jesus prayed upon the cross. The first prayer was, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." The second prayer was, "My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me?" Which, by the way, is the fourth utterance, which puts it right in the middle of the seven utterances, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And then, the third prayer is our text Today in verse 46.

Jesus prayed, "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit." Now, this prayer, verse 46, was a prayer of victory. He cried with a loud voice. It was a prayer of intimacy. He prayed to his father, and it was a prayer of dependency into thy hands, "I commit my spirit," so if I were going to take this last utterance, that's how I would break it down. Victory, intimacy, dependency. Into your hands, I commit my spirit, but the point I want to make is that Jesus died as he lived, praying. Several sermons I read on this text took the approach of Jesus showing us how to die. You want to know how to die? Read the words of Jesus from the cross, but it's based on how he lived. Generally, most of us will agree. People die how they live, the patterns, the habits that they set in their life will carry with them until they die, unless there's a conversion and old things pass away, all things become new, but Jesus lived his whole life doing what? Praying. He was a man of prayer. I love what James Stocker said.

He said praying was distinctly the language of his dying hours. It was not by chance that his very last words were a prayer, for the currents within him were all flowing heaven-word. I love that. Jesus died the way he lived. Praying, praying, praying, praying, praying, and guess what I want to do? If the Lord should tarry and I should die, I want to die, praying. I want to die with prayer on my lips. I want to die with praise on my lips. I want to die talking to God, praying to God, communing with God. What a way to die, praying. He died as he lived. How about you? Are you a man of prayer? Are you a woman of prayer? Are you committed to praying? Most likely, you will die then as you live. You will be dying in prayer. I want you to notice, thirdly, that this prayer was a prayer to his father. I want you to notice to whom Jesus prayed, verse 46. "Father." Jesus introduced the whole idea or concept that we can talk to God or address God or commune with as our, what?

Father in heaven. Amen. He's not far removed. He's not uncaring. He's not unsympathetic. He is your Father in heaven. Let that sink down deep into your heart. You have a father in heaven, and when they ask Jesus, "How do we pray?" Jesus said, "You pray like this." Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy name, thy character, thy nature. Praise be thy name. Your name be holy. Our Father, which is in heaven. So, he is holy. He is far removed, but he's also very near and dear to us as our father in heaven. This is the cry of committal, committal. Communion has been restored. Interesting contrast on the fourth utterance. I just mentioned it, the middle prayer. What was it? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why did Jesus, the first time pray Father, the last time pray Father, but in the middle, my God, my God. The reason being?

Because at that moment, the sin of the world was being placed upon Jesus Christ, and God was acting judicially as a righteous holy judge. He had turned his back temporarily upon the pure and holy son of God who has now become sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God. There was that fellowship that was broken, but now it has been restored, and he cries out, "Father." It's a wonderful thing that, wherever we go, we have the presence of God. If I take the wings of the morning, thou art with me. If I go to the outermost ends of the earth, thou aren't with me. If I get in an airplane and fly out of LAX, thou art with me, praise God. If I drive in my car through Los Angeles, thou art with me, and thy angels surround me. God is with you. You have his presence. Many of you know Pastor John Courson from Applegate Christian Fellowship, and years ago he was telling the story. I'll never forget. He was praying every night with his kids children, as a good thing for dads to do.

He is praying with his kids and tucking them in bed. He said, "I was in the habit of praying every night with our kids. God, we thank you for your presence. Every night, Lord, we thank you for presence."

Well, after four or five nights, John said that one of his kids said, "Dad, when do we get them?"

He was kind of taken aback like, "Get them? What do you mean when do we get them?"

He goes, "The presents. Every night you say, 'We thank you for the presents. Where are they? I don't see any presents.'"

Well, it's not those kinds of presents, right? It's the presence of the Lord that we're looking for. I'm so glad that wherever I go, I have my father's presence with me. You say, "Well, I don't sense his presence." Then, pray as Jesus prayed. Maybe you need to confess your sin to God. 1 John 1:9. If you have sin, then you confess your sin, and he's faithful and just to forgive you of your sin and to forgive you from all unrighteousness. Then, you walk by faith and you thank him for his presence. Communion with your Father is not dependent on time or place. Think about it. Jesus is suffering and dying on a cross, and what does he say? Father, father. No matter where you are, no matter what you're going through, no matter what is happening in your life, you have a father in heaven. Don't forget that, and he's always with you. I think of the three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They wouldn't bow to the king's image or worship it. And

so, we were thrown into what? The fiery furnace, right?

Three of them. Once they got in the furnace, the king comes and he goes, "How many did we throw in the furnace?"

A servant said, "Three."

He goes, "I see four."

They're walking around, and the fourth looks like the son of God, and so in the fire, in the flame, in the difficulty, we can meet and encounter the presence of God. Amen. God is with us in the furnace of affliction. Maybe you're discouraged right now. Maybe you just don't want to keep going. God is with you, and Jesus said, "I will never leave you and I will never forsake you." He had that example of his communion and presence of the Father, and even in his hour of death, God was still his father. When you lay on your bed and you get ready to die, God will be with you. I believe that with all my heart. I believe that there's grace at the moment of death, that God comes to us, he meets with us, and we encounter him. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, and you don't need to be afraid, because the Lord is with you. Now, fourthly, I want to point this out. Jesus' last words were a quotation from Scripture. You say, "John, you've said that about all seven statements."

Yes, because it's true. Every statement he uttered either was a quotation from the Old Testament, or it had its background or roots in the Old Testament. Jesus was quoting, here it is. Write this down. Psalm 31:5. Psalm 31:5, it reads like this, "Into thy hand, I commit my spirit. Thou has redeemed me. Oh Lord, god of truth." That was David who prayed that prayer, but it was also prophetic and messianic, because Jesus quoted it while he was on the cross, "And to thy hands, I commit my spirit." But it's interesting that Jesus quoted this verse and did two things to it. Number one, he made an addition. He added the word Father, and number two, he made an omission. He took away the phrase, "Thou hast redeemed me. Oh Lord, God of truth." Why? Because he's the redeemer. He's not the redeemed. He's the one that's dying for man's redemption. So he omits a portion of it, and he adds to it the word "father." You go, "Is that okay to mess with the scriptures?" Yes. If you're the Son of God. If you're Jesus, you can do whatever you want, right?

I'm not going to argue with him. So, he adds a phrase. He takes away a phrase to this scripture. Now, what was Jesus doing? Jesus died as he lived. Prayer. Jesus died as he lived scripture. He was always quoting the Bible. He was always meditating on the word of God. By the way, the most frequently quoted book of the Bible by Jesus was the book of Deuteronomy. It is known as the favorite book of Jesus. You ought to read it too. If Jesus read it, you should read it, so here's my point. How should we live? Praying and meditating, studying, and hiding God's word in our hearts, because you want to know something? How you live is how you're going to die. I want to die with prayer on my lips. I want to die with the Bible on my lips. I want to die with scripture in my heart and coming through my mouth. When I'm laying on my deathbed, and you say, "John, what are your last words?" I hope I just quote scripture.

Praying to God and quoting the word of God is how Jesus died. Will you live and die with God's word and prayer on your lips? Jesus always quoted the scriptures. An example, before we move on, remember when he was tempted by the devil in the wilderness? You remember that, right? "Turn these rocks into bread." What did Jesus tell the devil? "It is written," that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. It's not about bread for your body. It's about the word of God, and every one of the temptations, it is written, it is written, it is written. Remember when they came to Jesus and they said this woman, got to get the story straight, this woman had seven husbands, had a whole bunch of husbands. The first one died, the second one died, third one died, fourth one died, and they didn't believe in heaven, so they were asking him, "When we get to heaven, whose husband is the wife going to be or who's she going to be married to out of seven guys?"

I'm going to stop right there. What did Jesus say? "Have you not read your Bibles?" His response to them was, "You guys need to read your Bibles." When you get to heaven, then you're going to marry or given a marriage, but they're going to be like the angels. We're not going to be married when we get to heaven. Some of you don't like that idea, right? Don't worry about it. I don't want to be married in heaven. I never got to be married on earth. It's cool, but everything Jesus said was the Bible, the Bible, the Bible, the Bible, so he died as he lived praying. He died as he lived quoting scripture. Now, number five, I want you to note the actual prayer that Jesus prayed. If Jesus prayed a prayer, I want to understand the prayer that he prayed. Verse 46, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." That's the prayer. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Weymouth translates this "Father, to thy hands, I entrust my spirit." Some render this he dismissed his spirit.

It is a prayer of committal. It is a deposit of his spirit into the hands of the Father. Jesus, our example, again, he lived as he died in prayer in the scriptures, and here's number three. This is how you want to live, and this is how you want to die. Trusting, committing, resting in the hands of his father. What a great way to live, right? Praying, the word of God, and faith. "I trust you, Lord. I put my life in your hands," so as he lived his life, he trusted the Father. He depended on the Father. He only spoke the words the father gave him. He only did the things the father wanted him to do. He lived a life of trust, committal, and faith. This, my beloved, is the place of refuge. Put yourself in the hands of God. I cannot think of a better place to put my life, to put my wife, to put my marriage, to put my children, to put my grandchildren, to put this congregation than into the hands of Jesus Christ. Safe in the hands of Jesus.

You go, "Are you sure about that pastor? Are you sure we're safe?" His hands have scars. They were nails driven through those hands showing that he loves us. With those hands, he flung the stars into space. With those hands, he hollowed out the depths of the sea. With those hands, he healed the leopard. He gave sight to the blinded eyes, and with those hands, nail-pierced hands, he holds you in the palm of his hand. The Bible says that you are engraven in the palm of God's hand. It's the place of refuge. It's a place of trust. He was in the hands of sinful men. They abused him. They crucified him. Now he's in the hands of the Father. For life and in death, his hands are the hands we need to trust him, and I believe that we're secure in those hands. In John chapter 10, verse 28, Jesus said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never

perish, and neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hands." You can wrangle with that verse, and you can wrestle with that verse, and you can deal with interpreting that verse.

But either way you cut it, slice it, examine it, dig into the Greek and the grammar of that text, Jesus said, "You are in my hands, and no one and nothing can take you out of my hands." That's where I want to be, don't you? I want to be in the hands of Jesus. I am secure in the hands of Jesus. Now, if God is your father, you can trust him even when you come to death. What an example. The first martyr, Christian martyr, Stephen means Stefanos or crown, was when he died with prayer on his lips, forgiveness in his heart. When Stephen died, this is what it says in Acts chapter 7, verse 59 and 60. It says they were stoning Stephen. He was calling upon God, praying, and he was saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, trusting in God." He knelt down, and he cried with a loud voice, as Jesus did, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," like Jesus, and when he had said thus, he fell asleep.

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, as the stones were pelting his body, he looked heavenward, and his face was shining like an angel. The Bible says that he actually saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. Only place in all the Bible where you have Jesus not seated finished work, but standing at the right hand of the Father, no doubt to welcome Stephen, the first Christian martyr to heaven, and he said, "Lord Jesus, lay not the sin to their charge. Receive my spirit," and he knelt down, he prayed, and he went to sleep. That is the most wonderful metaphor of a Christian when they die. You know what the Bible says happens when a Christian dies? They fall asleep. I love that, because I love sleep. My wife's always saying, "You sure like to sleep a lot." Amen, sister. Give me my pillow. I used to travel with my pillow. I thank God for sleep. The older I get, I thank God for naps, amen.

When you die, you're only sleeping, your body. That's only for Christians, and it's only for the body, because their body is waiting the resurrection, the great [inaudible 00:25:10] morning. When Jesus will come, and with a shout, the dead in Christ shall rise first, so our bodies will be resurrected and reunited with our soul and our spirit, which is in the presence of the Lord. So, when a Christian dies, they fall asleep, and when they wake up, they're in heaven. Remember when you were little and you'd be out late with your folks, and they pull in the driveway, and you're falling asleep in the car, and your dad would pick you up and carry you in the house? That felt so good, and they'd carry you into the house, and dads like it too. You get to carry your kids in the house, and you lay them in their beds, and you put them in their jammies, and you pull the blankets up around them, and you kiss them on the cheek.

That's what death is for the Christian. The angels come, and they take you and they carry you to the Lord, and when you fall asleep, then you wake up in heaven, and the Lord is there. What a glorious thing that is. You don't have to be afraid to die, as Jesus died, so we die in prayer with the scriptures, with faith, trust, and committing our spirit into the hand of God. Jesus is showing us how to die, resting in his hands. Someone wrote these words in a poem, "Hide me, oh my Savior, hide until the storms of life are past. Safe unto heaven, guide me. Oh, receive my soul at last." I want to ask you a question. Have you committed your life to God? Have you knelt in prayer and said, "God, I commit my life to you. I entrust my life to you. Lord, I'm in your hands. I

belong to you. Have your way"? It was many years ago, I experienced what it was like to get kidnapped at gunpoint in Los Angeles. I've mentioned the story before.

I've never given the whole detailed version of the story, but we were flying out of LA one night, it was about nine o'clock on a Sunday night. We're on our way to Australia, and we had stopped to get a hamburger at a Carl's Jr. on Century Boulevard outside the airport. Not a good idea. When we came out of the airport, we were abducted at gunpoint. Two fellows, three of us, two of them, guns, forced us in our vehicle, took our wallets, watches, money, and things. Then, I thought they'd jump out. We could get back on the airplane. Just jump out. We still got to catch our plane. That'll be cool, and then they said, "Start the car." My heart just sunk, and for the next hour, they're driving around, holding the guns up to our head, "We're going to kill you. We're going to shoot your brains out." They drive into a park in Inglewood, pull up to a fence, and line us up to shoot us execution style. So, we're facing the fence.

They cocked their guns. Myself, my assistant pastor, and another fellow from the church were standing there, and I'll never forget it. The spirit of the Lord just came upon us, and I just said, "You know what? Let's just commit our lives to God. Let's just pray right now," and I led in pray. I said, "Lord, we belong to you. We are your children. We belong to you," and I literally just raised my hands and began to pray and said, "Lord, we belong to you. Lord, we just commit our lives to you," and just a second or two later, I heard the door shut in the car. They got back in the car, drove off, and left us standing there. Amazing. Which you probably figured out by now because I'm still here, right? We ran out in the street. "Help, help, help." It took a while. We finally got to the police department. "Hey. We were kidnapped, robbed," and blah, blah, blah, and the whole thing went down.

But so just have that presence of the Lord and that sense of God, "I belong to you. If I die right here and now, I'm your child. I belong to you. Lord, receive my spirit." You don't need to be afraid when you belong to the Lord. 2 Timothy 1:12, Paul said, "For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day, amen." Commit your life into God's hands. Here's number six. Jesus actually died. Jesus actually died. Verse 46, notice it. He gave up the ghost. Now I'm reading from the King James Bible, and it uses the word ghost there. He gave up the ghost, but the better translation would be he gave up his spirit or he dismissed his spirit, Or even better would be he breathed his last breath. The word is Pneuma, his breath or spirit. He actually died on that cross. Now, here we have an instance where Jesus actually died.

We have insight as to what death is. What happens when a person dies? This is what happens. This is what death is. The immaterial part of you, the soul and the spirit, leave the body. So Jesus, the man, died on the cross, and his soul and spirit left his body lifeless, inanimate, hanging on the cross, but he was buried, and three days later, he what? He rose from the dead. We celebrate that next Sunday, but it's very important to make it clear that Jesus, as a man, physically died, actually died upon the cross, as one day we will die when our spirit and soul leave the tent or leave this body. You say, "Well, why is this so important?" Let me tell you why. Because if Jesus did not actually physically die, then he didn't actually physically rise from the

dead. You've got to have an actual death, physical death, to have an actual physical resurrection. He didn't swoon. He didn't just pass out. It wasn't a metamorphosis.

It was a physical death, and three days later, he physically rose from the dead. That's very, very important to establish, and he became the first fruits of those who sleep, other Christians, and one day, our bodies, like Christ, will be resurrected from the dead. This is what the Bible says. 1 Corinthians 15:3. Christ died, underline the word died, for our sins. You got that? Jesus actually died for his sins. Now, what is a mystery to me is that Jesus said, "No man takes my life. I lay it down on myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it up," but when Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost, he looked at the mob, the crowd that was there, he said, "You, by your wicked hands, have crucified and slain," so the Bible teaches that men crucified and killed Jesus. The Bible tells us that Jesus laid his life down voluntarily. Which was it? Both.

I think what is happening here is that Jesus is actually dying. Have you ever been with somebody when they died? Have you ever watched them breathe slower, slower, and slower, slower? When my mother passed away, we were three days in the hospital with her, and we literally just sat there and watched her breath slower and slower and slower and slower, and her last breath, and we prayed, and we sang, and we gave thanks to God. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Amen. What a glorious hope that is. So as I look at Jesus hanging on the cross, and he says, into thy hands, "I commit my spirit." He went, "Ah," and he breathed his last breath. He died. He died for you. He died for me. He died for the sins of the world. Jesus Christ breathed his last breath. Then, 1 Corinthians 15:4 says, "He rose for our salvation. He died for our sins. He rose for our salvation."

Here's my seventh and last point. Jesus died victoriously. He died victoriously. Now, I've already touched on this, but notice the veil of the temple was ripped in two, verse 45, signifying the way to God is now open to the touring of his flesh. Verse 46, he cried with a what? Loud voice. Why did Luke record that? All we needed to know was what he said. We didn't need to know the volume. All we need to know is what he said, but Luke wants us to know it was a victorious cry. It wasn't a whimper. It wasn't exasperation. "I commit my spirit to your hands." It was a loud cry, and in rapid succession, he said these two things. He said, "It is finished to tell us die," and then immediately, he said, "Into your hands, I commit my spirit," and he breathed his last breath. He died victoriously on the cross for our sins. He cried with a loud voice.

Now, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, summarizing the cross that we've looked at for seven weeks, how would I summarize the accomplishments of the cross? Write these down. Three things, very important. What was the accomplished of the cross? Number one, the conquest of evil. The conquest of evil. Jesus conquered evil at the cross. Sin, Satan, and death were all conquered at the cross, the conquest of evil. Number two, the revelation of God, the revelation of God. What do we see when we look at the cross? This is why these last few weeks have so blessed my heart. Theologians call it the theater of the cross. We've been in the theater of the cross for seven weeks. What do we see? The love of God, the mercy of God, the grace of God, the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, the justice of God, the power of God, the wisdom of God, all of them seen in the theater of the cross.



Have you seen them? As we've looked through the window of his words, have you seen the heart of God? We need to spend time at the cross. As Christians, we should never get away from the cross. We never outgrow the cross. This is why it's so important for you to be in the communion service. Jesus commanded us, "As often as you eat this bread and you drink this cup, you show, you display, you demonstrate my death until I come." There's only one thing he asked us to remember, and that's his death in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup, because in the theater of the cross, we see God. We used to sing an old song that I still love so much, "Jesus, keep me near the cross. There's a precious fountain. Free to all, a healing stream flows from Calvary's mountain. In the cross, in the cross. Be my glory, ever. In the cross, in the cross."

Jesus keep me near the cross. I don't want to ever want to get away from the cross. No wonder Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." We need to live at the foot of the cross and let it change and transform our life. Conquest of evil, revelation of God, and thirdly, salvation of sinners. The salvation of sinners. As I was putting together the sermon last night, I was saying, "How do I conclude seven weeks on the cross? What can I say? What words could I use to summarize the conclusion of the cross?" And our response, what should now be our response? What did it accomplish? It conquered evil, demonstrated God, and saving sinners, but what is our response?

I could think of no better words to end with than the words of the song, When I Survey The Wondrous Cross, believed by many to be the greatest hymn ever written in the English language. It was written by Isaac Watts in 1707. "When I surveyed the wondrous cross on which the of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and I pour contempt on all my pride. Forbid it, Lord, that I should both save in the cross of Christ my God. All the vain things that charm me most. I sacrifice them to his blood. See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did ere such love or sorrow meet or thorns compose, so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mind that were a present far too small? Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." Let's pray.