

My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me? (4 of 7)

Mark 15:33-36

We have spent the last three weeks considering the sayings of Christ upon the cross. Up until this point we have witnessed the awesome grace and mercy of our Lord as He prayed for forgiveness, promised salvation, and made provision for His mother.

For me, this is the most difficult of the seven sayings to consider. It deals with an issue that we had rather not consider. In fact, with all due respect, our very nature is repulsed by this account. As the children of God, we look upon the cross with great humility and admiration, but our humanity has difficulty embracing the fact that Jesus was forsaken as He hung upon the cross, bearing the sins of the world.

This may be a subject that we have trouble considering, but it is true nonetheless. Our blessed Lord bore our sin in His body, and in doing so, He endured a time of separation from God the Father. I want to spend some time this morning examining this precious passage as we consider the eternal truths revealed as Christ cried out: **My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?**

I. The Timing of these Words (33-34a) – **And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.** [34a] **And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice.** At this point in the crucifixion, Jesus has already been on the cross for about three hours. At the 6th hour (noon) darkness invades the land until the 9th hour (3:00).

- We cannot begin to imagine or comprehend the suffering that Jesus has endured during those three hours upon the cross. Spikes are driven through His hands and feet. His muscles are cramping; it is hard to even take a breath under such conditions. The Son of God has been hung upon a cross, reserved for the vilest of criminals, and has endured the mockery and shame of the multitude as they tormented Him.

- But now, as the 6th hour approaches, darkness covers the land. This was the middle of the day, noon-time, and there is complete, absolute darkness. This could not have been an eclipse because we know it was at the Passover, during a full moon. The sun and moon were not at the right positions for an eclipse. This was a miracle of God! So, why was there darkness at this time during the crucifixion?

1. Prophecy – **Amos 8:9** – **And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:**

2. Mercy – Christ had endured the suffering of ridicule and shame as He hung naked upon the cross. God turned the lights out upon the ridicule!

3. Fulfillment – Humanity was under the grip and darkness of sin. Jesus entered the darkness of sin so that all could be delivered from its darkness into His glorious light!

4. Sovereignty – God was judging the sins of the world in His Son, and the world had no business looking in on that sovereign transaction!

I. The Timing of these Words (33-34a)

II. The Truth of these Words (34) – *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* What can we discover in these enduring words of our Lord? Notice:

A. The Prophecy – Much had been prophesied of the Lord's coming and crucifixion by the prophets of old. As Jesus made His entrance to this world, walked among men, died, and rose again, He fulfilled each of those prophecies to the letter. These words were prophesied of David concerning the crucifixion of Christ. *Ps.22:1 – My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

B. The Parting – *Why hast thou forsaken me?* We cannot begin to imagine the agony and suffering that Jesus endured at this moment in time. This reveals the reality of the cross for Christ our Lord. He was *forsaken* of God, literally "*abandoned, deserted, left helpless, and utterly forsaken.*"

- We really cannot appreciate the enormity of the emotion that Jesus felt. There has never been a time when Jesus didn't exist. He has always been, even since before the creation of the world, and during His existence He had never experienced separation from the Father.
- There had never been a time when He failed to please God. There had never been a time where He sinned or needed to seek forgiveness. He had always enjoyed that sweet, abundant fellowship with God, but as He hung upon the cross, bearing our sins, that fellowship was broken. It was there as Jesus became our sacrifice, bearing our sin, that God turned His back on His only begotten Son because He could not look upon sin.
- That certainly ought to make us look at our sin from a different perspective. If God would not tolerate sin, or even look at it, as it was placed on His Son, who are we to think that we can sin and get by?

C. The Punishment – This is likely what it hard for us to accept, but God punished sin in His Son. Jesus suffered the righteous judgment of God for the sin of all humanity. *Is.53:10 – Yet it*

pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

- This was no mistake or accident. Christ had not simply got caught up in the hatred and devious plan of those who sought to kill Him. This was the will of God from before the foundation of the world. God and Christ knew there would come a day that He would bear the sins of the world and the righteous judgment of God in His body. (I don't know about you, but I have taken a fresh look at the love of God for us. He was willing to offer His Son, punishing the righteous for the unrighteous! Can you imagine how God the Father must have felt during this time?)
- Take just a moment to consider what Christ bore alone. Every vile sin that had been or ever would be committed was placed upon Him at Calvary!

D. The Provision (34) – And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? There is a wonderful truth that we cannot overlook as we consider this statement of our Lord. He had not gone to Calvary without purpose. God would never have allowed this had it not been in His plan. Christ would never have submitted to this awful death had He not been willing to purchase our redemption.

- Christ did not die because He was guilty. He did not die because He was unable to escape or get a fair trial. He did not die because the high priests, Sanhedrin, and Pilate had cast their voices against Him. He died to provide for our salvation. He died so that we might be forgiven, reconciled to God, and inherit eternal life! 2 Cor.5:21 – For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 1 Pet.2:24 – Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

E. The Perfection – Even in suffering and death, Jesus maintained His deity. Even though He bore the sins of the world, He never ceased to be God. He was born as a man, but He continued to be God. As He suffered upon the cross, He continued to provide the example that we need to follow.

- No doubt His deity, as well as His humanity, was repulsed by the sin that He bore. He had never known sin and now He bore the sin of the world. Even in that moment, He did not reject God or accuse Him falsely. In the most difficult moment of His eternal existence, Christ continued to cry out to His Father. He continued to trust God and submit to His will.
- We need to learn that lesson as we serve the Lord. Often during times of difficulty we get bitter and want to blame God. Many times, when people need the Lord the most, they turn away from Him. Job 13:15 – Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

I. The Timing of these Words (33-34a)

II. The Truth of these Words (34)

III. The Tragedy of these Words (35-36) – The response of those who heard these precious words reveal a great tragedy that remains today.

A. The Message was Misunderstood (35) – And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. Some who stood by thought that Jesus cried for Elijah to come to His aide. They had not viewed Him as the Messiah, and they certainly did not understand that He was crying out to God. They missed the whole point of the words that Jesus spoke. They misunderstood what He had said.

- It is tragic, but the message of the cross continues to be misunderstood in our day as well. We have the complete revelation of God in His holy Word and yet men continue to misunderstand and misinterpret the Scripture. The Jews regarded the presence and person of Elijah more than they did Jesus. Mankind still chooses to deny the truth of the gospel and the way of salvation. Many today have gone into heresy and false doctrine because they have misunderstood the Word of God. Many want to set their own terms or conditions regarding salvation.

- Paul shared the gospel in a few short and concise words: 1 Cor.15:3-4 – For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4] And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: That is simple enough that a child can understand and yet many have a hard time embracing the gospel. If you reject it or choose to ignore it, then there is no other hope for you.

B. The Messiah was Mocked (36) – And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. Many of those present that day continued to mock and reject Christ as the Messiah. As He hung enduring the torment of separation, the mockery continued. These were blinded to truth and had no idea that He was there for their benefit.

- I want to leave you with this thought. We too have been brought to a place of decision this morning. You have heard the gospel. You have heard of the suffering and sacrifice that Jesus made for your sin. The question is: what will you do with that you have heard? Will you embrace Christ as the Savior of the world or will you continue to reject Him and make a mockery of His sufferings and provision for you?

- You cannot remain neutral about this. You must decide in this life what you will do with Jesus. A decision to put Him off for now is a decision of rejection. What will you do with Jesus? Will you accept Him or deny Him? Be careful how you decide: your eternal destiny rests in this decision!

We have looked at one of the most difficult and yet beautiful passages of Scripture. Jesus endured such suffering and agony for us. He endured all of that so we might be saved. Do you know Him? Christian, how long has it been since you worshipped the Lord and offered thanksgiving for what He provided for you? This altar is open; come as He leads.