

## A Memorial for Eternity

Luke 23:33

We are gathered this morning on what most in America consider Memorial Day weekend. It unofficially signals the beginning of summer, and is often celebrated with friends, family, and food. Tomorrow we will officially recognize the tremendous sacrifice of the countless service men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. As Americans, we are certainly indebted to these and their families, and owe them our respect and honor.

As I was studying and preparing for today, I was reminded of the numerous monuments that have been erected around the world to mark and commemorate the brave and selfless sacrifices of many on our behalf. Some of these monuments are very detailed, including information about the battle, and even have the names of those who lost their lives inscribed on them. Our text this morning is also a memorial to the greatest sacrifice known to mankind. This memorial is very brief, with little information or detail, and yet it commemorates the life and death of our Lord and Savior. Even today, thousands of people gather each year on a hill outside Jerusalem to contemplate and celebrate the Cross of Calvary.

As I approach this verse, I am in awe of the enormity it represents and the provision it declares. Similar to those hallowed battle fields, where many lost their lives, Calvary is holy ground – the place where our Savior bled and died for our redemption. As we examine the precious [aspects](#) of this verse, I want to consider: [A Memorial for Eternity](#).

**I. The Place of Calvary** – [And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary...](#) That is all Luke offers in his gospel. He simply mentioned they came to the place called Calvary. No doubt this place is beyond human comprehension, and mortals lack the ability to adequately describe this place. As I pondered the place, I was reminded that it was:

**A. A Sovereign Place** – Calvary was a hill outside Jerusalem, also referred to as Golgotha, *the place of the skull*. Some believe it was so named because of the executions that took place there, and others believe it is in reference to the eerie resemblance of a skull in the rocks on the hillside. Either way, we do know Calvary was a place of excruciating death. The Romans carried out many executions there for those found worthy of death for their crimes.

- While Calvary was used of the Romans for execution, Jesus was not led there on that faithful day because of Roman authority. Calvary was a sovereign place, chosen of God before Creation and the beginning of time. The Bible teaches in [Rev.13:8](#) that Jesus was a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. He was not there because of the betrayal of Judas, the hatred

of the Sanhedrin, or the condemnation of Pilate; Jesus was there to fulfill the sovereign plan of God to redeem humanity from their sin. While it was the greatest injustice of all time, Calvary was no accident!

**B. A Submissive Place** – While the majority of the condemned would have been drug to Calvary, against their will, Jesus willingly submitted to death on the cross. He willingly carried His cross from the hall of Pilate, through the city, and up the lonely hill of Calvary. He was not forced by the soldiers to submit to His fate. Jesus embraced the cross, knowing this was His purpose for coming to this earth in the form of a man – Jesus came to die! **John 12:27 – Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.**

▪ He was not murdered on Calvary's hill. The soldiers did pierce His side with the sword, but Jesus had already given up the ghost. He willingly laid His life down for our redemption. He had power to lay it down, and He had power to take it up again in resurrection life! **John 10:17-18 – Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. <sup>[18]</sup> No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.**

**II. The Payment at Calvary** – **And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him.** While these words do not adequately describe the torment and suffering Jesus endured on the cross, Luke does reveal that Jesus was crucified on Calvary. It was there that payment was made for the sin of mankind. Consider:

**A. The Atonement** – Beginning with the first of God's creation, Adam fell in sin the Garden of Eden. Because of the fall, humanity was under the curse of sin, separated and condemned before God. In order to be acceptable to God, we need the righteousness He possesses. None can enter His presence apart for complete righteousness. We had no way to obtain such righteousness. The sacrifices of old could not provide acceptance to God. Keeping the ordinances of the Law were insufficient to provide for our righteousness. In order for righteousness to be obtained, sin had to be atoned – it had to be paid for. Jesus offered Himself as the sinless, atoning sacrifice for our sin!

**B. The Judgment** – As we consider Calvary, and the crucifixion of our Lord, there is an aspect that is often forgotten and uncomfortable to consider. Jesus not only bore our sin as He offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice, He also endured the righteous judgment and wrath of God. As Jesus hung between heaven and earth, He endured the judgment of God on our behalf. God the Father, judged your sin and mine, in the body of His Son. Jesus suffered the undiluted wrath of

God as He died on the cross. [Isaiah 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.

**III. The Provision of Calvary** – [And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.](#) The scene recorded by Luke paints a beautiful picture of the provision made by Jesus on Calvary. Consider:

**A. The Substitution** – Along with Jesus, there were two other malefactors crucified that day. By the admission of one, these men were guilty of their crimes and worthy of death. Jesus was totally innocent. He had done nothing worthy of death. Just a short time earlier, Barabbas, a convicted murderer was set free and Jesus took His place. Through these men we see the picture of Jesus dying in our place. He suffered God's wrath for our sin and died in our place. He tasted God's judgment and death so we would never have to endure it! Innocence died so the guilty could live.

**B. The Satisfaction** – I can never think of Jesus' death on the cross without being reminded of the words He spoke as He was dying for us. Just prior to His death, Jesus declared – **It is Finished**. This proclaimed to all who were there, and throughout all eternity, that the righteous demands of God had been satisfied. Never again would blood be shed for sin. Jesus had provided a perfect sacrifice, and the holy and righteous God was pleased, accepting His atoning work!

**C. The Redemption** – As I consider His death and the statement, **It is Finished**, I am reminded that redemption was secured for all who come to Him by faith believing. This was not a cry of defeat and anguish, this was a cry of victory and triumph. He came to provide for our redemption, purchasing us from the slave block of sin, never to return again. As He died on the cross, Redemption's Plan was fulfilled. The debt had been forever settled. There would never need to be further payment. Redemption had been provided for the sin! [Titus 2:14](#) – [Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.](#)

**IV. The Priority of Calvary** – As we consider this powerful statement regarding our Lord's crucifixion, I hope everyone present today understands the enormity of Calvary. This is the defining moment in time. Had Christ not died on the cross, there would have been no payment for sin and we would yet be lost and condemned before God. Consider with me:

**A. The Necessity** – As I said earlier, Calvary was not an accident. Jesus did not die because men consented to His death. I hope you realize that Jesus had to die. There was no other way for sin to be atoned. There was no other means of salvation and reconciliation to God. Jesus alone had the ability to provide for our redemption. Had He refused to die on the cross, the payment for sin would not have been made. Our sin required a perfect sacrifice, and Jesus alone was worthy to be that sacrifice! [Heb.10:4-5 – For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.](#) <sup>[5]</sup> [Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.](#)

**B. The Responsibility** – Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary was not an event of little significance. It is the central moment for humanity. There provision was made for our sin. There was one way sin could be atoned, and Jesus was that way. Through Him salvation is available, but it is only available in Him. There is no other way of salvation. All who come to God, must come through Christ.

- Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross is not an issue we can be neutral about. He is the sole means of salvation. You have either received salvation in Christ by grace through faith or you remain in your sin. Choosing to wait, or an attitude of indecision is an act of denial. Salvation is available, but you have only one option – through Christ alone! [John 14:6 – Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.](#)

- I would be amiss to end the message here. We have discussed memorials for the sacrifice of the dead, and rightfully so. While we appreciate and grieve the sacrifice of so many for our freedom, we also face the reality that they will never be with us again in this life. Jesus however was different. He suffered death for us, but death was not final for Him. He rose triumphant over sin and death. He ascended back to the Father with the promise of coming again. In Christ there is hope and assurance for eternal life. Death is not final for those who are in Christ. However, for those who reject His offer of salvation, death will be eternal in suffering and torment.

**Conclusion:** As we ponder the verse we have considered, I pray you know Christ as your personal Savior. He died on the cross for you, suffering the judgment we all deserved. There is forgiveness and life in Him. If the Spirit has shown you the need for salvation, respond by faith today, repent of your sin, and believe in Christ for salvation. The way of salvation is exclusively through His sacrifice, but it is available for all who will believe!