

The Word of Anguish

Matt 27:45-49

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Introduction:

1. What Tragic Words

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

- a. "Forsaken" is one of the most tragic words in human speech.
 1. Imagine a child forsaken by its parents
 2. Think of a wife forsaken by her husband or a husband forsaken by his wife
 3. But the Son of God forsaken by the Heavenly Father is the most frightful of all
- b. For the Lord to hide his face from us but for a moment is unbearable and imagine God turning His back on His Son
- c. From all eternity, Jesus had been the object of the Father's love.
- d. During the thirty and three years the Son had been on earth he enjoyed unbroken communion with the Father.
- e. He was never out of harmony with the Father's will
- f. Jesus never spent a moment out of His Father's conscious presence.

g. No doubt this was the most bitter ingredient of the cup of suffering of which our Savior drank

2. What Sad Words

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

- a. The soldiers had cruelly mocked him: they had put on Him the crown of thorns, they had scourged and punched him, they even went so far as to spit upon him and pluck out his beard.
- b. They stole his garments and put him to an open shame.
- c. Yet he suffered it all in silence.
- d. They pierced his hands and his feet, and he endured the cross, despising the shame.
- e. The crowd taunted him yet he opened not his mouth.
- f. But now, as he bore the wrath that should have fallen on all who would be saved he cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
- g. Surely this is a cry that ought to melt the hardest heart!

3. What Mysterious Words

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

- a. In the OT Jehovah never forsook his people.
 1. Again and again he was their refuge in trouble.
 2. When Israel was in cruel bondage they cried unto God, and he heard them.
 3. When they stood helplessly before the Red Sea, he came to their aid and delivered them from their enemies.
 4. When the three Hebrews were cast into the fiery furnace, the Lord was with them.
 5. But here, at the cross, Jesus is abandoned by God the Father.
- b. Yes, this cry of the suffering Saviour is deeply mysterious.

- c. At first he had cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", and this we can understand, for it well accords with his compassionate heart.
- d. Then He said to the repentant thief, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise", and this too, we can well understand, for it was in full keeping with his grace towards sinners.
- e. Then he addressed His mother; "Woman, behold thy son"; to the beloved John, "Behold thy mother" -and this also we can appreciate.
- f. But now he said something which startles and staggers us.
- g. David said, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken" but here we behold the Righteous One forsaken.

I. HERE WE SEE THE AWFULNESS OF SIN AND ITS WAGES

A. We See the Awfulness of Sin

1. The depravity of the human heart is on full display here
 - a) *Lost man hates God and loves darkness rather than light*
 - b) *Lost man would rather free a murderer like Barabbas and crucify the Messiah*
2. The awful character of the devil is seen here - He put it into the heart of Judas to betray the Saviour

B. We See the Wages of Sin

1. Here at the cross we see the character of sin's awful wages.

Ro 6:23a For the wages of sin is death...

 - a) *The wages of sin is spiritual death*
 - b) *It separates us from God - Adam and Eve enjoyed communion with God before sin came into Eden then they were separated from God*
 - c) *Sin separates one from God's presence*
2. Death is the result of sin. *"By one man sin entered into the world, and*

death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (**Ro** 5:12).

3. On the cross the Lord Jesus was receiving the wages which were due his people.
 - a) *He had no sin of his own, for he was the Holy One of God.*
 - b) *He was bearing our sins in his own body on the tree - 1Pe 2:24*
 - c) *He took your place and was suffering the Just for the unjust.*
 - d) *He bore the chastisement of our peace; and the wages of our sins, the suffering and chastisement which were due us, was "death"*
 - e) *The Savior experienced separation from God, the separation from God that we deserved and He cried "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

II. HERE WE SEE THE ABSOLUTE HOLINESS OF GOD AND THE INFLEXIBLE JUSTICE OF GOD

A. The Absolute Holiness of God is Clearly Seen Here

1. God is so holy that mortal man cannot look upon him in his essential being, and live.
2. So holy is God that the very heavens are not clean in his sight.
3. God is so holy that even the seraphim veil their faces before him.
4. So holy is God that when Abraham stood before him, he cried, "I am but dust and ashes" (**Ge** 18:27).
5. God is so holy that when Job came into his presence he said, "Wherefore I abhor myself" (**Job** 42:6).
6. So holy is God that when Isaiah had a vision of his glory he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (**Isa** 6:5).
7. God is so holy that we are told, he is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (**Hab** 1:13).

8. And it was because the Saviour was bearing our sins that the thrice holy God would not look on him, turned his face from him, forsook him.
9. Psalm 22 gives us the answer to Jesus' question

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?* 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. 3 But thou *art* holy, *O thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. 5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. 6 But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, 8 He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. 9 But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts. 10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother's belly. 11 Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help. 12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round. 13 They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

- a) *This psalm gives us a prophetic view of Jesus' sufferings.*
- b) *The psalm opens with the very words of our Saviour's fourth cross-utterance*
- c) *But then, in verse 3, we find him saying - "But thou art holy"*
- d) *Jesus acknowledged God's righteousness - thou art holy and just in exacting all the debt at my hand*

10. O, how God hates sin

- a) *We see this hatred of sin when we look at the account of the worldwide flood of the days of Noah*
- b) *Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire and brimstone because God hates sin*
- c) *Remember the plagues sent upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his army drowned in the Red Sea*
- d) *But no scene Scripture shows us God's hatred of sin like the scene that we examine today - The heavenly Father turned his back on His own Son*
- e) *God spared not His own Son because of the awfulness of sin*

III. HERE WE SEE THE EXPLANATION OF GETHSEMANE

Mt 26:36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

1. In the garden of Gethsemane, the Savior focused on His coming suffering on the cross
2. Jehovah himself was to bruise the Saviour, and this overshadowed everything else.
3. Jesus left Peter, James and John on the outskirts of the garden, for he must suffer alone
4. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," he cried.
 - a) *He was thinking of the cruel death that he would face*
 - b) *Jesus suffered at the thought of his betrayal by Judas*
 - c) *The desertion by his disciples in the hour of crisis weighed heavily on Him*
 - d) *The mockings and revilings, the stripes and the nails, overwhelmed his soul.*
 - e) *The greatest terror Jesus would face on the cross was being forsaken on His Father*
5. When the sins of all the elect were placed on Christ God could not stand to look on sin and He turned his back on His Son

IV. HERE WE MAY SEE THE BASIS OF OUR SALVATION

1. God is holy and therefore he will not look upon sin.
2. God is just and therefore he judges sin wherever it is found.
3. But God is also love: he delights in mercy
4. To save lost sinners the just One must suffer for the unjust.
5. The Son of God himself was the one selected to be the substitute, for none other would suffice.
6. Nahum asked the question, "*Who can stand* before his indignation" and *who* can abide in the fierceness of his anger?" (Na 1:6).
7. That question was answered in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He alone could "stand". Only he could bear the curse of

our sin

8. Our sin and our punishment were both transferred to the Savior
9. In Gal 3:13 we are told that in order to redeem us from the curse of the law, our Savior had to be made a curse for us.
13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:
10. The curse is alienation from God - eternal separation from God
11. Christ suffered the alienation from God that we would have faced in hell

v. HERE WE SEE THE SUPREME EVIDENCE OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR US

Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

1. The greatness of *Christ's* love can only be understood when we understand what was involved in the "laying down" of *his* life.
2. As we have seen, it meant much more than physical death, even though that be of unspeakable shame, and indescribable suffering.
3. It meant that he had to take our place and be "made sin" for us, and what *this* involved can only be judged in the light of his *person*.
4. The greatness of Christ's love for us can be understood only when we are able to measure the wrath of God that was poured upon him.
5. "If it be possible let this cup pass from me," he cried. But it was not possible that his people should be saved unless he drained that awful cup of woe and wrath; and because there was none other who could drink it, *he* drank it.
6. Where sin had brought men, love brought the Saviour.

Conclusion:

1. Here we see what every lost sinner must face - forsaken by God
2. This cry of the Saviour pictures the final condition of every lost soul - forsaken of God!
3. Some say that God loves everybody, and that he is too merciful to ever carry out the judgment that is seen in his word.
 - a. This is precisely how the old serpent argued with Eve.
 - b. God had said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt *surely* die."
 - c. The serpent said, "Ye shall *not* surely die."
 - d. But whose word proved true?
 - e. Not the devil's for he is a liar from the beginning.
 - f. God's threat *was* fulfilled, and our first parents died spiritually in the day that they disobeyed his command.
4. God is merciful
 - a. The fact that he has provided a Saviour proves it.
 - b. The fact that he invites you to receive Christ as your Saviour is evidence of his mercy.
 - c. The fact that he has been so longsuffering with you, has borne with your stubborn rebellion till now, has prolonged your day of grace to this moment, proves it.
5. But there is a limit to God's mercy.
 - a. The day of mercy will soon be ended.
 - b. The door of hope will soon be closed.
 - c. You face death and after death is "the judgment".
6. Judgment day will be a day of justice, not mercy.
7. We have seen that God hates sin
8. Because he is holy and just, God must judge sin wherever it is found.

9. If then God spared not the Lord Jesus when sin was found upon him, what possible hope is there that he will spare you when thou stand before him at the great white throne?
10. If God poured out his wrath on Christ while he hung as surety for his people, be assured that he will most certainly pour out his wrath on *you* if you die in your sins.
11. God's Word is clear - "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but *the wrath of God* abideth on him" (Joh 3:36).
12. The suffering Savior was separated from God for three hours, and if you finally reject him as your Saviour you will be separated from God for ever in the fires of hell. What a terrible fate.

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