

The Glory of the Cross

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 March 2021

Preacher: Keith Knowlton

[0 : 00] The Lord is good to all that He has made, and merciful to all of earth and earth.

Now we're going to have James return to read our Old Testament passage from Psalms 22. God's Word together.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer.

By night, but I find no rest. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One. You are the one Israel praises. In you our ancestors put their trust.

They trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried out and were saved. In you they trusted and were not put to shame. But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

[1 : 22] All who see me mock me. They hurl insults, shaking their heads. He trusts in the Lord, they say. Let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.

Yet you brought me out of the womb. You made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast on you. From my mother's womb you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me. Strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax.

It has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a pot shirt, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You lay me in the dust of day.

[2 : 23] Dogs surround me. A pack of villains encircles me. They pierce my hand and my feet. All my bones are on display. People stare and gloat over me.

They divide my clothes among them. They cast lots for my garment. But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength. Come quickly to help me.

Deliver me from the sword. My precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions. Save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

I will declare your name to my people. In the assembly I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him. All you descendants of Jacob, honor him.

Revere him, all you descendants of Israel. For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one. He has not hidden his face from him, but has listened to his cry for help.

[3 : 22] From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly. Before those who fear you, I will fulfill my vows. The poor will eat and be satisfied.

Those who seek the Lord will praise him. May your hearts live forever. All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord. And all the families of the nations will bow down before him.

For dominion belongs to the Lord. And he rules over the nations. All the rich of the earth will feast and worship. All who go down to the dust will kneel before him.

Those who cannot keep themselves alive. Posterity will serve him. Future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness.

Declaring to a people yet unborn, he has done it. Amen. Now let's stand together to call on God's name in prayer.

[4 : 21] Stand together. Lord God, as we have read these words of David that speak so powerfully in anticipation of the suffering and death and resurrection victory of Jesus, we stand before you with a sense of humility and thankfulness.

Lord, we are so conscious as we consider the cross of the cost of our salvation. As we remember Jesus, our suffering servant, taking our place, taking our sin, facing shame and becoming a curse

for us.

So that we might be forgiven and enjoy eternal life and reconciliation with you and to be justified in your sight. So we would give you thanks and we would give you praise.

Lord, we recognize in the events of Easter, the great hope that there is for us and for our world.

Lord, we remember some of the words of Jesus on the cross as he was crucified cruelly by his enemies, praying, Father, forgive them.

Lord, we know that we live in a world marked by division. We know that there are many who fear being found out and who cannot find forgiveness and who live with guilt.

[5 : 59] And so we thank you for the forgiveness that is freely available in and through the work of the Lord Jesus. We remember him turning to the thief on the cross and promising today, you'll be with me in paradise.

And we thank you that in Jesus, there is a hope for now and for all eternity. We thank you that faith gives the gift of eternal life.

And Lord, we thank you for that hope as we recognize there are so many who are fearful and anxious and living in the shadow of death right now. Lord, we remember the words of Jesus as he cried out, it is finished.

We praise you that the work of salvation has been completed. There is nothing left for us to do save to receive it with thankfulness, to turn from our sin and to trust in Jesus.

And Lord, as we consider the great news at the heart of our faith, we pray that that message would be heard far and wide. We are thankful as a nation that churches can reopen today.

[7 : 12] And we ask that wherever your word is preached, wherever Jesus is proclaimed as Lord and Savior, that you would build your people up in faith and you would draw men and women and boys and girls to put their faith and trust in Jesus.

And we pray for your church around the world. We recognize circumstances will be different this Easter, but we pray that you would strengthen your church, that you would strengthen our witness, that you would enable us to share this message of good news that brings great joy with the people around us.

Lord, we want to pray for our church family today. We pray that you would give us unity in the gospel. We ask that you would protect us from sin and from the evil one.

We pray that you would give us a boldness in our mission to declare your praises. Lord, we give you thanks too for the good news for the Knowlton family of a child on the way.

We thank you that you are the author of life. And we pray that you would protect and be with Rachel and the unborn baby in the days and months ahead.

[8 : 32] Lord, we also pray for Andrew and Brittany as they look ahead to Wednesday and anticipating the arrival of their twin girls. We pray that you would protect, that you would love and support them as a family in the lead up to Wednesday and that you would give them the joy of welcoming those precious children into their family.

Lord, we pray for all of our families. We think of our junior church families as we were disappointed not to be able to begin again as we'd hoped.

Lord, we do pray that as they grow up, they would grow up with a real and living faith in Jesus as Lord, that you would protect them and you would enable them to serve you.

We think of our teenagers and we pray for them with the challenges that they face in education and also living for Jesus in their teenage years.

Lord, we ask again that you would strengthen faith, that you would give endurance. Lord, we also want to pray once again for the nation of Myanmar as we see those dreadful scenes being played out again.

[9 : 50] Lord, we pray for peace and we pray for justice. Lord, we pray for mercy. Lord, we remember in particular Pastor Titus and his family and his church.

We pray that you would give them living hope, that they would be conscious of your presence, that you would enable them to speak that message of good news to a broken and hurting people.

Lord, we think of the orphanage that the junior church has had a chance to support and to pray for. We ask for staff and we pray for those children to have faith in the Lord Jesus that would sustain them through fear and sadness.

Lord, we pray for the nations of the world, that there would be a turning to Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Lord, we thank you again for being able to study your word together.

Father, we pray that your spirit would be present with us as you have promised, that you would apply the word to our hearts and lives. Lord, let us see more of Jesus, we pray in his name.

[11 : 08] Amen. James. Today, we continue our series leading up to Easter.

We're going to be looking at the passage from Matthew 27, starting in verse 27. My family and I have been in Scotland now for six months, and one of the considerations when moving here, one of the thoughts we had thought of was the differences that we will experience.

And one of those differences that we thought about is the food that we eat. Now, certainly there's not huge differences with the food, but there certainly are some. And in fact, one of the main questions we received from people when they heard we were moving to Scotland was questions about food, particularly about haggis.

Everyone wanted to know about haggis. What is haggis? What does it taste like? Have you tried it before? Do they eat it a lot? They eat it every meal? I still don't know what it's made of, but, you know, another question was fish and chips, right?

They eat a lot of fish and chips. Have you had fish and chips? Are you going to eat all the time? And certainly I love fish and chips. I really haven't had much opportunity to eat them here because of restaurants being closed, but I look forward to when that will change.

[12 : 20] It's a very simple, delicious meal, right? You have fish and you have chips. They're both essential to the meal. You can't take one away and still have the meal. If you take the fish away or take the chips away, you no longer have fish and chips.

Well, the same principle is true when we think about Easter. When we celebrate the completed work of Christ, we observe both his death and his resurrection, right?

They are both essential to the work of Jesus. And so that's what we're going to concentrate on today. Though it's easy to look forward to next week when we're going to celebrate the resurrection, when the hope and joy that comes through that, let us take time today to marvel in the glory of the cross.

And so let's look at Matthew 27, starting in verse 27. Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him.

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him.

[13 : 30] Hail, King of the Jews, they said. They spat on him and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they mocked him, they took off his robe and put his own clothes on him.

And then they led him away to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull.

There they offered Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall, but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots and sitting down, they kept watch over him there.

Above his head, they placed a written charge against him. This is Jesus, King of the Jews. Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, you who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself.

Come down from the cross if you are the son of God. In the same way, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself.

[14 : 38] He is the king of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, I am the son of God. In the same way, the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

From noon until three in the afternoon, darkness came over the land. About three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eli, Eli, Lamech Sakkani, which means my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

When some of those standing there heard this, they said, he's calling Elijah. Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar and put it on a staff and offered it to Jesus to drink.

The rest said, now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him. When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

The earth shook, the rocks split, and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and peered to many people.

[15:48] When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and exclaimed, surely he was the son of God. Many women were there watching from a distance.

They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. This is the word of God. Will you pray with me? God, as we gather in your name today, we ask that your word will penetrate our hearts, that it will stimulate our minds.

God, we ask that you free us from our stubbornness, free us from our self-righteousness. Lord, we ask that we may be transformed by the power of your spirit today.

May your word bring lasting change in our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Not long ago, I played a little trivia game on the internet where you try, that gives you logos and you try to match the logo with the company that it represents.

[17:00] It was amazing how many logos I really knew, even subconsciously. We see logos all around us, right? You're probably very familiar with lots of logos. You know, what's the logo for McDonald's, kids? It's the golden arches, right?

What's the logo for Nike? It's the swoosh. It's important for marketing, for branding, for companies, right? And so when we think about Christianity, what's the logo that may come to mind?

It's the cross. Certainly, it's one of the most recognizable symbols in the whole world. We see it all around us in our society. We see it worn on jewelry. We see it in pop culture.

We see it in artwork. But because we see it all the time, it's become so familiar to us, we've kind of domesticated it. And we can easily forget about how strange it really is that an instrument of torture can serve as a symbol for our faith.

And so that's what we're going to look at today is actually this cross. Why do we hold it out to be significant? And I think this passage points out three reasons.

[18:03] Why do we revel in the cross? Well, what I want to look at today in this passage is three things. The cross reveals, first of all, Christ's misery. Second of all, it reveals Christ's identity.

And third, that the cross reveals Christ's victory. Christ's misery, Christ's identity, and Christ's victory. So let's first look at Christ's misery.

When we think about the death of Christ, we really need to focus on the manner in which he died.

When we talk about the crucifixion, we're actually talking about the death of a slave.

This was a means of death that was not used for Roman citizens. And it wasn't just a form of execution. It was actually a form of death that prolonged agony, that promoted public shame.

There's a minister in the U.S., Fleming Rutledge, who wrote a book on the crucifixion. It says this in the book. The crucifixion as a means of execution in the Roman Empire had as its express purpose the elimination of victims from consideration as members of the human race.

[19:12] It cannot be said too strongly that was its function. It was meant to indicate to all who might be toying with subversive ideas that crucified persons were not of the same species as either the executioner or the spectators and were therefore not only expendable, but also deserving of ritualized extermination.

There's certainly much that can be said about the physical suffering of Jesus. There's certainly plenty of literature, both medical and historical and biblical literature, that talks about the physical suffering of Jesus, the horror of the cross.

But when we think about the misery of Christ, we must not only think about the physical suffering. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said this, that the meaning of the cross lies not only in the physical suffering of Jesus, but especially in his rejection and shame.

And that's the focus that Matthew takes in this passage, is to focus on the rejection and shame of Christ. We see very clearly that Jesus on the cross became a public spectacle.

He was a despised object of shame and ridicule. We see that the Roman soldiers, they mocked him and they abused him. He was hung between two criminals. Like it says in Isaiah, he was numbered

with the transgressors.

[20 : 33] When he hung on the cross, he'd hung completely naked, fully exposed to those who were watching. All the while the soldiers gambled for his clothes at his feet.

It says that wine was mixed with gall and given to him. And you may think, well, this seems like an act of mercy. But in fact, this was likely also an act of mockery for the gall that was included in that wine was probably so strong and so bitter that Jesus refused to drink it.

It says this in verse 36, and I really missed this the first few times I've read this passage. It says that the soldier sat down to keep watch over him. Jesus' crucifixion was literally a spectator sport.

He didn't suffer alone and in isolation. He suffered publicly so that people could personally ridicule him and despise him.

We see in this passage that he's actually rejected by each segment of society. Matthew points out that it was the Romans who beat him and tortured him and mocked him. It says that those that were passing by also heaped insult on him.

[21 : 48] The Jewish leaders as well, it talks about the priests and the scribes and the teachers. Basically, all those who composed official Judaism completely rejected him.

And not only that, but the criminals on either side of him. But we see that it wasn't, this misery wasn't just in the mocking of others.

The actual misery came to a point of culmination in verse 46 where Jesus cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? We see that although he endured public shame and physical suffering, it was the separation from God that he was experiencing in the fullest here.

He was experiencing the ultimate penalty for our sins, the full wrath of God. And when he was experiencing the judgment of God, that means he was experiencing separation from him.

It says in Galatians 3.13 that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.

[22 : 58] So when Christ was crying out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He wasn't asking a question he didn't know the answer to.

He was quite literally expressing the horrors of abandonment. He was literally voicing the cry of the damned. Christ became a curse for us.

He experienced the misery that we deserve. And so when we think about the misery of the cross, the misery that Jesus endured, let us rejoice in it.

For if we are in Christ, we will never experience not even a single drop of the wrath of God that Jesus endured. We will never have to cry out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

For it was Christ who was forsaken on our behalf. And so as we think of the misery of Christ, we can also focus on the identity of Christ that is revealed in the cross.

[23 : 58] You know, I have one of my favorite musicians in the U.S., pretty well known. His albums do well, reach the top of the charts usually. And whenever he releases a new album, he always does something that I find really humorous.

He always makes a rather self-deprecating video that he puts on YouTube. And he kind of jokingly refers to himself as this international superstar and that he just can't go anywhere without people recognizing him.

Then he immediately goes out on the street with a microphone without disguising himself and speaking of himself in the third person. He goes up to people and asks them how excited they are about this new album being released.

And you usually get two different responses. One, people say, who? I've never heard of this guy.

What kind of music does he play? The other one is even funnier. It's people that just because they're on camera, you can tell that they're lying to the camera and say, oh, I love his music.

He's so good. I can't wait till his album comes out. All the while failing to recognize that they're actually talking to the artist who is interviewing them. And so we see this irony in this video.

[24 : 59] It's similar irony that Matthew uses in this passage. He's highlighting the mocking that's being thrown at Jesus. And by highlighting the mocking and the words of his mockers, he's actually revealing the true identity of Christ.

Certainly we can see the humanity of Jesus in this passage as he suffers physically and spiritually as he bears our sin on the cross. But Matthew wants us to see more than that.

He points out that Jesus is much more than just a normal man. When Matthew wrote this passage, or when he wrote his gospel, he was intending it, his directed audience was to be the Jewish

audience.

And so we see throughout the gospel of Matthew, this repeated theme that Matthew is pointing out that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the savior, the king of Israel.

And those are the words that are highlighted by these mockers in this passage. Verse 28, it says that the soldier stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. Then they twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head.

[26 : 07] They put a staff in his right hand. They knelt in front of him and mocked him. Hail, king of the Jews, they said. In verse 37, it says that Jesus hung on the cross and a sign with his written charge hung over his head.

This is Jesus, king of the Jews. Pilate had this sign written primarily to offend the Jews here. But the truth is actually in this statement and it's not overlooked by Matthew in this passage, that though these soldiers pretended to worship him as a king and Pilate sentenced him as a pretend Messiah, Jesus was asserting himself as our suffering savior.

It continues in verse 39. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, you who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself.

Come down from the cross if you are the son of God. In the same way, the chief priests and the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself. It's funny how this mocking, these words actually cut two ways, right?

The fact that they said he saves others but can't save themselves is quite an accurate statement. And that's what Matthew wants us to see because he is saving others. That is exactly why he cannot and will not save himself.

[27 : 36] The Jewish leaders continued, he is the king of Israel. Let him come down from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him. For he said, I am the son of God.

Little did these Jewish leaders know that they were fulfilling prophecy in their words, that they were quoting exactly from Psalm 22. Little did they know that it wasn't Jesus' lack of power that kept him on the cross.

We see just the night before when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, his disciples, a few of them, tried to defend him by using force. And what does Jesus do? He stops them immediately and says, don't you know that I could send down 12 legions of angels at my disposal to stop this?

It certainly wasn't his lack of power that kept Jesus on the cross. It was his will to save us. The Bible says that he came to earth not to be served, but to serve us and to give his life as a ransom for many.

The Jewish leaders said that they would believe that he was the son of God if he came down off the cross. But friends, that's exactly why we believe he is truly the son of God because he chose to stay up on the cross.

[28 : 56] And so we see in this passage that Jesus truly is our suffering Savior. And thirdly, the cross reveals the victory of Jesus.

If you're not familiar with the story, this kind of looks like a bad ending, right? You have this son of God who comes to earth and ends up just being killed by the men that he planned on saving. But we know that this isn't the end of the story.

Matthew, in recounting this narrative, basically hints at us and then eventually reveals in full that Jesus is not the loser in this situation. In my family, you know, Francie, when we play games together, and she may win the game, she likes to tell people she won the game.

She likes to go around the house gloating, I won, I won. But she's usually followed close behind by one of her other siblings who she beat, who say, we let her win.

I let her win. That's kind of what Matthew is doing in this passage here. Though it looks like a bleak outcome, he's showing us that Jesus did not truly lose.

[30 : 02] Although the Jewish leaders thought they had won, things certainly were not as they seemed. Jesus did not lose. He did not lack the ability to stop the flogging. He did not lack the ability to climb off the cross.

He didn't die just because he was outwitted or overpowered. He willingly gave himself up. Jesus, in the Gospel of John, says that, he says, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. Jesus did not lose his life.

He willingly gave it up for us. And that's the ultimate purpose of why he came to earth, right? He was sent to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins. So by dying on the cross, he was fulfilling his mission.

Mission accomplished. He has the victory. We also see the victory of Jesus in the torn curtain. It says in verse 51, right when Jesus breathed his last, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom.

[31 : 16] We see that this curtain was used in the temple for separating the holy place from the holy of holies. The holy of holies would have only been entered into once a year by the high priest to make a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

And so now through the blood of Jesus, we see that our access to God has been fully opened. As that temple has been torn, we have direct access to the Father through the blood of Christ. So we no longer need earthly priests. We no longer need animal sacrifices. We can go to the Father directly. For it says in Hebrews this, that Jesus sacrificed for our sins once and for all when he's offered himself.

So therefore we can approach the throne of grace with confidence, for we have received the righteousness of Christ. Again, we see another picture of victory through Matthew's retelling of these open tombs.

In verse 51, it continues, the earth shook and the rock split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. Now Matthew's the only one in any of the gospels that recounts this story.

[32 : 27] And this is all the information we have about it. So there's a lot of mystery surrounding it. Who were these saints? When exactly did they come back to life? Did they come back to life in the flesh? How long did they stay around?

Did they ascend with Jesus? We don't really know, but that's really not the point of this passage. The point is where Matthew includes this story in his narrative.

And it's immediately following this earthquake. We see throughout the Bible, the earthquake is used as a sign of God's presence and God's judgment.

And so here we see this close link between the death of Jesus and the life that he gives. When Jesus took on the judgment of God, he died on the cross and the earth trembled.

And what's the immediate result? Life for the saints. Death has lost its sting. It's been swallowed up by victory.

[33 : 24] And lastly, we see the victory of the cross through the soldier's own profession. In verse 54, it says this, when the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw that the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and exclaimed, surely he was the son of God.

Matthew's really using more irony here. Not in what is said, but who says it. We know that all the Jewish leaders were there at the cross with all their religiosity, with all their familiarity with the scriptures.

They still didn't recognize who Jesus truly was. But yet we have these scared Roman soldiers who were the first to profess the deity of Christ.

And so we see in the victory of Christ that salvation has been opened up to all. Christ didn't come just to save the Jews. He came to save Gentile soldiers like in this story.

He came to save people like you and me who have rejected him, who have lived in rebellion, who have mocked him with our lives. And yet we are offered peace with God.

[34 : 31] And so that's the ultimate glory of the cross, the victory that we have in Jesus. And so in closing then, my question to you is, how do you view the cross?

Paul says in 1 Corinthians that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

And so do you view the cross as foolishness? Do you not see any need for it in your life? The Bible says that we have all sinned and that the penalty for sin is death, eternal and total separation from God.

So I urge you, if that's you, to recognize that our sin is infinitely serious. I urge you to recognize that the death of Jesus on the cross is proportionate to the extremity of our sins.

That what Christ suffered on the cross is actually a picture of our situation without Christ. Because without Christ, we are enslaved to sin. Without Christ, we are condemned under the law.

[35 : 46] Without Christ, we are due death. But there is good news, right? That no matter how great your rebellion, no matter how ugly your sin, Christ has come to take our sin away.

Christ has paid the penalty for our sin in full. It says in 2 Corinthians 5, 21, For our sake, God made Jesus to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

And so I urge you to turn to Christ, to acknowledge him as your Savior. To share in the victory of Jesus. And for those of us who are believers, let's be sure not to overlook the cross, but to be able to rejoice in it, knowing that Jesus experienced the misery and the separation from God that we deserve.

That through his blood, our sins have been forgiven. That we have direct access to the Father and we are seen as holy and blameless in his sight. And let's also be willing to identify with the cross. We share in the sufferings of Christ. Paul says, let us resolve to know nothing except Christ Jesus and him crucified.

[37 : 07] So knowing that we are united with him in his death, much more so we are united with him in his resurrection. And that is the good news of the cross. That is the good news of the work of Jesus.

Both his resurrection, both his death, and also his resurrection. And we can rejoice in that today. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for the glory of the cross.

God, thank you for sending your son because of your great love for us who endured the cross, physical suffering, public shame, separation from the Father on our behalf.

Lord, thank you for making a way that we can be in relationship with you, that you see us as holy and blameless. You have given us the righteousness of Christ. Lord, for those who do not know you, God, we ask that you soften their hearts, that you reveal to them their sin, the vanity of their life apart from you.

Help them to experience the welcome that you offer, your desire for us to share in your victory.

[38 : 28] Let that be our joy today. Let that be our joy as we look forward to celebrating your resurrection next week. We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Now we're going to sing our last hymn, The Power of the Cross.

Christ on the road to See the dawn of the darkest day, Christ on the road to Calvary, Tried by sinful men, Torn and beaten there, Nailed to a cross of wood.

This the how of the cross. Christ became sin for us, To the grave.

O'er the wrath, We stand forgiven at the cross. O'er the wrath, Oh, to see the pain, Written on your face, Bearing the awesome weight of sin, of sin every bitter thought every evil deed crowning your blood stained brow this low power of the cross Christ became sin for us took the blame bore the rough we stand forgiven at the cross now the daylight flees now the ground beneath quakes as its maker bows his head curtain torn in two dead are raised to life finish the victory cry this is the palm of the cross

Christ became sin for us took the blame took the blame hath we stand forgiven at the cross oh to see my name written in the word for through your suffering I am free death is crushed to death life is mine to live one through your selfless love this is the power of the cross son of God slave for us what a love what a cost we stand forgiven at the cross what a love what a cost we stand forgiven at the cross will you stand with me to receive the benediction it's taken from Hebrews 13 now may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep equip you with everything good for doing his will that may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever

[44 : 30] Amen Christ alone my hope is found he is my light my strength my song this cornerstone this solid ground firm through the fiercest drought and storm what heights of love what depths of peace when fears are stilled when striving cease my comforter my all-in-law here in the love of Christ

I stand in Christ alone who took on flesh fullness of God in helpless faith this gift of love and righteousness scorned by the ones he came to save till on that cross as Jesus died the wrath of God was satisfied for every sin on him was laid here in the death of Christ I live there in the ground

his body lay light of the world by darkness slain then bursting forth in glorious day up from the grave
he rose up from the grave he rose again and as he stands in victory sin's curse has lost its grip on
me for I am his and he is mine bought with the precious blood of Christ heaven and some