

Good Friday

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Date: 30 March 2018

Preacher: Tony Bickley

[0:00] Mark chapter 15, I want to read from verse 17 to the end of the chapter, verse 17 to verse 39, which is an account of some of the events of the cross.

So Mark 15 verse 17, we read, and they clothed him with purple, and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews. Then they struck him on the head with a reed and spat on him. Baring the knee, they worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took the purple off him, put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

Then they compelled a certain man, Simon of Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by to bear his cross.

And they brought him to the place Golgotha, which is translated place of the skull. Then they gave him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but he did not take it.

[1:08] Then they crucified him. They divided his garments, casting lots for them, and to determine that every man should take him. Now it was the third hour, and they crucified him, and the inscription of the accusation was written above, the king of the Jews.

With him they also crucified two robbers, one on his right, the other on his left. So the scripture would be fulfilled, which says, he was numbered with the transgressors.

And those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying, Aha, you who destroyed the temple and built it in three days, save yourself.

Let the Christ, the king of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we might see and believe.

Even those who were crucified with him reviled him. Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which is translated, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[2:29] Some of those who stood by when they heard that said, Look, he's calling for Elijah. Elijah. Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to him to drink, saying, Let him alone, let us see if Elijah will come to take him down.

And Jesus cried out with a loud voice and breathed his last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. So when the centurion who stood opposite him saw that he cried out like this and breathed his last, he said, Truly, this man was the Son of God.

Amen. Now we read Psalm 22 earlier, which is a remarkable psalm. It has six prophecies of things that happened in the life of Jesus in the space of just three hours in these events on the cross.

One clever mathematician, far cleverer than me, estimated that for such a thing to happen would be equal to having 10p coins spread over the whole of the United Kingdom to a depth of 10 foot and one of those coins having a cross on it and then sending someone in to plunge their hand in blindfold and pull that coin out with the cross.

That is the extreme unlikeliness of such a thing happening to one man in such a short space of time.

[3:54] But we know better. We know that Psalm 22 was a prophecy. It was related to events in the life of David, but it was really a prophecy of what would happen on the cross.

Now, in the weeks leading up to this point, we see the beginning of the suffering of Jesus as he prayed in the garden. Just before this, he prayed in Gethsemane. Father, if it be possible, let this

cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, thy will. And agonized over what was about to happen, sweat dripping off him like blood from an open wound. From there he moved into the trial and then beginnings of his suffering on the cross.

In doing so, on that journey, we see how Jesus was brutalized. We read how he was brutalized, beaten, humiliated, and publicly abused by those who claimed to be God's own people.

See, the suffering of Jesus was very real. It was very real. Indeed, crucifixion, as he is about to face and will face crucifixion, is the most hideous death.

[4:59] It says something about its inventors, which were the Assyrians, but it says even more about those who encourage it and the extremity of their cruelty.

Remember when Pilate brought Jesus out, the cry from the Jews was crucify him. They wanted this death for him. It was purposed as a replacement for impaling.

The Assyrians didn't think impaling was painfully enough and so they invented crucifixion and Jesus is nailed. Jesus is nailed, he is mocked, he is taunted, and he bleeds.

As on that cross, he approaches death. But I want us to concentrate on those hours of darkness where sin is poured out upon Jesus, who is in utter forsakenness.

From the darkness, and with his work, the work of salvation nearing its end, that mournful cry of the suffering saviour is heard.

[6:05] Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which is translated, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why?

Of all that happens on the cross, I think these are perhaps the most emotive words that Jesus spoke. The eternal God who has lived in the eternity of the triune unity is now, well, for three hours, seemingly self-separated for our sin.

It's said of Martin Luther that he sat for three days contemplating, praying and fasting over this single verse, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And after the three days, he's said to have leapt up, or risen up, I think if you sat cross-legged for three days, leaping would be hard, but he would rise up, and he said, I cannot square this, God forsakes God, and such is the mystery of those hours, that they are beyond telling, and beyond all perfect understanding.

But it's also been said that we cannot know anything that happened in that time of darkness, and I think whereas much of what happened is in many ways, in many ways remains a mystery to us, we do know some of the things that Jesus experienced, that he suffered.

[7:28] Now, Psalm 22, written by David, must have followed a dark time in the life of King David, but it was such a time as left us with this, left us with this window to look through, so as to get a glimpse of what Jesus suffered during those hours of darkness.

And we need to remember that this is what he did for us. I think the greatest thing that we can learn from this is that it tells us just how much he loves us, just how much God loves us.

So loving us, giving his son, so loving us, giving his life in this way, it speaks of the Father's love in giving his only begotten to face this hideous death, and it explains to us why Jesus cried out as he did in the time of his sin-bearing hours, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

The death of Jesus was not an easy death, but it is by that death, and only by that death, that we have gained eternal life.

So what did Jesus, or what do we know of what Jesus experienced in the darkness of the cross?

Now I've had this said to me a number of occasions, that the deity of Jesus in some way supported his humanity, so that the pain and the suffering of the cross were lessened in their intensity.

[8:48] But I believe, I believe that he, being perfect in every way, would if anything have felt the pain, even keener, as his senses were perfectly honed, and without any sin caused degradation.

And the cry is the anguished expression of all that is happening to him, as he hung there as our sin offering. Abandonment, separation, forsakenness, the solitude of the aloneness of the one who'd never before been alone.

The silent prayers that, despite his situation, constantly cried out to his father, I cry, but you do not hear me, as Psalm 22 tells us. In the daytime, in the darkness, my cries go unresponded to, as sin

falls upon me like a storm of flood.

I felt it. I'm a worm and no man. Hidden from your gaze, separated from your presence by the alien of sin, I'm despised, reproached by those who I came to save, I'm abandoned and bereft of your felt presence.

I feel like a beast trapped, surrounded by the bulls of Bashan, like a wild animal beset by strong bulls, like a dried up clay pot wracked by pain and my heart melts within me, my bones are torn out of joint and my tongue clings in this desert dryness.

[10:16] I'm brought to the brink of death, abandoned, forsaken and lost to your presence. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why, oh why, have you forsaken me?

And in this time, sin upon sin, my sin and the sin of all his faith rests in Jesus. He's poured out like water, like wine upon the faltering, failing and dying flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is sent into the world.

He came in willingness so as to bear the shame and the scoffing, we sing it, bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood.

Hallelujah, what a saviour. and he pours out his own lifeblood so as to pay the wages of sin for those who rest in him, those who put their faith in him.

To those who ask, where is God's love to be found in this world of violence and hatred? As many people say, well, if God is love, why is this? Well, here it is. Here it is on the cross.

[11:27] To those who wonder at the need of the cross, remember that, but for this, it would be you in judgment. This cross is for you that you might not face judgment.

For those who doubt their need of Jesus and think of this, the wages of sin is death and only Jesus died for sinners. Here we see him, here we see him hanging, stretched, bruised and beaten.

Why? Because God's love to a fallen humanity. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes on him will not perish but will have everlasting life.

God's love to fallen humanity in the unison of purpose, in the agreement of method, the triune God agreed and purposed that this was the only way.

This is redemption's way. A way that demonstrates the full extent of God's love in sending his son and a way that shines forth the love of Jesus, the one who calls himself our friend.

[12:32] A man will lay down his life for his friends, you are my friends, if so you keep my commandments. He calls himself our friend this way and no other way will do.

So, here's the question. the important question. Is your sin nailed to this cross?

Is your sin paid for by Jesus? There is no other way. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by me. No one can come to God through priests and prelates, ministers of any kind, through systems and whatever it has to be through Jesus.

No one comes to the Father by me because he alone is the way. So, is your sin nailed to the cross? Is your sin paid for by Jesus?

In many ways, the desperation of this anguish Christ speaks of the eternal anguish of all who reject Jesus in life. It is descriptive of hell's destruction.

[13:50] You think of Cain when he's banished from into the land of Nod. He says that the worst thing that's happened to him is that he's been separated from the face of God.

Descriptive of hell's destruction and the darkness and desolation, the desperation of the forsakenness of God. Those who lived, whose lives have been lived in the absence of God will end up in the absence of hope.

Sin has a cost that is awful in eternal magnitude. Hence, Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin in an awful and magnificent, magnitudous way.

How can we be assured that this action of Jesus is enough? How can we know that as the Lord said on the cross just before he died, it is truly finished?

How can we know that? A sin separates us from God because of it we have no direct access to his presence. We need a mediator. We need someone who lived a perfect life.

[15:00] A man won't do. A man of Adam's nature won't do. We need someone who lived a perfect life. Someone who is equal in holiness to God. This

is my son in whom I am well pleased.

Well pleasingness to God is equal in holiness and righteousness. We need a way to expunge our sin. The wages of sin is death. There is a cost to sin.

We need a way to expunge our sin and all of this is fulfilled in Jesus. And the evidence of this is found in verse 37 and 38 of Mark chapter 15.

Jesus cried out with a loud voice and breathed his last and then the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. Now the temple veil was about four inches thick and it was very large.

It was heavily embroidered and it was torn in two from the top to the bottom. The immediate action that followed the death of Jesus is that the veil that separated man that was the purpose of it to keep the congregation as it was separated from the sin offering.

[16:09] The veil that separated man from God is torn from top to bottom. God has literally torn it apart that veil that represents our lack of access because of sin torn with what we might say are invisible hands from top from God to the bottom to earth.

for allowing access by our one true mediator and high priest in whom everything is finished. It is finished he said.

Jesus Christ he has borne the cost of sin upon his body he has carried it far away into the abyss of death. Soon he would be entombed and carry sin into the grave.

Soon he would rise again and leave it there. it is in its place. The sin of all who rest in Jesus is in its place.

but not all sin only that of those whose faith rests in Jesus.

[17:19] Is that you? This is something you really need to consider is that you? Does your faith rest in Jesus? Have you asked him to forgive you your sins and to save you?

Is that you? But you say I'm not a bad person. I was speaking to somebody yesterday and they were saying I'm not a bad person I'm a friend of Jesus and I said well tell me about Jesus and they said well he's my friend he's a good chap.

Limited fictional view of Jesus. You say I'm not a bad person. well that's to fail to understand the holiness of God his intrinsic it's his holiness and his righteousness that put Jesus on the cross to pay for sin.

The justice the wages of sin is death. But you say well I don't believe in God. Well people have believed many things and doubted much more and have been found to be wrong.

You just look around the world a world that espouses wisdom the espoused wisdom is that we're getting better we're an improving species evolving into a higher form of life and yet we kill more people with greater ingenuity and with callous disregard for the suffering and the poverty of the vast majority of the world.

[18:48] There's food in the world but everyone is not fed. Indeed we're getting worse not better because sin is an infection that festers it's a pandemic of selfish hatred.

In death in death Jesus sought forgiveness for those who killed him. Father forgive them for they know not what they do. He restored the eternity of the thief.

They both mocked here some hours later one of them was saved and he said this day let me be with you in paradise. He restored his eternity.

He convinced the man who had likely beaten him the day before the man stood at the foot of the cross and said surely this must be the son of God he convinced the man who had likely beaten him the day before that he was truly the son of God and he controlled the moment of his death when sin was poured out they were surprised that Jesus was dead they didn't have to break his legs according to the prophecy that was made his legs were not broken he controlled the moment of his death and when sin was poured out in full he paid the price in full it is finished and this I think this is the most amazing thing I want you to think about this he came knowing the abandonment the separation from his eternal father and holy spirit and yet he came this is love that a man will lay down in his life for his friends you are my friends said Jesus but who knew when he said that that it would mean such a death filled with such abject hatred and suffering he knew when God so loved the world and sent him into the world he knew that it would come to this he knew the true cost of the

wages of sin he knew

God knew Jesus God the son knew and yet he came yet he came he lived he loved and he gave his own life's blood he bore our reproach he took our separation he foretold to the disciples that it would happen in this way by these means and yet he came you see the love of God yet he came he lived he healed he restored he gave testimony of his love and of his purpose he came to save sinners and here we see my God my God why have you forsaken why are you so far away from my roaring from the anguish and the pain and the suffering that sin would bring what do you think the father father's answer might be because it must be so these things must be if the eternal plan of salvation is to become a perfect reality this is what we planned this is how we said it would be achieved in the triune council of eternal ages in history before time in the spiritual eternity where only we where only I existed in triune perfection we planned and we purposed planned and purposed for you we planned and we purposed and then we came and we came to make a way back for the broken sons and daughters of broken Adam there was no real answer was there only understanding as Jesus said it is finished and gave up his spirit it's all true everything was planned before time and all was worked out in time and Jesus knew this

[23:02] Jesus knew that you think of him on the cross in that pain and that suffering that rejection that ridicule before the cross the beating the mocking the garden the betrayal the abandonment of the disciples he knew the horror of the event was pain suffering rejection and aloneness and it is taken by the forsaken one and when all is said and done what more can we say of the cross salvation belongs to the Lord and is only in the Lord you see the cross is not simply an inconvenient truth whereby we see the full colours of fallen man it is God's purpose God's chosen way to restore our brokenness to remake our relationship with him he lived a life fit for heaven he died a death fit for sinners and he did it both in knowledge and in the reality of a painful separation from a father's holiness where is the love of God to be found well it's here on the cross and you can find it today if you come to

Jesus where is our hope of salvation your hope of salvation to be found it's here on the cross and it's yours today if you turn to Jesus or have turned to Jesus where is human sin paid for it's here on the cross and your sin can be forgiven if you confess it to Jesus he is love incarnate holy and perfect and yet he will willingly bear your sins on this cross so the only question that reminds is this what are you going to do about it have you done anything about it if not what are you going to do about it the answer is between you and God I guess but I'm sure there are those here today who are willing to help you to answer that question Amen

God