

AM Matthew 27:32-50 & John 19:28-30 Two great cries

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[0 : 00] The Word of God in Matthew chapter 27. Some of you may remember that I've been doing a series from time to time when I'm preaching here on Colossians.

! The next portion of Colossians didn't really lend itself to communion. So I've reserved that for another time. And today we're going to look at the death of Christ.

Going to read from Matthew 27. Going to look later at verses 45 to 50.

But to set it in context I'll start from verse 32. That's on page 1005 of the Church Bibles. As they went out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name.

They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means place of a skull, they offered him wine to drink mixed with gall.

[1 : 31] But when he tasted it he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.

Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put a charge against him which read, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

Then two robbers were crucified with him. One on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself.

If you're the Son of God, come down from the cross. So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him saying, He saved others, he cannot save himself.

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 deliver him now if he desires him.

[2 : 47] For he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli lama sabachthani.

That is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And some of the bystanders hearing it said, this man is calling Elijah.

And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. May God speak to us through that portion of his word.

[4 : 04] Last one standing still with a jacket on, but I think I'm going to give in at last to the heat. Let's turn now to Matthew 27.

And I'll read again verses 45 and 46. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli lama sabachthani. That is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

The day that Jesus died was a day that changed history.

It's a day that has changed the life of millions, including some of us, who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

[5 : 24] Not surprisingly, therefore, all four of the gospel writers tell the story in great detail, recalling everything that happened and everything that was said.

They each had their own sources of information, and consequently some of them have details that others don't have. So we really have to read all four to get the whole picture.

But here in Matthew, in the portion that we've read, we have the three hours of darkness, which are recorded also by Mark and Luke.

And we have also two great cries. For the first of those great cries, in verse 46, he actually gives the words, By God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It's a cry of distress. The second of those loud cries, in verse 50, he doesn't give us the words, but John does.

[6 : 45] And he tells us that Jesus cried out, It is finished. I want us to look at the first cry now.

Then we will sing a hymn. Then I will be going down to the lectern to continue with the communion. And just before communion, we'll think a little bit about that second cry, in verse 50.

So this first cry, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It's one of seven sayings on the cross.

Luke alone records the first of them. After the soldiers had nailed him to the cross, Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Then when one of those two robbers repented, Luke tells us that Jesus said to him, Today, you will be with me in paradise.

[8 : 07] John adds a third saying, When he saw John and Mary watching, he said, Woman, behold your son.

And to John, Behold your mother. This is now the fourth saying, There's a fifth in John, I thirst.

The sixth is that other great cry, It is finished. And then finally, As he bowed his head and died, Luke tells us that he said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Our focus for now, though, is on this saying in Matthew, My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me? It's a strange saying.

It was misunderstood at the time, and it has been misunderstood often since. But it's a saying that takes us right to the heart of the gospel.

[9 : 25] I want us to consider, First, The outward circumstances here, The darkness, In verse 45, And then that inward distress, In verses 46 to 49, That loud cry, My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?

And how it speaks of our salvation. So first, Let's think about the darkness. In verse 45, Now from the sixth hour, There was darkness over all the land, Until the ninth hour.

Matthew is using the Hebrew method of measuring time, From daybreak to dusk. So the sixth hour is about noon, The ninth hour, 3pm.

Jesus has already been on the cross for three hours. Arrested the previous night in the garden of Gethsemane.

He had been taken first before the high priest, And then in the morning before Pontius Pilate. No proper trial had been held. Pilate had simply questioned him, And then swayed by the crowd, Ordered him to be crucified.

[10 : 58] As normal in such cases, He had been scourged, With a whip, With metal tips. Tortured, in other words.

He had been mocked. The crown of thorns. The crown of thorns. And the purple robe put on him. And then he'd been led away to die.

Normally a prisoner would carry his own cross. John tells us that Jesus did at first. But possibly because he was weakened by the torture, They had to draft in someone else.

Says here, In verse 32. Simon of Cyrene, Drafted in to carry his cross for him. Wine was offered, Mixed with gall, To deaden the pain.

But he refused it. And then they crucified him. Hammering the nails into his hands and his feet.

[12 : 10] And hoisting him up. With the two robbers. One on either side. And to add insult to injury, They cast lots for his clothes.

And even there, As he hung in agony, He was mocked. By the bystanders, And by the chief priests, And the scribes.

If you're the son of God, Come down from the cross. He saved others. He cannot save himself. 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 him deliver him now. If he desires him. Demonic words.

They echo the temptation in the wilderness. Satan had tempted him. If you are the son of God, Here are all these people, Including the leaders of Israel, Saying exactly the same.

[13 : 17] And even the robbers joined in. Though one, Thankfully, Repented later. It's a scene of indescribable horror.

And then on top of it all, Comes the darkness. Now this darkness, Has to be supernatural.

It can't have been an eclipse of the sun. It was Passover. Solar eclipses take place at new moon.

Passover was full moon. In any case, An eclipse only lasts for a few minutes. I watched the solar eclipse in 1999, Down in Cornwall.

Sky went dark. The birds stopped singing. The street lights came on. And then it was all over. Three minutes. This was three hours.

[14 : 17] Some have suggested it might have been a dust storm. But a dust storm covering the whole land? Some translations say it covered the whole earth.

And wouldn't they have choked? Well, I suppose it's possible. If it was, Then it was a special dust storm, Stirred up by God himself. Sufficient really, Just to say, That it was a supernatural darkness.

Darkness. There are actually records of it In other ancient writings. Tertullian, A Christian writer in the second century, Says that there were records of this darkness In the Roman archives.

And the Greek historian Thalys, He mentioned a worldwide darkening of the sun. But what was the meaning of it?

Well, for one thing, It marked him out as a very important person. For an event like this to happen at his death. But more than that, This darkness had biblical overtones.

[15 : 39] Jewish people would have thought of the Exodus. It was Passover, remember? The annual festival in which they remembered Their deliverance from Egypt.

The ninth plague, Just before the death of the firstborn, Was that there was darkness
Over the land of Egypt For three days.

Well now, The firstborn son of God Is about to die. And beforehand, There are three hours
of darkness.

It's crying out to us, isn't it? Christ, our Passover, Is sacrificed for us. They may also have
thought of the day of judgment, As foretold by the prophets.

Amos 8 verse 9, for example, On that day declares the Lord, I will make the sun go down
at noon, And darken the earth in broad daylight. That's exactly what was happening.

[16 : 45] Undoubtedly, This darkness was a symbol of judgment. It was a day of darkness for the
world, That they should crucify the Son of God.

This world deserved judgment. And yet there's something deeper here. Who bore that
judgment?

It was Jesus himself, Dying on the cross for our sin. That outward darkness was a symbol
Of the spiritual darkness That he was going through for us.

The ultimate darkness Of bearing God's wrath. Hell is described in Jude As the blackness
of darkness forever.

Jesus was going through hell for us. Some of you perhaps are going through darkness Of
one kind or another.

[18 : 01] Cast down perhaps with anxiety Of depression Troubled with illness Bereavement Other
troubles And I'm sure it's all very, very unpleasant.

But it's nothing compared with what Jesus went through. Take comfort in this though.
Precisely because he went through this darkness He knows what it is like.

And he is able to sympathize with you In whatever kind of darkness You may be going
through. And give thanks If you're a Christian That you will never have to go through That
ultimate darkness.

Christ has born Our judgment for us. But what exactly was our Lord going through?

Well we're given some insight into it In that cry of distress In verse 46 About the ninth hour
Jesus cried out with a loud voice Saying In Aramaic Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani That is My
God My God Why have you forsaken me?

[19 : 19] Now at first sight That may look like a cry of despair Priests had taunted him He trusted in
God Let God deliver him If he desires him Well God hadn't delivered him It would be easy
to read this As the cry of a heartbroken Disillusioned man Realizing too late That he
wasn't the son of God After all I have to admit When I first started reading the Bible It
troubled me That Jesus spoke like this That was the way It seemed to come across to me
But think about it Matthew is writing this gospel To convince us That Jesus is the son of
God Why would he have included

A saying like this If Jesus were saying Precisely the opposite Especially considering That
this is the only saying On the cross That Matthew gives to us He's chosen these words
Especially Why would he do that If it was simply A cry of despair He obviously thinks
There's another Better meaning And indeed there is The key to it Is to realise That he is
quoting scripture Psalm 22 We sang from earlier That psalm That psalm That psalm
begins My God My God Why have you forsaken me By quoting these words Jesus is
reminding The people Of that psalm Think Think about What that psalm said

Christ the son of David Is going through David's experience And more than that Because psalm 22 Is more than just David's experience It's a prophecy Of the Messiah It describes Not just the sufferings Of David The king of Israel But the greater Sufferings Of the king of kings Psalm 22 Was being Lifted out In front of them That day The very words Of the priests Were prophesied Psalm 22 Verse 7 All who see me Mock me They make mouths At me They wag their heads He trusts in the Lord Let him deliver him Let him rescue him For he delights in him How extraordinary That the chief priests And the scribes Didn't realise That they were quoting The psalm Against themselves

The pain of crucifixion Is there Psalm 22 14 I am poured out Like water And all my bones Are out of joint The nails Are there Psalm 22 16 They have pierced My hands and feet The casting of lots Is there Psalm 22 18 They divide my garments Among them And for my clothing They cast lots And yet As we've sung Psalm 22 Doesn't end in despair It ends in triumph As we sang earlier Verse 27 All the ends of the earth Shall remember And turn to the Lord And all the families Of the nations Shall worship Before you Can't have been easy To speak on the cross At any length Hanging there In agony Gasping for breath Jesus Couldn't Preach a sermon But with this

One verse He speaks volumes To everyone Who was there And to us Today That one verse Was enough To say to them All this Was prophesied And it will all End in triumph How they couldn't See it I really don't know But obviously The bystanders here Didn't understand Perhaps they just Misheard What Jesus said To give them The benefit of the doubt Maybe his Galilean accent Maybe his voice Was choked With pain But for whatever Reason They thought He was calling For Elijah Someone runs With a sponge Full of sour wine Others say Wait let us see If Elijah Will come To save him But we know He's not calling

[24 : 23] For Elijah This has nothing To do with Elijah He's quoting Psalm 22 But it's not Just quoting Words This was a very Real experience And a very Terrible one Perhaps we will Never know Quite how Terrible it was Throughout eternity As the son of God He had enjoyed Perfect fellowship With the father Even as a man He could say The father was Always with him But now The father Had turned Away from him The physical Pain of the cross Was terrible The spiritual Pain was Even worse This is not Mere Separation Notice He is

Deliberately Forsaken We're Separated From our Daughter In Hong Kong By 6,000 Miles Separated From our Son In London By 350 Miles But there's No quarrel Between us And we're Regularly on The phone To each Other If they Were in Trouble We would Be on The plane Or the Train Straight Away Likewise If we Were in Trouble I'm sure They would Be here In Scotland For us We're Separated And that Can be Painful At times But that's Not the Same as Being Forsaken Suppose They were To refuse To even Answer the Phone Suppose They just Didn't want To know Us That's what It is to Be forsaken Someone You loved Turning Away from You When you

Need them For our Lord it Was a Thousand Times Worse Jesus Was Suffering In Agony And the Father Was Apparently Doing Nothing At all About it So why Did it Happen Why Had God Forsaken Him Very Simply For our Salvation And Therefore We might Say It was Actually Out of Love Out of Love For us Obviously But also Strangely Indirectly And Ultimately Out of Love For Christ Because Only in This way Could he Have a People For himself There Was Still Unchanging Love For God

In the Heart Of Christ Even as He hung On the Cross There Was Still Steadfast Faith He Still Calls Him My God He Knows That Although The Darkness Is Upon Him Now Deliverance Will Come Psalm 30 Says Weeping May Tarry For a Night But Joy Comes In The Morning That Morning Of the Resurrection Would Come But For now He Was In Deepest Deepest Darkness For Us There Is A Deep Mystery About This As The Hymn Says We May Not Know We Cannot Tell What Pains He Had To Bear But We Believe It Was For Us He Hung And Suffered There If You're A Christian Here This Morning Your Salvation Is Bound Up In This

Verse Christ Was Forsaken On The Cross So That You Might Not Be He Died That You Might Live He Was Separated From His Father For A While That You Might Be United With The Father Forever In Adam We Were Cast Out For Our Sin In Christ We Are Welcomed Back With A Promise I Will Never Leave You Nor Forsake You May We Know The Reality Of That At Communion And If You're Not A Christian Think About It Do You Want To Go Through That Darkness Forever Why Not Come To Christ The Savior Of The World Who Even From The Cross Says!

[29 : 27] Come To Me Amen Invite You If You Are Wishing To Take Communion To Come Forward Just Makes It That Little Bit Easier For Serving But Even If You Don't Wish To Do That We'll Still Come To You Yours!

Well, as we come to communion, as I said, I want us to think for a short while about that second great cry of the cross.

Matthew 27 verse 50, and Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. Mark says the same, Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

But John tells us what it was that he cried out. Let me read from John 19 verses 28 to 30.

John 19 verse 28.

[31 : 53] And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Luke adds that as he bowed his head, he prayed, presumably in a quieter voice, Father, enter your hands, I commit my spirit.

Quoting Psalm 31. But our focus is on that loud cry. It is finished. In the Greek it's just the one word, teteleste.

And it's a word of triumph. He's not merely relieved that his sufferings are over. He's triumphant that his mission is finished.

The same word is sometimes translated in the New Testament, accomplished. Luke 12 verse 50, he says mysteriously, I have a baptism to be baptized with.

And how great is my distress until it is accomplished. Same word. He'd already been baptized in water, so what did he mean?

[33 : 05] Well, he is speaking of that baptism of suffering. The baptism of blood that he must go through. He was longing for it.

Not just for it to be over, but to be accomplished, achieved. Or again, Luke 18 verse 31, he speaks of the scriptures being accomplished.

Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets must be accomplished. Now, after six hours on the cross, he could say, it is accomplished.

All the scriptures had been fulfilled. The baptism of suffering was complete. He'd drunk the cup of the wrath of God to the dregs on behalf of his people.

He'd truly finished the work that God had given him to do. Now he could go home to the Father as the obedient son who had done as he'd been told.

[34 : 17] His mission was complete. His people were saved. There are other loud voices in scripture, and they always come at very important moments.

God spoke with a loud voice at Mount Sinai. With the sound of a trumpet. With the sound of thunder when the law was given. It speaks of God speaking with a loud voice when Jesus returns.

But this is the most important moment of all. When Jesus cries out with a loud voice. It is finished. What a wonderful encouragement that is to us.

Our salvation is finished on the cross. There's nothing to be added to it. And nothing can be taken away from it. Trusting in Christ all of our sins.

Our sins are forgiven. The price has been paid in full. There's nothing extra required of us. We have a full and a perfect salvation.

[35 : 32] And that should call forth from us songs of loudest praise. Psalm 47 says, clap your hands all peoples.

Shout to God with loud songs of joy. None of this mumbling into our boots. Shout to God with loud songs of joy.

Having accomplished his mission. Jesus could return to his father satisfied. He quietly gave up his spirit.

With a simple prayer. He gave up his spirit notice. He himself had said in John 10. That no one took it from him.

He gave it up voluntarily. And the prayer that he prays is a simple prayer of trust. Father into your hands I commit my spirit.

[36 : 31] According to Luke's gospel. He began and ended on the cross. With the word father. Father forgive them. Father into your hands I commit my spirit.

Jesus could now enter into rest. Awaiting the resurrection. And we too. Can rest in him.

May the Lord encourage us with these thoughts. As we share in the bread and the wine. Amen.