

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

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: 25 March 2001

Preacher: Paul Barker

[0 : 00] \$65,000. What price? Life.

A life for a life? Ten years maybe for murder? Maybe less in some situations? A few dollars for an abortion?

Life is cheap at \$65,000. Perhaps a modern equivalent of 30 pieces of silver.

In Mark's Gospel, the value of Jesus' life is seen in two different ways. It is cheap. Judas bought it for those 30 pieces of silver.

The Jewish authorities valued it at no more than that. Maybe less. The Roman governor, Pilate, valued it little. But Jesus' life is also precious, not just cheap.

[1 : 07] And it's precious because his life was a ransom for many lives. And as we saw last week, it is a life that was given so that many, from all sorts of races and countries, may actually live their lives.

It is his life that brings us life. It is the value of Jesus' life seen in his death that is the focus of these last chapters of Mark's Gospel.

Indeed, just to get a perspective on how important Jesus' death is, six of the 16 chapters of the Gospel deal with the last week of Jesus' life.

And their focus is very clearly, though it's a focus that began way back even in chapter 8, if not earlier, a focus on Jesus' death. It's very unusual. It's very unusual.

No biography does that. Pick up a biography from a bookstall today, and they'll concentrate on the prime years of people's life. And no doubt, if you were to read biographies of Donald Bradman, for example, they'll concentrate on 1928 to 1948.

[2 : 18] That was the prime of his cricketing life. But you won't find a biography of Bradman or any other famous person that devotes 40% to the last week of that person's life.

But such is the focus of the Gospels, and Mark in particular, that we cannot escape the conclusion that it is the death of Jesus that is the important thing about Jesus over all things.

Provocatively, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey on a Sunday, the week before he died. Provocative, because riding on a donkey was in fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy.

And Jesus was staking a claim to be the fulfilment of that prophecy, as we saw last week. And provocatively, the next day, he overturned the tables in the temple, again as we saw last week in chapter 11.

And he provoked the Jewish authorities further as they tried to trap him with their cunning questions by giving answers that were too clever for them and too truthful for them.

[3 : 24] And he provoked them even further in chapter 12 by speaking parables against them, that they understood to be against them, even though they failed to grasp their full significance.

Now, much of the provocation of Jesus in these last days of his life is focused on the Jerusalem temple. And a grand building it was.

It was the largest ancient building anywhere in the world devoted to one God. There were some other ancient temples that are devoted to a pantheon of gods or more than one God, but it is the biggest ancient building anywhere devoted to one God alone.

Well, it no longer exists, but it was. And not only that, in the years leading up to Jesus' life and in the beginning of his life, that building was undergoing a large amount of refurbishment and enlargement and making it better and more grandiose.

Herod the Great was the architect behind all of that. And so people, when they came to Jerusalem, the temple for them dominated the skyline much more than any building in Melbourne or probably in any other modern city.

[4 : 43] The temple of Jerusalem was dominant when you came into Jerusalem. You could see it from every angle in those days. So no wonder people marveled at it.

No wonder people thought that it was the treasure of the nation. And no wonder Jesus' actions and words in and around the temple precincts in those days after he arrived on a donkey were so provocative for the Jewish authorities and leaders.

Then during that week, maybe the Tuesday of that week or the Wednesday after he'd ridden in on the donkey, a few days before he died, he came out of the temple and even his disciples were marveling at the grandeur of the temple and its precincts that had been refurbished by Herod the Great.

They said to him, look, teacher, what large stones and what large buildings. It was fairly obvious. And let me say they're right.

Because the extension of the temple mount by Herod the Great incorporated stones, some of which are 120 tons. That is 10 times, I think, the weight of the stones of Stonehenge in England.

[5 : 56] They are enormous. And so well built were they that now 2,000 years later, you can still between some of them not get a knife down because they are so tightly cut together, forming the temple mount in Jerusalem.

So no wonder the disciples marveled. What marvelous large buildings and what large stones that they're built with. But Jesus dismisses all that praise by saying to them in chapter 13, verse 2, do you see these great buildings?

Not one stone will be left here upon another or will be thrown down. And that's how chapter 13 of Mark's gospel begins. Not one stone will remain standing.

They will all be knocked down. They cross over the Kidron Valley and they go up onto the Mount of Olives, a mount that is slightly higher than Jerusalem and from which you actually look down on Jerusalem and down on the temple mount.

And there Jesus sits with his disciples opposite the temple. Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him some questions privately. And they said to him in verse 4, we're told, tell us when this will be and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?

[7 : 09] When and what sign? And Jesus, in a sense, answers the second of those questions first. What will be the signs that these things you've just spoken about, the destruction of this temple, what will be the sign that it's about to happen?

Jesus mentions a few. Verses 5 to 8, he says there will be false messiahs and wars, people who come claiming to be the messiah. And there will be nation fighting against nation.

But he says to them in verse 5, beware of that time. The second sign, he says, is that there will be persecution of the followers of Jesus. And he says to them in verse 9, beware of that time.

And then in verses 14 to 23, he says another sign is an abomination in the temple itself. And he finishes that section in verse 23 by saying, beware of that as well.

Now the expression he uses about this abomination in verse 14 is odd. But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be, let the reader understand, is put in brackets.

[8 : 12] Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, etc. Jesus there is referring, it seems, to the desecration of the temple before its destruction.

And in 70 AD, on the 31st of August 70 AD, the Roman emperor, or general I should say I think at that time, Titus, maybe he was the emperor by then as well, entered Jerusalem and entered the temple, desecrating it because he was a Gentile, carrying Roman standards I think with him.

And then after that, the temple was destroyed. They're the signs, Jesus says, and beware of them. When will this happen?

Verse 30 he says in effect, soon. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. These things are happening soon.

But these things in themselves, that is the destruction of Jerusalem and the things leading up to it, are themselves signs of the final cosmic end of the world.

[9 : 21] That is the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, which happened, and Jesus predicted, is itself a sign of the overthrow of this whole universe or world as we know it, and the ushering in finally of God's kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth.

So in verses 24 to 27, Jesus looks beyond the destruction of the temple to that final destruction of this world before Jesus himself returns in glory.

In the first verses, leading up to verse 24, Jesus talks about, beware for your sown's sake, you will see these things. But now he says, they will see these things.

Because it's the generation that now exists in Jesus' day that will see only the first things that happen leading up to the destruction of the temple. But the final return of Jesus, I think he's saying, lies at least another generation down the track.

Then when Jesus returns, when the Son of Man, Jesus' name for himself, comes, he says in verse 26, with great power and glory, then he'll send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds and from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heaven.

[10 : 33] When Jesus talks about gathering the elect, that is God's people, from all the different nations, he is talking about a new temple. Because the temple was the place to which the people of God would gather for the feasts and the pilgrimages.

That temple's destroyed. Jesus is alluding though to a new temple in a sense. When all the elect from all the nations, one day when Jesus returns, will be gathered together. Now we're not told here exactly what that temple is.

But in the story of the New Testament, we realise that it's Jesus himself who is that new temple. And into him, his people are incorporated as part of that temple.

He then tells two parables to finish off chapter 13, which reinforce what he's just said. Firstly, he says signs tell us about what's going to happen in the future, like a fig tree. When it's budding, you know it's in effect spring, and fruit will be coming in summer.

So the signs he said I've just been telling you will be a sure indication that I will return in glory in the destruction of this world and the bringing in of a new heaven and a new earth. But he's also warned the disciples three times in the first part of that chapter, verses 5, 9 and 23, to beware, to be on alert, to be on the lookout for these signs because they're not pleasant things.

[11 : 48] And so he then tells another parable about the necessity for being watchful and alert to finish off the chapter. Now the provocation that Jesus has been issuing to the Jewish authorities in these last few days since he arrived in Jerusalem on the donkey is too much for them to bear.

And so they plan, again, not only to kill him, but to work out how to arrest him. That's how chapter 14 begins. It's two days before the Passover. It's probably referring to Wednesday of that week.

The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. Now they could just go in and arrest him. He's in and out of the temple all the time.

No doubt they would have had people follow him and know where he was staying. But the tricky thing is that it's Passover time. And it's like Sydney at the Olympics. It is full of people.

And these are pilgrims who've come for the Passover festival, including many people who've been following Jesus. And praising his miracles. And singing Hosanna when he came into the city.

[12 : 53] They've come from Galilee where he's been for the last few years. And he's picked up people en route, as we saw last week with blind Bartimaeus, for example. So for the Jewish authorities, it is not an easy thing to arrest Jesus without causing a riot.

Because pilgrims in Jerusalem for the Passover festival not only mean that it's full of people, but there's actually a hotbed of expectation because in Jewish thinking of Jesus' day, the Messiah was going to come at a feast.

Most probably the Passover. And here they are at Passover in Jerusalem. And they've already acclaimed him the king. So you can imagine the sort of fever pitch that is around Jerusalem that is making it not easy for these Jewish authorities to work out how to arrest Jesus before the Passover.

Jesus, during this week, is not staying in Jerusalem. All the motels are booked out because it's such a peak period. It's cheaper for him to stay with his friends over in Bethany, which is about a two-kilometre walk over the top and beyond the Mount of Olives.

And no doubt it seems he's staying with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, the one he raised in John's Gospel. But this particular night we're told that he's eating in Bethany, the same town, at the house of Simon the leper.

[14 : 03] No doubt he's there with his disciples as well as Mary, Martha and Lazarus. And he's anointed by, Mark tells us, just a woman, but it's probably Mary from the house where he's been staying.

This act of anointing of Jesus, he explains to us in verse 8. He says, She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for its burial.

That is, he acknowledges her act as a good act, but a symbolic act. Because when a body would be buried in those days, it wouldn't be in a coffin six foot under the ground.

It'd be put into a cave, and after a year the bones would be left dry, the flesh would have rotted away, and the bones would then be put into an ossuary box, which was as long as the longest bone, which is roughly 18 inches or thereabouts long, and then perhaps stored somewhere in the cave while other bodies were put on the ledges.

But in order to bury somebody, they'd be anointed with spices and things to make them sort of smell nice, because bodies then decayed much quicker than they do now. Now, we eat so much preservatives, our bodies stay sort of as they are for some time.

[15 : 13] That's true, actually. Bodies there would decay very quickly and smell very quickly. Jesus is saying, in effect, she has anointed my body for burial. He's again keeping the focus on his death.

That's what he's there to do. He's there to die. And here he is being anointed for burial already. Well, this extravagant action of this very expensive ointment or perfume being poured over Jesus is too much for the disciples and some of the other friends to bear.

They complain at the extravagance. They think the money should have been given to the poor, and it's probably this act that was the final straw that broke the camel's back of Judas, who then goes on to betray Jesus in verses 10 and 11, to conspire with the Jewish authorities, to hand Jesus over to them at an opportune time when there wouldn't be crowds around, and as it turns out, at night and so on.

Judas, we're told elsewhere, was the disciple's treasurer. Money seems to be important to him. He complains at the extravagance of this act, the money should be given to the poor, and then, of course, he goes and sells Jesus for an extravagant amount of money as well.

It's now Thursday. It's the first day of unleavened bread in verse 12 of chapter 14. And Jesus is organising his disciples to have a meal.

[16 : 38] It's a Passover meal. And that night, from verse 17 onwards, he and his disciples go into Jerusalem. Passover was meant to be celebrated within the walls of Jerusalem.

He's organised an upper room, it seems, somebody's guest room, perhaps, in Jerusalem. And he's fixed the arrangements, and he goes there with his 12 disciples that night to eat the Passover meal.

There's some doubt about whether this is actually the day of the Passover meal, or perhaps the day before that, a day early. The Gospels sort of give slightly different edges, but certainly all the Gospels are consistent in seeing this as a Passover meal itself.

Jesus declares during the meal, in verses 17 onwards, that he knows that he is going to be betrayed. I'm not sure that that means that he's overheard Judas conspiring.

I think he knows in his heart that that's happening. But he doesn't say who it's going to be, and the disciples ponder this. They are afraid that it might be, each one of them is afraid that it might be him. But Jesus finishes this little conversation in verse 21 by saying, The Son of Man goes as it is written of him.

[17 : 49] But woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been better for that one not to have been born. They are very ferocious words.

They are words that have no room for mercy. They are words that nobody would like to hear Jesus speak of them. They are about Judas, but he's not named him.

And the extraordinary thing is he goes on to celebrate this last supper with his disciples, with Judas still there, it seems. Judas leaves later. And though Jesus knows that Judas is going to betray him, and Judas knows that Judas is going to betray him, the other disciples don't know that Judas is going to betray him.

And the meal continues with 11 faithful but fearful disciples and the betrayer. That's a very poignant act for Jesus to break bread and pass it and to pass a cup of wine, to say this is my body and this is my blood, to hint at what he's going to do on the cross and include his betrayer in that event.

The words that follow when he does those things are perhaps among the most famous in world history.

[19 : 05] Verse 22, While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to them and said, Take, this is my body. Then he took a cup, later on it seems, from the other Gospels, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them and all of them drank from it.

He said to them, This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

The bread in the Passover meal is bread of affliction, unleavened bread because of the haste of leaving Egypt. Jesus says, That's my body. The wine here is perhaps the wine of redemption, one of the cups of the Passover meal.

That, he says, is my blood. What does he mean in these words? Books have been written about this and people have been killed on this point.

But let me try and summarise it with five simple points. Firstly, Jesus is saying that he himself is the Passover sacrifice fulfilled.

[20 : 25] The Passover meal was to commemorate the liberation of God's people from Exodus in the second book of the Bible. It was an annual festival and pilgrimage. Jesus is saying that he himself is the Passover sacrifice fulfilled.

That is somehow through his sacrificial death, there will be a greater liberation and freedom for his followers than even was found under Moses in the Old Testament.

Secondly, when he says this is my blood of the covenant, he's acknowledging that the promises of God here to do with his death and what it will accomplish as we saw last week are sealed with blood.

Now, I remember when I was a young boy with the boys over the back fence and next door, we formed a little club for about a week and to become a member of this club, you had to sign your name with blood on the bit of paper which we then put in a tin and buried under the gum tree at the back of the garden.

It might still be there for all I know. It wasn't all that pleasant but we did it because it was a sort of very solemn act. So when Jesus talks about the covenant being sealed with blood, he's referring to what happened in the Old Testament when animals would be sacrificed as a means of showing how solemn and serious covenant oaths and promises are.

[21 : 47] He's saying, God's just not making a rash promise here about my death being a ransom for many. This is something serious and certain. Now, possibly with Jesus' words here actually were this is my blood of the new covenant, something that's prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah.

The Old Testament is the old covenant in a sense sealed with sacrifice at Mount Sinai in the book of Exodus. But now this is a new one and Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant dealing with forgiveness and writing God's law on the hearts of people.

But also Jesus' words here, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many. And they're words we're familiar with, probably wouldn't think twice about them.

But they're poured out on behalf of or in the place of many. The word suggests a substitute as we've already seen last week or the week before. Jesus is dying in our place.

He's not just offering us something but his death is on our behalf, in our place. And it's for many, not just a few, not just the disciples, not just Jews, but for many.

[23 : 04] His life is a ransom for many, we saw last week. people of every nation and every race. Jesus is saying here that his life is not cheap.

His life is valuable. It's worth much more than 30 pieces of silver because his life is what gives life to many people throughout history and throughout geography, wherever they are, in whatever time they live.

That is a valuable life that he is giving up on the cross. It's not cheap. Far from it. After the meal they leave Jerusalem again.

They cross over the Kidron Valley, go back up the Mount of Olives and there, in a garden on the Mount of Olives, commemorated today rather low down on the mountain with a little olive garden nearby a rather modern church, in a garden called Gethsemane, Jesus prays.

His prayer, we're told here, some of its words. In verse 35 of chapter 14, Jesus threw himself on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

[24 : 09] Now he's not praying there for daylight saving suddenly to come so that you can skip an hour. He's not praying that time will fly because he's a bit bored. He's praying that the hour of his death might somehow not be necessary, that somehow it could pass from him.

And then he prays in the next verse, Father, for you all things are possible. Remove this cup from me. It's the cup of wrath, the cup of God's wrath that in the Old Testament is poured out against the sins of the world and the sins of people.

That's the cup that Jesus is about to drink, metaphorically, by dying. That is, he's attracting the wrath of God for the sins of the world on him and he's saying, isn't there some other way for that to happen other than my death?

Can't it go away? Do I have to drink it? I don't want to drink it, he says. But then he finishes his prayer. Not what I want to do, but what you, Father, want to do.

I'll do it, I'll submit to your will. He realises that it's not just about dying, it's about dying with the sins of the world on him.

[25 : 16] That's the horror of the cross. Here is one of those temptations for him to escape it. One of the things the devil or Satan as we've seen a few times already in this series has tried to tempt him to bypass the cross.

But at each point Jesus resolutely keeps on, get behind me Satan he said and he finishes this prayer by saying, not what I want to do, but what you want to do.

There is no other way for salvation to come to us in this world other than by the death of God's son on the cross carrying the sins of the world and incurring God's wrath against that sin.

He drinks the cup of wrath so that we can drink the cup of redemption and salvation. Whilst Jesus is in the garden with his disciples Judas comes with a whole crowd of people, it seems to be an unusually large number of people shows how important Jesus was regarded by the people when they come to arrest him.

But of course they've found a night time and they've found a remote place. The crowds aren't around at this time. It could indeed be quite late at night, possibly after midnight.

[26 : 34] And so they take Jesus and they take him to the high priest's house and it begins immediately a trial of Jesus which is very irregular. They don't wait for the official court opening times.

They're in haste. They know the urgency of a Passover about to be celebrated. The next day is this important Sabbath day begins. So they're urgent and irregular and they meet during the night.

And the key question that these Jewish authorities ask Jesus in the high priest's place comes in verse 61. Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?

Now that's the sort of question that's being asked in different ways right through this gospel. Who is this man that even the wind and the waves obeyed? Who do people say that I am? Is he Elijah?

Is he a prophet? Is he John the Baptist again? Who is he? Who do you say that I am? And now he himself is asked by these Jewish authorities, are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?

[27 : 34] Now the question's important. Jesus says, I am. And that's enough for them because that's blasphemy. He's saying in effect a blasphemous statement by saying I am words which echo the statement the name of God from the book of Exodus I think.

The Jewish leaders have heard what they need. Blasphemy needs death. But their problem is that under Roman rule the Jews could not put a person to death.

The Old Testament said if you're a blasphemer, death. But for these Jewish leaders they were stuck. And the Roman authorities they weren't interested in blasphemy.

They had so many gods. What's blasphemy? So they had to go to the Roman authorities and it's rather ironic that they have to do this. They have to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's.

Picking up Jesus' words that we saw last week. But now the issue is an issue of treason. Because the question that Jesus is now asked by the Roman trial beginning in chapter 15 before Pilate who was the Roman governor of the day is in verse 2 not are you the Messiah the son of the blessed one he's not interested in that.

[28 : 48] Are you the king of the Jews? Because if you're the king of the Jews then you are stating something treasonable against the Roman Empire. You're saying that you are setting yourself up as a king in opposition to Caesar who is the emperor the king.

So the issue is not blasphemy for Roman authorities but treason. It's 6am in the morning. The trial with the high priests had gone until at least 2 or 3 because when the cock crowed that would be about 2 or 3am maybe there was a 2 or 3 hour gap while they had a bit of sleep.

They convened again before daylight and now first thing about 6am they're at Pilate's doorstep. That work would have been done quite early in those days so it's probably not too unusual to be there at 6am.

But Jesus is silent this time to Pilate's question. Now Pilate was a weak man. He was the governor. He's pretty inconsequential in history. There's only one place that anyone has ever found the name of Pontius Pilate outside the New Testament.

In fact for many, many years people thought that he never existed and the Bible had made it up. But I think in the 1960s a stone was found. It was found at a place called Caesarea Maritima on the coast of Israel a place where Paul was in prison for a while later on and there it refers to Pontius Pilate the governor.

[30 : 06] Inconsequential in history apart from the fact that he happened to be the Roman governor at the time that Jesus was on trial. Now he's a weak man. He had some good connections which is why he ended up as governor. But the trouble is his patron his good connection back in Rome had been executed in 31 AD and this is probably a year or two later.

So now Pilate has to tread very carefully in his first years as governor he was very horrific to the Jews quite brutal against them but now he's got to balance a finer fine wire with the Jews.

He's got to accommodate them because if the Jews are unhappy with them reports will go back to the emperor and Pilate will be killed executed for being incompetent which he was anyway. So Pilate accedes to the Jews request.

He's got his hunches. He knows that Jesus is innocent. His questions show that out. Pilate heaps guilt on himself for this but in the end he tries to keep the Jews happy and so he hands Jesus over to be crucified in verse 15.

Typically the soldiers would have free reign for a while. They'd mock him. They spat at him. They flogged him. All the things that Jesus predicted. They dressed him up in a robe and put a crown of thorns on his head and they mocked him by saying hail king of the Jews.

[31 : 25] They struck his feet and head. They whipped him. And then when they had their bit of fun they let him out to crucify him. It's about 9am when they crucify him. A couple of people either side.

Crucifixion was relatively common not for Roman citizens but for bad criminals, traitors, violent people, bandits and Jesus.

And usually when someone was crucified a sign would go on the top saying what their crime was and Pilate put it up there saying this man is the king of the Jews. That is, he's being sentenced to death for treason.

As Jesus hangs on the cross six things are important here in Mark's gospel at least. One is the mockery of people passing by including the people on the cross either side.

For example, they say to him in verse 31 he saved others he cannot save himself. They're laughing at him. But their mockery is ironic. That is, they say truth without realising it.

[32 : 25] He's not on about saving himself. He's actually on about saving others and he's saving others by staying on the cross and not saving himself. And then in verse 32 let the Messiah, the king of Israel come down from the cross now so that we may see and believe.

The irony is the Messiah whom we are to see and believe in is the one who stays on the cross and dies. They speak truth ironically.

Secondly, darkness comes from 3pm onwards from noon onwards for three hours. Darkness that is not an eclipse couldn't be on that day. It shows us that some cosmic battle is underway here.

This is not about a man just dying a criminal's death on a cross. There is something cosmic happening here. The forces of evil and the forces of God are arrayed in all their might.

It looks as though God's son is impotent and weak but on the cross he is fighting Satan to the death. Thirdly, Jesus cries out with a loud voice in Aramaic.

[33 : 31] Mark only three times refers to Aramaic words but what Jesus quotes is Psalm 22, the beginning of that psalm. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Words that can be interpreted in all sorts of different ways.

Is Jesus really angry with God the Father for abandoning him? Is Jesus really despairing and confused? What's going on here? Why are you forsaking me? I think not. There are too many indications through the gospel that Jesus knows what's going to happen to him and why.

Psalm 22 goes on to be about the pressure and distress that comes on the psalmist but finishes with triumphant vindication by God.

And often when the Old Testament is quoted in the New, it's not just the verse that matters but the context of the verse. And Jesus here is addressing himself to that psalm but I think expressing some muted confidence that God will vindicate him in the end.

But of course the answer to the question is that Jesus is being abandoned by God the Father because he's carrying the sins of the world. Jesus, God's Son and God the Father are being separated for the first time.

[34 : 44] Separated by the sins of the world. Just as when the first sin happened in history Adam and Eve were separated from God's presence and kicked out of the garden. And how time and again in history God and people are separated because of human beings sinfulness now at the cross Jesus is forsaken by God for the first time ever because he carries the sins of the world on his shoulders.

He is in hell here on the cross. My God, my God why have you forsaken me? Because he's carrying the sins of the world as he dies.

And then he breathes his last and the way that is expressed it is not just that he comes to the end and dies but that he himself deliberately expends his air for the last time and gives up his life.

See right to the very end it is Jesus who gives his life as a ransom for many not other people who take his life from him. He's in control even here on the cross giving his life as a ransom for many.

And then fifthly the curtain in the temple is torn in two from top to bottom a 60 foot curtain. It's not people who've done it but it's symbolic of what is happening in Jesus' death.

[36 : 03] He has paid for our sins on the cross and as he dies and breathes his last breath atonement is finished and accomplished. Atonement isn't finished when he's dead and in the grave.

Atonement isn't finished when he rises from the dead. Salvation is won for us the ransom is paid for us as he breathes his last. Hell has been entered and conquered Satan has been defeated and the curtain's temple is torn in two so there's no longer any barrier between God and humanity who trusts in Jesus Christ.

It's done on the cross. The victory is won there on the cross when Jesus' last breath is given up as a ransom for many. You see this is not defeat on the cross.

It is victory. An astonishing victory because it doesn't look like it. But there the curtain's torn the barriers taken away and human beings that may have been forsaken by God because of their sins find themselves with direct access to God because the son of God is forsaken by God on the cross in our place.

And then finally the climax of this gospel really. The centurion who stood facing him in verse 39 saw that in this way he breathed his last and he said truly this man was God's son.

[37 : 26] We've been asking the question throughout this gospel who is this man? Who is Jesus? Who do people say that he is? In chapter 1 God said at his baptism this is my son.

And then people keep saying who is this man? And Peter came close when he said you are the Messiah but then immediately after that we saw last week at the transfiguration on the mountain God says this is my son.

More even than the Messiah. Messiah. And now again ironically in a sense the one person who gets it totally right is a Roman not even a Jew a Gentile.

And it's an indication to us that Jesus' death is not just for Jews but for many from any nation. It's also a bit ironic because as the centurion says truly this is God's son he himself commits treason in the eyes of Rome.

Before it gets dark to avoid the Sabbath which comes at sunset Jesus is buried. Women watch where he's buried and the same women on the Saturday night as soon as the Sabbath is over when the sun goes down go and buy spices and first thing on Sunday morning they head off to the same tomb to anoint the body properly.

[38 : 46] But they're too late. The tomb's empty. They find a man there who's an angel as it happens and he tells them that he's risen he's not here the body's gone you're too late. He's going to Galilee send the disciples there go and tell them what's happened.

And the gospel ends with the women not doing that. They keep silent because they're afraid. Who is this man who made people afraid in life and afraid in death?

Who is this man that even wind and waves obey him? Who is this man that a tomb is empty when it should be full? Who do you say that he is? You here tonight who do you say that he is?

And what do you want him to do for you? To give you the greatest place of honour like some of his disciples asked for? Or to give his life as a ransom for yours?

You see life is not cheap life is precious and our lives are precious because God's son gave his life for ours.

[39 : 55] That's the value of our life. His life in our place so that we may live with God forever. Our lives are of immeasurable worth because Jesus' life was given for us.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.