Three Scenes from Calvary

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[0:00] The scripture reading for today is taken from Matthew chapter 14 verses 1 through 25.! It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by sylve and kill him. For they said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.
And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nad, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.
There were some who said to themselves indignantly, Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor.
And they scolded her. But Jesus said, Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you.
[1:18] And whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for burial.

And truly I say to you, Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the world, What she has done will be told in memory of her. Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them.
Our second scripture reading for the day will be taken from the book of Mark, chapter 14, verses 26 through 52. Mark 14, 26 through 52.
And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, You will all fall away, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.
But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Peter said to him, Even though they all fall away, I will not.
[2:36] And Jesus said to him, Truly I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times. But he said emphatically, If I must die with you, I will not deny you.

And they all said the same. And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, Sit here while I pray.
And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.
And he said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.
Remain here and watch. And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed, that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.
And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.
[3:42] And he came and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.
And he came the third time and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand. And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him, a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.
Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, The one that I will kiss is the man. Seize him, and lead him away under guard. And when he came, he ran up to him at once, and said, Rabbi, and he kissed him.

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[4:58] And they laid hands on him, and seized him. But one of those who stood by, drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, Have you come out as a genx, a robber, with swords and clubs, to capture me?

Day after day, I was with you in the temple, teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled. And they all left him, and fled. And a young man followed him, with nothing, but a linen cloth about his body.
And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth, and ran away naked. Here ends the scripture reading. With a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lima sabachthani, which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, Behold, he is calling Elijah. And someone ran, and filled a sponge, with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.
And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, Truly, this man was the Son of God.
[6:32] Thank you very much, Demetria, and all those who read God's Word this morning. Thank you very much to the worship team for leading us.

As we turn our attention to God's Word this morning, my prayer is that we would be freshly affected by the Savior's sacrifice for us, and that the Lord would guard us from the familiarity that can easily come from anything that we practice in a regular way.
In the Scripture readings this morning, we began with Mark giving us an account of a woman who came to Jesus with a vase of pure nard, very expensive perfume.
And she poured it on him, and there were those around who protested. And Jesus said that she did a very beautiful thing to him, and that she had anointed him in advance for his burial.
Jesus knew he was going to die, and he knew why. See, we're all going to die, and the reason we're going to die is because we're sinners, and the ways of sin is death.
[8:12] And death came to all through Adam and his sin. But Jesus was not going to die for his own sins. He was going to die for the sins of sinners like you and me.

Jesus knew he was going to die because that's why he came into the world. He came to give his life as a ransom for many. crucifixion.
And so each of the four gospel writers give us an account of the crucifixion. And each account can be read in just a few minutes.
But the truth is that what the gospel writers give us in a few minutes took place over about six hours from 9 a.m.
in the morning until 3 p.m. in the afternoon. And there's so much more than we are able to grasp in the few minutes of reading that we find in the gospels.
[9:22] And in these six hours there are many scenes and the gospel writers capture these scenes rather briefly but there are many scenes that take place in this six hour period of time as Jesus was crucified.

And this morning I want to direct our attention to three of those scenes and they are found in verses 33 to 39. Three scenes from Calvary.
The first thing I want us to consider is the loud cry of Jesus as he hung on the cross. in verse 25 Mark tells us that Jesus was crucified at the third hour which would have been 9 a.m.
in the morning. And to be crucified means to be nailed to a cross and to be left there to die a slow but certain death that could take place over days.
It could literally last four days. But in verses 33 to 34 Mark tells us about something unusual that happened at the sixth hour which would have been 12 noon 12 midday.
[10:42] Look again at what he says starting in verse 33. And 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 Jesus cried with a loud voice Eloi Eloi lema sabachthani which means my God my God why have you forsaken me?

I think it's first of all important to note that the darkness that covered the whole land was most unusual. It would have been unusual if there was momentary darkness that came and just lifted but what Mark tells us is that the darkness lasted for three hours.

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It lasted from 12 noon until 3 p.m. in the afternoon. And it was after those three hours at the ninth hour we're told that Jesus cried out my God my God why have you forsaken me?
And I think the question that we should all consider the question that should come to our minds is why does the Son of God at this point in his crucifixion at the ninth hour in the midst of unusual darkness make this loud cry?
Why didn't he cry out when he was being nailed to the cross by the Roman soldiers? When they would have been hammering rough nails into his hands and into his feet, why didn't he cry out?
[12:44] Here's why he cried out. Jesus cried out because in that three-hour period of darkness, he was experiencing something that was far greater and far more horrific than what the Romans had done to him.

In that moment, Jesus was experiencing the unrelenting, righteous wrath of God being poured out upon him for sin, the sins of sinners like you and me.
In the darkness, God was expressing his justice in pouring out his wrath upon Jesus. At the same time, he was expressing his love for sinners like you and me.
And Jesus on the cross made this cry of forsakenness as he hung there, as he hung as our substitute. And he cried out because what happened to him should have happened to us because he was our substitute.
He took our place on the cross. He absorbed our sins, he bore them, and he took the punishment that our sins deserve.
[14:10] There are people who say that Jesus cried out because he was just in excruciating pain, and the reality of the crucifixion, the pain of it, got to him. That's not very likely because if the crucifixion got to Jesus, there were two men on the sides of him who were being crucified as well.

And we have no record that they cried out. As a matter of fact, they were having conversations. had Jesus been crying out because he was overwhelmed by the pain of crucifixion, he would have died less honorably than those men and than countless others who had been crucified in Jerusalem.
Some say that he cried out because he felt forsaken. He felt forsaken by God. But brothers and sisters, his words are not the words of one who felt forsaken.
Because he took our place, he was crying out as one who was forsaken. And he had to be forsaken because he was taking our place and God was giving him what our sins deserve.
Our sins deserve to have the face of God turned away from us and to forsake us. But Jesus was forsaken because on the cross, he was our substitute and God treated him exactly the way our sins deserve to be treated.
[15:45] But here, brothers and sisters, unless and until we appreciate the wrath of God, we will never be able to understand and appreciate the grace of God.

God will be to God. It was necessary for God to pour his wrath on Jesus so that his grace may be extended to us.
It was necessary for Jesus to experience utter darkness and separation from God so that those of us who put our trust in him will never experience utter darkness.
No matter how dark this life gets, we will never experience the darkness that Jesus experienced. No matter how lonely we ever feel in this life, we will never experience that loneliness and that separation that Jesus experienced on the cross.
The one who from eternity past knew intimacy and fellowship with the Father and with the Spirit. In that moment, in the mystery of it all, was separated and experienced the loneliness and the darkness and the forsakenness of that hour.
[17:14] Jesus was forsaken and cried out in agony so that we can cry out in joy as we have done this morning, singing songs that remind us of reconciliation, remind us of mercy that has come to us, that we would never know the pain and the sorrow and the suffering that our sins deserve.

And so on this Good Friday, we can gather this morning and we are able to reflect back on what Jesus did for us. and remember that that is what should have been done to us.
God has shown us great mercy in the punishment of his own son. That's the first scene, the loud cry.
The second scene I want us to consider is found in verses 37 and 38. it's the torn curtain. And this is my second point. Look again at how Mark records it starting in verse 37.
And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

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[18:37] Why is Mark telling us about this particular event that happened? that the curtain in the temple that would have been some distance away was torn from top to bottom.

First of all, I think we should realize that Mark is not including this as a random detail. Mark is just not giving us a beside the way comment.
Instead, Mark is connecting the torn curtain to the moment that Jesus breathed his last breath. Look at it again and you'll see the connection starting in verse 37.
And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last and the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. Mark is saying to us that there's something significant between Jesus breathing his last breath and the curtain being torn in two from top to bottom.
This tearing is not just an interesting historical fact that took place on that day. Mark is communicating to us an important theological truth that took place in that moment when Jesus breathed his last and the curtain was dramatically torn in two.
[20:07] It's quite fascinating to think about what happened with that curtain when we realized the height of it and the thickness of it. We realized that no human activity could have been involved in causing that curtain to be cut torn in two from top to bottom.

That curtain was 60 feet high. 60 feet high. Like six times the height of this building.
the curtain was 30 feet wide and it was four inches thick. And one of the reasons we know that there would have been no human activity to vandalize that curtain in the temple is that at that hour of the day at 3 p.m.
the priests would have been there they would have been doing their normal duty offering performing in the temple. Offering sacrifices offering incense and the other things that they did.
And Mark tells us that the curtain was torn not from bottom to top but from top to bottom. Now the temple had two curtains. The way the temple was structured was there was an outer court that had two compartments and there were on the outer compartment there were places where people could go, the Gentiles could go, women could go, men could go, and then there was an inner part of the outer court where only the priests could go.
[21:46] And in that inner part of the inner court there were two pieces of furniture. First there was a brazen altar where the priests would come and they would offer the sacrifices on this altar.

And then right up above it there was a bronze lava, a place where there was water, a basin there was water, and the priests would go there and he would be able to wash himself from all the blood and everything else that was present.
And then there was a curtain. And that curtain led into the holy place. That's the first curtain that was in the temple. Mark doesn't tell us exactly which one it was, but there's this first curtain.
And in the holy place there were three pieces of furniture. Over to the left there was the lampstand and the priests were responsible to maintain the lampstand, trimming the wick and making sure there's oil so that the lampstand never went out.
Then over to the right there was the table of showbread where on the Sabbath once a week they would put 12 loaves of freshly baked bread there represented the 12 tribes of Israel.
[23:01] And then in the middle, right before the next curtain that led into the most holy place, there would be this altar of incense that was there.

They would offer incense there which represented the prayers of the saints and the prayers for the people. temple. And then beyond that curtain, there was a single piece of furniture in the most holy place.
It was the Ark of the Covenant that had the tables of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod that budded, and overlaying that was the mercy seat.
in the most holy place, only the priest could go in once per year. Only the priest, no, no, the high priest, only the high priest could go in, and he ran in once per year on the Day of Atonement, the seventh day of the seventh month, and this was not the Day of Atonement.
The priests, the other priests, they can go into the other areas, but they could not go into that area. In the most holy place, that was where the presence of God was.
[24:15] One of the first things the priest would do when he would go in was he would burn incense so that the place would be filled with smoke, and the idea was that he could not behold the presence of God and lived.

And so the question is, which one of these curtains was torn? Was it the first curtain that separated the outer court from the holy place, or was it the second curtain that separated the holy place from

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the most holy place?
I think the witness of Scripture tells us that it was the second curtain that was torn. Listen to what the writer to the Hebrews writes in Hebrews 10, verses 19 to 23.
Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.
And since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
[25:55] the second curtain that was torn from top to bottom that separated the most holy place from the holy place, that Mark takes the time to record that this event took place, is an indication that God, in the death of Jesus Christ, had brought to full completion the entire sacrificial system, and in that tearing, that curtain was not to be opened on that day.

That was not the day of atonement, and only the high priest could go in there. But in the tearing of that temple, making the way open, in the moment that Jesus died, God was expressing that Jesus Christ had fulfilled all of the sacrifices of the temple.
He was the perfect lamb, he was the perfect priest, and therefore the entire system of sacrifice was now obsolete because it was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.
That tearing in that moment, the true high priest could go in because he had fulfilled it all, didn't have to wait for the day of atonement, didn't have to wait for the seventh day of the seventh month. Christ was the fulfillment of it all, and in his making the way open, he made open for us to go into the presence of God in a real way, not having to wait for a particular day, but the way into God's presence was made open by the tearing of that curtain when Jesus breathed his last breath.
[27:49] This was the climax of that entire system. One of the things that took place on the day of atonement was there was a goat that was called the scapegoat, and the high priest would take the goat and he would place his hands on the goat and he would press against the goat and he would confess all the sins of the nation, confess his own sins, his household sins, but he confessed all the sins of the nation.

And the idea was that these sins were being transferred onto the scapegoat and then they would release the scapegoat into the wilderness. The idea was the scapegoat took away the sins of the people.
On that day, Jesus fulfilled it all. The high priest, when he would have done that, then he was able to take some of the blood for his own sacrifice and for the people's sacrifice, and then he would be able to go into the most holy place, and he would sprinkle it on the mercy seat.
Brothers and sisters, on that day, Jesus fulfilled it all. He was the scapegoat. He was that one who took our sins and separated us from our sins.
He bore it. He was also the one that died, and his blood was sprinkled to set us free from guilty consciences, to give us access into the presence of a holy God and not be condemned.
[29:27] And the reason we're not condemned is because we don't come in our own righteousness and our own merit. We come in the righteousness of another. We come in Jesus' righteousness. He took our sins, gave us his righteousness so we can go into the presence of a holy God.

Mark wants us to know that when Jesus breathed his last and God rendered that curtain, that the way into the most holy place was open for us, brothers and sisters.
And the writer to the Hebrews tells us that we are able to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, our bodies washed with pure water, and on that basis we can hold on to our confession of hope without ravering because the one who promised is faithful.
The third and final scene that I want to draw attention to this morning is found in verse 39. It's the scene of the convicted centurion.
Look again at what Mark says in verse 39. And when the centurion who stood facing him saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, truly, this man was the Son of God.
[31:07] Mark doesn't tell us anything else about this centurion, but it's very likely that this centurion would have participated in the mocking and discouraging of Jesus.

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he would have been over a hundred soldiers, that's what it means to be a centurion, and so he would have been a very experienced soldier, he would have no doubt participated in many crucifixions, seen many people die, seen many criminals die in particular, but this crucifixion was different.
crucifixion was different. And so this centurion goes from mocking Jesus as Messiah to confessing Jesus as the Messiah.
he doesn't just think these words in his head. He uttered these words out loud and Mark is able to record them that this is what he said.
Truly, this man was the Son of God. And in those words we see God's mercy on this centurion.
[32:34] This centurion did not on his own and by himself come to this conclusion to decide, you know what, this man is not a criminal, this man is the Son of God.

He didn't come to that conclusion in isolation. The centurion could not have confessed what was not revealed. I'm sure you recall when Peter in Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus asked, who do people say that I, the Son of Man, am?
And they gave all kinds of different reasons, all kinds of identities as to who he was. And then Jesus said, who do you say that I am? And Peter said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.
And Jesus said, Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal that to you. He said, Peter, you're not smarter than the other disciples. Peter, you're not more perceptive than the other disciples.
He said, the Father who is in heaven revealed that to you. Brothers and sisters, anyone who from the heart confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord can only do that because God the Father has revealed that to them.
[34:02] I'm not talking about mouthing, I'm not talking about reading off of a page, I'm not talking about just saying something that somebody tells you to recite. But to say from the heart, to say from conviction, to say like this centurion with people gathered all around him, that he utters out these words out loud, surely this man was the Son of God, this man that we just crucified.

That's almost, that's almost treason. It's almost treasonous to say that. To say that this man that we have just crucified, we have just crucified the Son of God, yet he utters it out loud.
Why? Because God the Father revealed it to him. It was such a conviction of soul that he utters it out loud. Truly this man is the Son of God.
And brothers and sisters, it's no different for us. If you this morning from conviction of soul are saying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, you only do that because God has had mercy on you and allowed you to see that revelation of who Jesus is, that you can confess him with conviction of soul that he is the Son of God.
He is the one who came into the world to die for sinners and you put your trust in him and you believe that you are secure in your salvation in him.
[35:36] That, brothers and sisters, is a matter of divine revelation. And so we should never take that for granted. Never take it for granted. Let us not for one moment think that we trust Jesus because we are morally good or we are wise or we are sensible.

Left to ourselves, we are all fools going on our way to hell. But as he did for Peter, as he did for the centurion, he has done for many of us to allow us to see the Son of God and confess the Son of God.
as the one who came into the world to give his life as a ransom for many. And in that we see the great mercy of God.
God and so brothers and sisters on this good Friday morning, may our hearts, may our hearts be freshly amazed, freshly amazed by this loud cry.
Jesus cried out, he cried out the cry that we should have been crying out. He cried out in our place. Let us be freshly amazed by this torn curtain and all that it represents, that that entire Old Testament sacrificial system was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ and it gave evidence that we now have access into the presence of a holy God.
[37:07] And knowing who we are, knowing that we are not all that God has called us to be, knowing that we fall far short and yet we're not consumed, yet we're not destroyed, yet we don't need a shield to come into his presence like the high priest needed to have the smoke as it were, to cloud out the presence of God.

We now go because we have access through Jesus Christ and his righteousness and we can come before a holy God even though in and of ourselves we are not holy but we come on the merits of his

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son and we have access into the presence of a holy God because of what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross.
And let us be freshly amazed this morning by this convicted centurion because that convicted centurion represents all of us, all of us who have put our trust in Jesus Christ in the very same way that he was able to say surely this man is the son of God and even do it at the risk of execution that we can with conviction say this is the son of God and that we will make that profession of faith, we will hold on to that even in face of our own death and not because we are strong willed and not because we are brave, but because God will give us grace, that we will hold on to that conviction because we know it true to our core.
We also know that the one who sustains us in that moment is able to raise us if the worst should happen to us that we were to die for our profession of faith.
Let's thank God today if we know Jesus Christ that from the depths of our souls that is a reality for us. We are convinced that this one who died on that middle cross was the son of God and he came and he gave his life as a ransom for me.
[39:35] not not not anonymous people for me took my place for my sins died my death.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we are so grateful today that we can commemorate the Savior's sacrifice for us Lord we thank you that no longer do we have to rely on bulls and goats to give us a reprieve only to have to do it once again.
Father I pray that you would help us to rejoice in our salvation that Christ has purchased God. Lord may we avail ourselves of the privilege we have to come into the presence of a holy God because our great high priest has made the way for us.
For us Father may we rejoice not only on this day but may we rejoice every day for the great mercy that you have shown us in the cross of Christ.
Amen.

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