

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

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Date: 20 September 2020

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[0 : 00] May God add his blessing to these readings from his holy word, the word that we read there both in Matthew and in Psalm 22. Read again verse 46 of Matthew 27, and about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani, that is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Thank you. Last weekend in this congregation, we would have been celebrating the Lord's Supper. In the old normal, last week, we would have been by word and by sacrament, the word, the Bible, sacrament, the Lord's Supper.

We would have been remembering the Lord's death till he comes. We would have been remembering his sacrifice on the cross. We would have been remembering his giving of himself, himself for sinners for whom he came to give his life.

Of course, in the current restrictions, we weren't able to carry out that communion as we've been accustomed to doing. Nevertheless, the restrictions don't restrict us from calling to mind the Lord's death.

We're bringing to mind what Jesus did for us on the cross. We can still reflect on the Lord's death through the word that we've been given by God.

[1 : 30] And, well, for the last two Sunday mornings when we've been here in the building, we've been looking at questions that Jesus asked others. Well, this morning, we're going to turn to that question that Jesus asked his Father.

Well, Jesus has been crucified. He's asking that question. You know the question. You know it both in the original language and in the translations. The words that Jesus cries out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And as we contemplate these words in that cry of forsakenness, Then see Jesus. Call the Lord to mind.

And yes, worship him for the cost that he paid for your salvation. Worship him for the willingness that he had to do his Father's will, even in going to the cross, even in being there to give his life for sinners.

And we're here to worship. Remember, that's what we're here to do. We're here to call upon God's name. He is worthy. That's what worship is, to recognize the worthiness of God.

[2 : 46] And we come to this place of worship to worship him. And worship, yes, worship the Lord Jesus for what he did for you and for me on that cross.

And have the cross before you. And yes, consider again and consider anew these words of Jesus. Because, you know, when we think in these words, when we contemplate them, when we meditate on these words, you know, it can be so overwhelming.

There's Jesus nailed to the cross. Jesus suffering there. Jesus, our substitute on that cross. And when we hear again Jesus crying out these words, we can scarce take in the depth of his suffering when he cried out these words.

But remember, God has permitted us to hear these words. God has permitted us to recognize what Jesus suffered there on the cross when he cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? So listen to these words again. Contemplate them. And respond in worship and praise. As we remember who it was and who it is who gave his life for you.

[4 : 00] As he suffered. As he took your place. The place that you deserve, I deserve. In that punishment for sin. When Jesus, crucified on that cross.

Yes. Yes. Sensing that forsakenness by God. So that you might not be forsaken by God. So listen to the voice of Jesus.

Listen in that moment of forsakenness. And worship. And contemplate. And meditate on that great love of God for sinners. That great love.

As you fix your eyes. And you fix your heart. On the suffering Savior. On the Lord Jesus. And that depth of his suffering. We might say the depth of his anguish.

As recorded here in Matthew 27. That 3pm that Friday afternoon. It was, we're told, Darkness covering the land. To speak of the darkness of Jesus' soul.

[5 : 00] As he suffered there. So, let's look at these words. The uniqueness of Jesus' suffering. That these words speak of. Because when you remember Jesus and his suffering.

When Jesus came to earth in human form. He suffered. He suffered in his human nature. He suffered from birth to death. That's what our shorter catechism tells us.

The question. And I'll put this in slightly more modern English. In what did Christ's humiliation consist? Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born.

That in a low condition. Made under the law. Undergoing the miseries of this life. The wrath of God. The cursed death on the cross. And being buried.

And continuing under the power of death. For a time. So that when you hear the words of Jesus crying out. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? We've got to understand them in the light of his suffering.

[6 : 01] He was born. When he came from heaven to earth. He was born. He was made man. For us. And before his incarnation. He was spirit.

In heaven. Spirit within the Godhead. But when he comes from heaven to earth. He's suffering in his humanity. He's suffering in his physical suffering. He's suffering in his emotional suffering.

And on the cross. He's facing the wrath of God for sin. Even though he knew no sin in his heart. And he was cursed of God. Cursed by God.

Made a curse on the cross. And in his death. That leads to his burial. Dead there for three days. Again. Suffering. Jesus knew suffering upon suffering.

But it was only in the cross. Where he cries out with these words. That we're reflecting on this morning. That question. That question that includes the word why.

[7 : 02] Even in the intense suffering of his soul. You know. Think even before Calvary. Think of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Just before his crucifixion. He's in such agony of soul there.

And yet even in that agony of his soul. Even in that suffering. It wasn't the same as that cry of forsakenness on the cross. Because in Gethsemane.

He's still calling on his father. As father. Abba. Father. But in that moment of abandonment on the cross. As he senses abandonment. He doesn't call on his father.

As father. You know. Even on the cross. When you look at the sayings of Jesus. The words of Jesus on the cross. The first time he calls on God.

As father. He calls on father. Father. Forgive them. For they don't know what they're doing. And. And. He's. Showing compassion. To those who are watching on.

[8 : 00] Those who are sinning. Against the son of man. And then. The second saying. He's showing compassion. On the thief. Who acknowledges him. As. Son of God.

He's showing compassion. To that repentant thief. Today. You'll be with me in paradise. And then. His third saying. When he. Looks upon. His mother Mary.

And John. His disciple. And he addresses. Mary. To John. Behold your son. And he addresses John. To Mary. Behold your mother. Even then. He's showing that.

That compassion. When you hear. This fourth saying. Of Jesus. This time. There's no compassion. In this. In the voice.

It's a voice. Of bewilderment. It's a voice. That no longer calls. On his father. As father. And yet. When he's. Recovered. As it were. Recovered.

[8 : 54] His sense. Of being. That son. The son of God. He will call. On his father. As father. When he dies. When he cries out. Father. Into your hands. I commit my spirit.

But in that moment. Of forsakenness. He doesn't call. On God. As father. It's that. Lowest point. Of his humiliation. And in that.

Lowest point. He can't call. On his father. As father. You know. The Lord Jesus. New. Intimate. Eternal. Intimacy. With his father.

On that. Moment. On that moment. On the cross. That intimacy. Is broken. See. There's that darkness. In his soul. Not even the depth. Of anguish. In Gethsemane.

Could match. And Jesus. Is now. Experiencing. Something unique. Something. Unprecedented. That sense. Of abandonment. By God.

[9 : 49] The father. It's that. Awful moment. Of agony. And no language. Whether it's English. Or Greek. Or Hebrew. Or any other language.

Can. Can truly. Get to the. The nub. Of Jesus. Suffering. There on the cross. But the eternal. Plan. Of salvation. It's reached that moment. In space. And time. When the sinless. Son of God. Must pay the price. For the sins. Of his people. And he's.

Now in a place. Where no one's ever been before. Or no one will ever be again. The sinless. Son of God. Made sin. He's bearing the sins. Of the world. Again.

It's something. None of us can fully grasp. Fully understand. And. And I know that. Well I know. Many of you anyway. But. Each one of you. You've known suffering.

[10 : 45] You've known suffering. To one degree. Another. You've known. Intense pain. That really. Cut you to the core. Of your being. But I'm saying this. With the greatest.

Of compassion. To yourselves. Think of Jesus pain. Think of Jesus suffering. When he. When he cried. These words. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? That pain.

That intensity. That none of us. None of us. Has known. But then. What if that. That why. Jesus is asking. Why have you forsaken me?

Well. Listen to the words again. With another emphasis. Why have you. Forsaken me? He's not. Protesting. You know. God's righteousness.

He's not saying to God. God. You're wrong. Here. He's not showing any self-pity. As he's hanging there. On the cross. Jesus knows he's innocent. He's innocent.

[11 : 39] He's innocent. Of any sin. And so you can see Jesus. Humanity there. It's struggling. Sinlessly struggling. To comprehend God's ways. With him. Many times.

You and I. We've struggled. To comprehend God's ways. With us. And I'm sure. It's with me. It's with you. You've asked God. Why? Why did such and such a thing happen?

Why Lord? Did you allow. Such and such a loss. To happen in my life? Why did you allow. This thing to happen. In my life. In the life of others? Why Lord?

Is the world. Enduring. The conditions. The restrictions. The virus. That's happening. All around us. And it may well be. That God's answers to you.

Will come. When you reach the glory of heaven. But for now. We trust. And we. Exercise that trust. In God's loving sovereignty.

[12 : 40] Because truly behind. This. Browning providence. He hides a smiling face. We have to realize. And grasp within our hearts.

That God's purposes. Are always right. They're always righteous. God can't contradict himself. I mean. Even in the father. That the father forsaking the son.

That happens for righteous reasons. The father couldn't look upon sin. When Jesus was made sin for us. And we don't always. And we. Can't always understand God's ways.

Working in our lives. But just remember us. We were. We were. We were. We were reminded. In our midweek meeting. On Wednesday night. God's ways. Are always. Right ways.

Because God. Is righteous. Because. When Jesus. Was on the cross there. Which is. Now our second point. In the sermon. His being there.

[13 : 36] His suffering there. In dying for sinners. Was the only way. For sinners to be saved. The father forsaking his son. At that moment.

When Jesus bore. The sins of his people. That forsaking. Of the father. When Jesus was on the cross. When Jesus became sin. It was the only way.

That you could be made right. With God. In Jesus cry. That cry of abandonment. Jesus uttered that cry. When Jesus was bearing. Bearing our sins.

And you know. When you contemplate the cross. Never ever forget that. When Jesus is on the cross. You have given your life. To the Savior. He was bearing your sins. Yes. He was facing. The wrath of God.

He was. The curse of God. But he's facing. The justice of God. He's facing. The penalty. For sin. His death. And he's crying.

[14 : 34] That cry of abandonment. So that you might never. Be abandoned by God. So that you might never. Suffer eternal death. You who've. Given your life.

To the Lord Jesus. Remember this as well. When Jesus cries. That cry of abandonment. He cried that cry.

While Jesus still loved you. While he still loved all. For whom he gave his life. For whom he gave his life. Verse 1. That Jesus loved his own.

His own people. To the end. To the very end. Even in that. That moment of abandonment. Jesus still loved his own. He gave his life for his own.

He never stopped loving those. For whom he gave his life. Because it was love. That sent Jesus to the cross. And it's his love. That kept Jesus on the cross.

[15:27] There's never a moment on the cross. When Jesus stopped loving. Those whom he gave his life for. And you see the depth of his love. You see that in the.

The total obedience. That Jesus gave to. To God the Father. You see that. And also we see the depth of his Father's love.

For sinners. You know that love that we were thinking of. When we were speaking to the children. That God gave. That the Father gave his one and only Son. That whoever believes in him. Should not perish. But have everlasting life. And that giving of the Son. Giving the Son. To be that sacrifice for sin. But then.

Why does Jesus cry out. My God. And twice. My God. I mean. The very first words he. Or recorded on the cross.

[16:22] He's directing them. As we said to his Father. Father. Father. Father. Father. Forgive them. For they don't know what they're doing. But why does he now. Calling God as. My God.

Well. Surely we're hearing. And really our final point. For this morning. We're hearing and seeing. His faith. The firm faith.

Of the suffering Savior. Think of Jesus' faith. We don't often think of the faith of Jesus. But Jesus' faith. And the cross. That was utterly undiminished.

Yes. He has that sense of abandonment. By his Father. He's not saying. Abba Father. As he did in Gethsemane. But we have to say this.

That his faith. And the cross. Never left him. I mean. How else could it be? If he lost faith in his Father. That would be sin. He'd be sinning against his Father. And of course. The Lord Jesus knew.

[17:17] No sin. So he's crying out. Eli. Eli. The words in the original. That mean. My God. My God. His faith.

His faith. In God. In the righteousness of God. That's never left him. Yes. He's in anguish of soul. But he's not in utter despair. Someone said.

It's a cry of distress. Not distrust. Distrust. I mean. Yes. He's suffering. But he's still trusting. He's still trusting in God. Even in the darkness.

Of his. Of his sin bearing. And. You know. When we look to Jesus on the cross. You're seeing. That spiritual strength of Jesus.

Not once does his faith in God diminish. Even when he's bearing the sin of the world. God is still. God. God. And he never loses. Faith in almighty God.

[18:16] This is the Lord Jesus. Who in obedience. Went to the cross. Fully aware of what he's doing. Doing his father's will. For the salvation of sinners. So that when you think.

In that obedience of Jesus. Then surely that should help you. Even in. In this act of worship. Because the cross. Never broke his spirit. The cross.

Never broke Jesus faith. Jesus remained. Firm in faith. Trusting in God. Even in the valley of the shadow of death. And if Jesus.

And we can. I pray say this in all reverence. If. If Jesus on the cross. Could trust God. Even. In the darkness. Even in the darkness. Of. That horror of a sin bearing.

Then surely. He's giving you. An example. To trust in God. Even in your darkest moments. And you know. Yes. In our. Times of hurt.

[19:12] Our times of pain. Our times of sorrow. We have to say again. Aren't. Of course not. On the same level. As Jesus suffering. But nevertheless. When you do.

And men. If you have. Gone through that. Valley of the shadow. The shadow of darkness. Yes. When you suffer adversity. And have suffered. Adversity and loss.

It's for you. To keep faith in God. Even these times. When. When. God. Is still. Before you. Even in the darkness. Faith. Must walk. Where there's no light. And if. Maybe your life.

Maybe now. There's not much light. In your life. Maybe if darkness. Is overwhelming you. And you're. Crying out to God. Why? Maybe you're echoing. The words of the psalmist.
[20 : 07] In Psalm 88. Oh Lord. Why did you cast. My soul away. Why did you hide. Your face from me. He's calling out. Why? Even if that's your cry. Even this morning. Even. In the depths.
As you're crying out. To God. Still trust him. He's still. God. He's still. Your heavenly father. He's not going to abandon you.
He's not going to forsake you. And so I pray that. You'll know the joy of the morning. After the dark night of your soul.
That you'll look to the Lord Jesus. You'll look to him who knows your needs. You'll look to the saviour who sympathises with you. Yes. In every weakness of your life. And that you'll call to the father.
You'll call to that throne of grace. Where our loving heavenly father is. And know for sure. That in that throne of grace.
[21 : 03] You'll receive mercy. And grace. From our loving father. Amen. Let us pray. Our Lord.
Our God. Our heavenly father. You to whom we call. You to whom we cry. You to whom we call for mercy. To deliver us. We pray Lord.
That that cry will be in the hearts of your people. Even when we call out why. May we know that you are the one. Who has the answer. You are the one whose purposes.
And the lives of your people. Are perfect. For you are perfect. Lord. Strengthen our faith in you. We pray. May we trust in you. At all things.
And not lean on our own understanding. But trust in you. Knowing. That you are God. And all. All your love. And all your care. And all your kindness.
[21 : 59] Hear us Lord. As we continue in worship before you now. And we pray these things. In Jesus name. Amen.