

And they crucified Him

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Date: 05 November 2016

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[0 : 00] Well, if you could turn back, please, to Psalm 22. I'd like to take just a few minutes to look at the second part of this psalm, really.

But before we get into this, let me just begin by telling you that my oldest daughter, Anna, I have a wife, I have three young girls.

The oldest one is Anna. She's 10 years old. And she's not with us just now. In fact, this is probably the first time that she's not been at home with us for two or three days in the trot.

She's away on a school trip. She, with various other pupils from the school, have been allowed to go to York.

And they are getting to visit Tim Peake, the astronaut. So there was great excitement in the house in advance of this meeting with Tim Peake.

[1 : 06] But for the last few days in advance of her going, there was various preparations that she had to make. She was doing a bit of research into more of who Tim Peake is and what he's done, although they were following his progress over the last expedition.

But there was questions that she had to prepare because her and some of the other pupils are going to get an audience. They're going to get the chance to sit with him and speak to him. So she had questions to prepare.

She had some research to do. She had very mundane things like a bag to pack and tickets to organize. So she's down in York.

But the point I want to make is before she went there, before she went to have this meeting with this audience with Tim Peake, it was preparations that had to be made.

And today at this service and over the last few days as you've met as a gathering of God's people, you meet with the clear intention to be prepared to meet with the Lord each time you come here, but in a special way as we anticipate gathering around the Lord's table.

[2 : 25] It's a place that we don't rush to thoughtlessly or carelessly. It's a place that we know that we are to be carefully prepared for in coming.

And so where do we go if we are to be prepared to come to the Lord's table? Where do we go if we are to be prepared for this act of remembering our Savior?

Well, the place that we go is the cross. And I want just to go for a moment to Mark chapter 15. Mark chapter 15 and verse 21.

And it's the title, the section that is entitled The Crucifixion in the ESV Bible here.

It says from verse 21, And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross, Jesus' cross.

[3 : 49] And they brought him to the place called Golgotha, which means place of a skull. And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh.

But he did not take it. And they crucified him. And it's these last four words that I want to lock onto just for a moment.

And they crucified him. And they crucified him.

Think about this. This is the most significant event in history. This is the event that enables us not to perish, but to receive and to be assured of eternal life.

This is the event that enables the enemies of God to become his friends, to become his family. This is the event that enables lost sinners, hopelessly lost sinners, to be saved.

[5 : 05] And it's reported by Mark, as God inspired him by the Spirit, in four words. And they crucified him.

The gospel writers, and Mark in particular, inspired by the Spirit, tell us with such staggering brevity what actually happened in history.

But David the psalmist, who is inspired by the same Spirit, takes us, in a sense, behind the curtain, into the mind, and the experience, and the sufferings of Christ, into the depth of all that was going on behind these four words.

And as we scan down the first 21 verses of Psalm 22, we see they are dark and they are gruesome verses.

They are verses that are not easy to read and they are verses that confront us with the gravity of our sin and the ugliness, but yet the necessity of what was required for our sin to be paid for.

[6 : 33] And yes, David writes of his own experiences in some measure, but David writes beyond himself in this psalm as the Spirit carries him. And he takes us to a place where we see something of the depth of the sufferings of Christ.

We see how he was despised, crying out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

We see how he was deserted and how he was despised as the verses progress. And to verses six and seven and eight, we see in verses 12 to 18, the attack and the diabolical nature of the attack.

Yes, humans were involved and yes, yes, men were instruments in all this, but we see the diabolical nature of the attack upon Christ.

it's hard reading. But this is a psalm that we will do well to, in our own private time today, before we come to the table, to go back and to revisit.

[8 : 03] this is a scene that we must often come to, especially in preparation for coming to the Lord's table.

We need to look to the man of sorrows, who we see in this psalm, who we see in Isaiah 53.

We need to remember in the words of the hymn writer, it was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life.

I know that it is finished. In just a few days, the nation will once more remember the sacrifice of many for our freedom in the act of war.

Each year we are called to and we need to remember that. And each time we come to the Lord's table in order to be prepared to come.

[9 : 13] We need to remember the cost of our freedom from the punishment that our sin attracts. We need to remember how Jesus drank that cup of God's wrath that our sin filled.

we need to remember the sufferings of Christ and we see them in the opening part of this psalm, the first 21 verses.

But verse 21 in this psalm is the hinge upon which the psalm swings. And in verse 21 in the second half of that verse, there is a turnaround, a dramatic, surprising almost turnaround.

In just a moment, everything changes in the psalm. Save me from the mouth of the lion bites the psalmist.

And then before we can even take our breath, there is that change. you have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen.

[10 : 39] There is a dramatic change, a dramatic turnaround. One of the commentators, Dale Ralph Davis, he tells a story in his commentary about a small steamer boat called the Flickston.

And this boat was making its way up the English Channel. And there was a lookout man on the boat during the war years. And the lookout man to his horror suddenly saw this white line that was rapidly approaching the vessel.

He recognized it instantly as a German torpedo rising to the surface in its approach. And the lookout shouted out in warning. But in doing so he knew it was too late.

He knew that the vessel could never move with sufficient agility to be able to outmaneuver this missile that was headed their way. So they braced themselves for the explosion.

But just a few yards before impact something went wrong in the mechanism in the torpedo. And it caused it to rear its nose out of the water and turn 180 degrees and head back in the direction of the submarine that fired it.

[12 : 00] And before the crew of the Flixton could really take in what had happened, they saw this torpedo return to the German ship that fired it and send it to the bottom of the sea.

A dramatic turnaround that Dale Ralph Davis speaks of and there's something of that pattern.

There's something of that turnaround in this psalm from darkness to light and from the depths of sin and what sin does to the hope of salvation.

This is a psalm a bit like Ephesians 2 where there is that dramatic turnaround, that dramatic change.

And the text I want to take for the remainder of the time that we have is the last four words of the psalm.

And they're staggering words that enable us to come to the Lord's table. And they're simply this, he has done it.

[13:20] He has done it. So let's consider in the remainder of the time that we have what he, Jesus, has done and how we should respond to what he has done.

Four Ps to guide us in our thoughts. And the first P, the first point is propitiation. What has he done? Propitiation.

And this is not a word that we use every day, but it's an important word. Because it's a word that encapsulates, in as far as it's possible to do that, what Jesus did.

This is a word that describes us and teaches us what actually was going on and what was being worked out on that cross where they crucified him.

It's a word that enables us to understand, in as much as we can, what we see in the psalm. And the phrase to underline is our text.

[14:26] He has done it. the work of propitiation. He has done it. The gospel summary, one could argue, is that phrase.

He has done it. So what has he done? Well, he has done everything that was necessary to bring many sons to glory.

And he did it on the cross. That's where our salvation was transacted.

That's where my sin and yours, if you are trusting in Christ, was made an end of. That's where God's riches, his forgiveness, his peace, his joy, his unseekable hope, that's what it was made available to us.

You've heard this a thousand times before, I'm quite sure, but what is grace? We tell the children, what is grace? Grace is God's riches at Christ's expense.

[15:53] Grace is God's riches, all the wonder that he offers us, not at our earnings, but at Christ's expense. And we see Christ expending himself, and the cost of that, and the horror of that, at the cross.

He has done it. Hebrews 2 is one of the keys which unlocks Psalm 22. It's a chapter which quotes from Psalm 22.

There's no time to go into it, but in verse 17, the writer, Hebrews 2, chapter, and verse 17, the writer, he speaks about Jesus making propitiation for the sins of the people.

And in the study notes of the Bible I use, the ESV study Bible, it says, propitiation conveys the sense of an atoning sacrifice that puts away sin and satisfies God's wrath.

death. And that's what Jesus did. That's the work that he undertook and completed.

[17:16] He put away our sin. And he satisfied the right anger of God against sin. And he did it on the cross.

There's that double movement that Jesus effected on the cross. Sin was driven far away from us. And the sinner, through what Christ did, is called to come close. And to enjoy communion with God. It's a work that we could never do. And so Jesus came. The word became flesh.

He made his dwelling amongst us. He lived perfectly for us. He died in our place.

[18:23] To take the punishment for our sin. and to bring us from being God's enemies into friendship.

Into the family. Adopted into the family of God. The work of reconciliation. The work of atonement. The work of propitiation.

He has done it. that's what we remember. That's why we come.

Because he has done it. A.W. Pink tells a story of a carpenter and a farmer. The farmer was a believer.

His friend, who was a carpenter, was not a believer. He had a great burden to share the gospel with his friend. He tried to explain to him over and over again that Jesus has done everything that was possible, that was necessary for his friend to be saved.

[19:35] All he had to do was believe and accept all that Christ had already done. But the carpenter, like so many, was not convinced. He walked away saying, surely I must have to do something.

And so shortly after the conversation, the farmer asked his friend, the carpenter, to make a gate for it, which he did.

And when it was finished, the farmer took hold of the gate and he hung it, he put it in place, and he asked his carpenter friend to come round and just check that he'd hung it properly.

And it was just so. So he agreed. And as the carpenter approached the scene where the gate was hung and the farmer was waiting, he was surprised to see the farmer with an axe.

He was even more surprised when the farmer went in the direction of the gate with the axe. The carpenter stopped him. What are you doing? He said. The farmer says, I'm just putting a few finishing touches on the gate.

[20 : 41] He says, you don't need to do anything. It's fine the way it was. It's finished. You're just ruining it. And the farmer said, yes, you're right.

You're right. The gate is finished. And Christ's work of salvation for you is finished. You add nothing to it.

You hack nothing off it. You simply believe. And that was a lesson for the carpenter.

It's a lesson that brought him to faith actually. And it's a necessary reminder for us today as we prepare to come to the table.

We remember that Jesus was the propitiation. He has done it. God, when we come to the table to remember and to rejoice in the fact that our faith is in Christ's finished work, not in our best endeavors.

[22 : 00] And what we read in prophecy in Psalm 22, we hear in proclamation in John chapter 19, when Jesus cried out from the cross these amazing words, it is finished.

And with that the work of salvation was complete and the curtain tore from top to bottom showing that the way into God's presence was now open. Sinners saved.

through all that Christ had done. He has done it. He is the propitiation.

Much more briefly, I want to think in the closing moments about our response to that. What should a fitting response be to the fact that Jesus has done it, that he is the propitiation?

Well, the first thing is praise. we hear that in the psalm. As we reflect on the fact that Jesus has done it, the only appropriate response for us, surely it has to be praise.

[23 : 15] We read about Mary in Mark chapter 14. And she took that expensive nard perfume, she anointed the feet of Jesus, she dried his feet with her hair, and it was an extravagant act of praise and devotion.

She realized how much she was forgiven, and she responded in such joyful praise and worship, as did the psalmist in the second half of this psalm, with his limited vision into these things on that side of the cross, and yet he leads us in the light of God's salvation and such audible and open praise.

Look at the verses as we just read through them again. Verse 22, I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation, I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, verse 23, praise him, all you offspring of Jacob, glorify him and stand in awe of him, all you offspring.

of Israel, for he is not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and has not hidden his face from him, but he has heard when he cried to him, from you, verse 25, comes my praise in the great congregation, my vows I will perform before those who fear.

The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied, those who seek him shall praise the Lord. And so on.

[25 : 02] You know, probably the clearest test that we can apply to ourselves in examination as to whether or not we should come to the table, probably the clearest test of whether or not we have accepted Christ as Savior is heard in our praise or in our lack of it.

Because when we see Jesus as our Savior, when we see and realize as the Spirit opens our eyes that he has done it, we will want to praise him.

When we consider verses 20 and 21, when we consider how Jesus has forgiven and rescued and delivered us, surely we want to praise him.

When we consider verse 26, that he died so our hearts could live forever, surely we want to praise him.

When we remember verse 28, that Jesus is king and he rules over all, and that includes the Clintons and the Trumps and the Putins and all these unstable characters that worry us as we look at our news, when we consider the fact that Jesus is king and he rules over all, every age, every generation, surely we want to praise him.

[26 : 58] When we remember that he has done it, surely we want to praise him.

God when we consider the cost and the terror and the forsakenness that we read of, that he went through for our salvation, surely you want to praise him.

One commentator remarks of the psalmist, David testifies that he owed his deliverances entirely to God. Well, if David could say that, that side of the cross, how much more can we, as we focus on the cross, praise the Lord for all that he has delivered us from and all that he has delivered us to. One of my elders in Harris was telling me about an old lady apparently from somewhere in Lewis. He says, he thinks her name was Mary. And I don't know what congregation she was in or what age she was in, but she was well known, a bright, lovely Christian lady who was very zealous and enthusiastic.

She would attend worship and she would listen to the sermons. But as the sermons progressed and as the gospel began to come back and shine in front of her once more, every week she at some point would shout out, Hallelujah!

[28 : 41] To the dismay of many of the congregation and sometimes to the distraction of the minister. And so the minister went to Mary one day and he said to her, Mary, can I ask you before we begin this service just to be quiet through this one?

Just to remain silent through this service? And he says, I'll tell you what, if you remain silent during this service, I will buy you a pair of shoes. And it was back in the day when shoes were hard to come by and expensive to get hold of.

She agreed happily to be silent. She was very keen to get these shoes. And so the service began and the sermon began to be preached.

And as the text was being expounded, Mary was becoming more animated in her face. As the cross came into focus more clearly and she began to see her saviour, it was building within her.

And it was coming to the point of the hallelujah. And she was trying to keep it down and it was no use. And a crescendo, up she got from her pew and she shouted out, shoes or no shoes, hallelujah.

[29 : 56] She couldn't keep the praise in. Now I'm not advocating that we start shouting out during the sermons. But I do pray that as we stand to sing and as we come and prepare to sit at the table, we will come with reverence but joyful praise as we think about all that he has done for us.

And as we go from here and work and as we visit and as we enjoy friendships and as we are within our families and as we have leisure time, then we are to do so, do everything as unto the Lord, praising him for all that he is and all that he has done for us.

he is the propitiation. He has done the work of propitiation. He has done it. So we respond with praise and we respond next with profession.

And I just want to very briefly draw out that distinction because there always have been and there always will be those who say, well, yes, I praise him, but I praise him all in here.

It's private. Yes, I'm a believer. I'm a believer as much as you're a believer, but I praise the Lord in the privacy of my own home or in the privacy of my own church pew.

[31 : 28] I love the Lord. I trust him, but it's private. Nobody needs to know. It doesn't need to be audible. It doesn't need to be visible. Well, do you notice the psalmist never said that?

His praise is very public. There's nothing private about it. Verse 22, I will tell of your name to my brothers. Where? In the midst of the congregation, I will praise you.

Verse 25, from you comes my praise in the great congregation. My vows I will perform before those who fear him.

God's love. And the question of application here is simple. It's are you willing to do that? If you're a believer here this afternoon, are you willing to make that profession?

the table is set. The table will be set. And as we remember all that the Lord has done for us, are we willing to do this for him?

[32 : 48] Maybe for the first time. Maybe there's somebody here and for the first time they need to come in profession and tell their brothers and sisters of the faith that they have in the name of Jesus.

He's the one who is worthy. What do we profess when we come? We profess openly and publicly our own unworthiness and our faith in the one, the Christ who is worthy.

We come to the table to praise openly his name in the midst of the congregation. We come to perform our vows.

We come to take the bread. We come to take the wine in remembrance of him. It's profession.

Surely when we consider that he has done it for us, all that he has done, surely we will do this in obedience to him.

[34 : 14] And the final P is proclamation. He has done the work of propitiation.

How do we respond with praise? In profession. And finally in proclamation. Remember when one of the girls was born, it was late on at night.

And it was in Inverness. And after I left the hospital, and Mary was well, and one of the girls, whichever one it was, was well, I headed off to get some sleep, but I was hungry, so I went to get a takeaway before I went home.

And I stood in the takeaway, and the man serving the burger was there, and one or two other people were there. I didn't know them, but I was a dad.

And Mary was well, and the girl, Anna, I think it was, was well, and she was beautiful, and I was desperate to tell them, good news. You don't want to hold in there, you want to proclaim it.

[35 : 29] And so bizarre as it must have sounded to them, I did in that place. The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news.

and it's not to be kept a secret. Believers are not to be shy in our boasting about the person and the work of Christ.

Believers are not to be easily silenced, but we are commissioned to proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ.

who do we proclaim it to? Look at verse 27, all races, all nations. Look at verse 30, all generations. And what do we proclaim? Something of this, we proclaim that he has done it.

[36 : 41] And as we come to the Lord's table, there is that visual proclamation that we respond with.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me, is the words that we will read. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

How can you proclaim? This is one way you can proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ. If you're a believer, then come.

Take the opportunity that the Lord has given us to remember that he is our propitiation. And come praising him, professing our faith in him, and proclaiming to all nations, all races, all generations that our faith is not in ourselves, but in our Lord and in the fact that he has done it.

Amen. Let's pray. Our heavenly father, we thank you for sending your son.

[38 : 42] And we thank you that as we read these words of prophecy and as they direct us forward to what we read in the gospels, the fulfillment of prophecy.

We thank you that we see and over these days we remember that the work of salvation is complete. We thank you that Christianity is not a religion of try hard to do it.

But we thank you that Christianity is a religion where we see and profess that he Jesus has done it. And he is the only way into the father's presence. He is the only name through which sinners can be saved.

And so we pray that we would profess our faith in his name and rest in his finished work and come.

[39 : 56] And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.