

Luke 22

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Preacher: Mr Iain Morrison

[0 : 00] Amen. When I read the account given in Scripture of the death of Jesus Christ on that cross at Calvary, there's always a question that comes into my mind.

There's always a question that occurs to me. And it's a simple question, and the question is, why? Why? Why did Jesus leave heaven to be born in Bethlehem?

Why did the Creator come in the form and in the image of the creature? Why did he live in poverty? Why was he rejected by the very people that he came to save?

And why did he have to die such a barbaric, hideous death on the cross of Calvary? Why? Well, Jesus himself gave us the answer to that very question on the night before he died.

If there ever had been any question, any doubt as to why he came into this world, that doubt was forever dispelled when he and his disciples kept the feast of the Passover together in the upper room.

[1 : 28] So can we turn together, not to the chapter that we read, but to the chapter immediately prior to the chapter that we read. To Luke chapter 22. And we'll read from verse 14.

And when the hour came, he reclined at table and the apostles with him, and he said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

For I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took a cup. And when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves.

For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God come. And he took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise the cup, after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

[2 : 43] In there, in these last two verses that we read, Verses 19 and 20, there are two small words that give us the clue as to why Jesus Christ came.

They're almost insignificant. We can almost pass over them without thinking. Can you see them? They solve the riddle as to why the Son of God came to earth.

Do you know what they are? For you. For you. This is the reason that Jesus Christ did everything that he did.

It was for you. Jesus came into this world for you. Jesus died on the cross on Calvary's hill. For you. Jesus rose again from the dead on the third day. For you. You, my friend, are the reason that he did what he did.

[3 : 56] He did it all for you. And let's look at this today. Let's look at these words for you. And let's consider what he did when he did it all for you.

Look at his humiliation. Look at his humiliation. That was all for you. Now it's tempting for us to think that the humiliation of Jesus Christ began when he was betrayed by Judas Iscariot in the garden on the night before he was crucified.

And when he was tried in the courts of Pontius Pilate. But the humiliation of the Son of God began long, long, long before that. Now let's be clear about who we're talking here.

Who we're talking about here. This is Jesus from Nazareth, the son of Mary and Joseph the carpenter. But this is also the Christ. This is also the anointed of God.

The beloved son in whom the father was well pleased. This is the second person of the Holy Trinity. He is God the son. He is the creator of the universe.

[5 : 11] The Bible tells us that there was nothing made without him that was made. He was there in the courts of heaven when God the father said, let us make man.

He was there in the courts of heaven when the plan of salvation for mankind was plotted and devised in the mind of God. His humiliation did not begin when he was nailed to the cross to die. His humiliation did not begin when he was taken prisoner in the garden and when he was beaten and ridiculed and spat on. His humiliation did not even begin when he, the Lord of glory, was laid in a feeding trough, in a Bethlehem stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, under the gaze of animals. The whole path that Jesus followed in obedience to his father, from when he veiled his glory and from when he took human form till he called out on the cross, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

That path that he followed was down and down and down. All that he did, everything that he did in loving obedience to his heavenly father till he poured himself out in death was step after step after step on the downwards path of humiliation.

[6 : 36] And do you know what? That was all for you. His condemnation. His condemnation, that was all for you too.

Look at him. Look at him in the chapter that we read in Luke chapter 23. Look at him as he's rejected. The very people that Jesus came into this world to redeem and to deliver from their sin and from their bondage, they were the ones who turned their backs upon him.

The people who had just a couple of days before, who had welcomed him into the city of Jerusalem and had covered his path with palm trees and who had glorified his name, now screamed out, crucify him.

Crucify him. Give us a murderer instead of Jesus. Look at him as he's ridiculed. His enemies, Herod and his soldiers, the Roman soldiers, the rulers of the synagogue, they all mocked and they all ridiculed Jesus, the king of kings.

But he didn't abuse them. He endured the ridicule because it was all part of the price that he was willing to pay for you and for me.

[8 : 01] When he was reviled, Scripture tells us, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten. Once when Julius Caesar was sailing across the Aegean Sea, his ship was attacked by pirates and Caesar was taken captive.

Now these pirates, they demanded a ransom. Once they realized who they had, they demanded a ransom because Caesar was a powerful man and Rome was a wealthy nation. So they wanted money and they asked for 12,000 gold pieces.

And so arrangements were made for the payment of the ransom. Now Caesar spent 40 days as a prisoner of these pirates.

And as he spoke with them over the 40 days, he told them that one day he would capture these men and that he would crucify each and every single one of them because of what they had done to him.

Now the pirates, they didn't take him seriously. They thought this was a huge joke. But when Caesar was released and when he got back to Rome, the very first thing that he did was assemble his fleet and go after these pirates.

[9 : 25] And to a man, because of the ridicule and the humiliation that they had brought in him, to a man he crucified these pirates. Isaiah 53 and verse 7 says about Jesus, he was oppressed.

He was afflicted. But he didn't open his mouth. He endured the humiliation in his death for you and for me. Now it's interesting to recall in Psalm 2 and verse 4 what the Lord says about those who sin against him.

He who sits in the heaven, he laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. The Lord will mock and laugh and pour scorn on those who take the side of sin against him.

But as part of the plan of redemption, as part of the plan that God put into practice to bring you and me into salvation, Jesus willingly became the laughingstock to the very creatures that he came to redeem.

And he endured this shame silently for you. But he did respond. Look at him as he responds from the cross.

[10 : 47] When Jesus did open his mouth on the cross, it wasn't to condemn. It wasn't to revile or abuse his enemies. When he spoke, he spoke out of compassion. And he spoke with love.

He opened his mouth to bring salvation to a lost soul. Today, he said, you will be with me in paradise. He spoke to give comfort to his mother, where he said, woman, behold your son.

As the creator, one word from his lips had called light into being. And one word uttered from that cross would have abolished every molecule of the universe from existence.

Yet, when he responded from the cross, he responded in love. What grace? What love? Grace that continues to flow from the cross to this very day.

While we were weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. Christ died for you and for me.

[11 : 55] And his crucifixion. His crucifixion. That was all for you as well. Look at his crown. Look at the crown that was on his head on that day on which he died.

Never did a king wear a cruel, such a cruel crown of mockery and ridicule as the crown of thorns, of jagged thorns that the soldiers faced down onto his head till the blood ran down his face that day.

He allowed himself to be crowned as an amusement to the soldiers because he was in fact a king.

And a king who one day, Revelations chapter 19 tells us, would wear many crowns.

Now those thorns from which the crown was woven, they were symbols of the curse that had come into the world because of sin. They represented the very thing that Jesus was dying on the cross to deliver the world from, to remove from the curse of sin on mankind.

And he wore that thorny crown on that day on Calvary to show that he was taking our sins onto himself.

[13 : 11] And he wore that crown, my friends, for you and for me. Look at his cross. Look at the cross which he occupied on that day.

Never did a king occupy such a hideous throne as the king of kings occupied on that day. Now I'm sure you know that to die on the cross was to die the death of a man cursed.

Galatians chapter 3 says, Cursed is every man that hangs on a tree. Crucifixion was the most painful of deaths. To be crucified was to writhe in agony, nailed to rough pieces of wood, struggling for breath after having been beaten and scourged till the bones of your back were laid bare.

After having been tried and convicted, after having been beaten by soldiers, after having been mocked and ridiculed and made to carry your own cross, the instrument of your own death, to the place of your own execution.

It was an awful, a truly awful way to die. But this was the death that Jesus was destined to die. This was the death that was set out for him.

[14 : 32] Isaiah, the prophet in the Old Testament, in chapter 53, he wrote about the death of Jesus. He said he was pierced for our iniquities. He was crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed. David wrote in Psalm 22, A company of evildoers encircles me.

They have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me.

They divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots.

Hundreds of years before Jesus came into the world. His death was made plain in Scripture. It was a death reserved for him before the world was ever framed together.

It was a death that he went willingly. It was a death that he went for humbly. And it was a death that he went to expectantly.

[15 : 40] John chapter 18 and verse 37 he says, For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth.

And in Mark chapter 10 he says, For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

He occupied that throne. He hung on that cross that hideous cursed cross and he did it for you.

Look at his cause.

Look at his cause. Never did a king have such a noble cause as did Jesus when he set out on his crusade against sin.

Now Jesus went to the cross for others. He didn't go for himself. He didn't go for good people. He went for sinners.

[16 : 44] Not for people who could repay him but for those to whom he could offer salvation freely. Not for the righteous but for the dregs of humanity.

He said himself, I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. He did what he did on the cross of Calvary.

He did that for people who were his sworn enemies. He did what he did for you and for me. He did what he did so that we might be able to look to him by faith and be eternally saved by his grace.

He died to open the door of salvation wide for you and for me. And look at his conquest.

Look at his conquest. That was all for you. Look at him redeeming. As he hung on the cross something mysterious, something divine took place.

[17 : 53] In the middle of the day at the time when the sun was at its strongest it was at its height darkness came. The sky became dark.

And Paul writing in 2nd Corinthians says that the precious lamb of God became sin. He was made to be sin.

He didn't just take our sins on the cross. He became our sins on the cross. And God judged him there as if he were the literal actual sins that you and I were born in and that we commit day after day after day.

At Calvary God looked at his son as if he was my wretched sins and he subjected him to the wrath against sin. Against my sin.

And against your sin. There on the cross of Calvary. And Jesus' work on the cross of Calvary opened up the way for us to God.

[18 : 58] The great veil in the temple that it stood as a symbolic barrier between God and the presence of man between the man and the presence of God for centuries.

Now it's estimated that that veil was about 60 feet high. 20 meters. 30 feet wide. 10 meters. And 4 inches thick. Historians say that it was so heavy that it took 300 priests to move it and then two oxen pulling in opposite directions wouldn't have been able to tear it.

But as Jesus gave up his spirit on the cross of Calvary as he yielded his spirit into the hands of his father at that very instant in the temple in Jerusalem that great curtain that great veil was ripped into two into two pieces just like tissue paper.

Jesus removed all the barriers between us and between God. his work on the cross extinguished the wrath of God against the sins of those who are in Jesus who are now free from the threat of an eternity and hell fire forever all because he won the victory on that cross.

In May 1946 at the United States Nuclear Research Facility in Los Alamos a young scientist was carrying out an experiment preparing for the first atomic test to be carried out in the South Pacific at Bikini Atoll and he'd done this experiment many many times before to work out to calculate the amount of radioactive uranium 235 that was necessary for a chain reaction what scientists call the critical mass he would bring two hemispheres of uranium together and then just as the mass became critical he would move them apart again and he would do so with the simplest of tools with a screwdriver and that stopped the chain reaction but that day this particular day just as the material went critical the scientist dropped a screwdriver on the floor and he couldn't find it and the nuclear reaction started and instead of trying to save himself what he did was he took the two hemispheres in his bare hands and pulled them apart and by doing so he saved the lives of the other seven who were in the laboratory with him as he waited for the ambulance to take him to the hospital he said to his companion you'll come through all right he said but I haven't got the faintest chance and he was through he was correct nine days later that young man died in terrific agony because of the radiation that he absorbed when he saved his colleagues two thousand years ago the son of the living God walked directly into sin's most concentrated radiation he allowed himself to be touched by its curse and he laid down his life but by that one selfless act he broke the chain reaction of sin he broke the power of sin and he set his people free look at him rejoicing look at him rejoicing you might not think of the cross as a place of rejoicing with its horror and with its pain and with its suffering but if you had been there on that day if you had been in the crowds of people who stood by watching you would have heard as Jesus spoke seven times from the cross and every time he spoke every time he breathed out these words he endured pain and he endured suffering and he deepened his agony but towards the end of his time on the cross when he knew that the way to God had been opened by the payment of his redemption price he opened his mouth and he spoke he shouted even three simple words and these simple words these three words they still echo throughout the halls of eternity he said it is finished now this wasn't the cry of a defeated man he didn't say

[23 : 42] I am finished this wasn't the cry of someone who had given up after falling short unable to meet his goal of redeeming the human race this wasn't the mournful lament of a victim this was the glorious shout of a victor he didn't say you are finished this wasn't the cry of somebody who was attacking and condemning those that had crucified him this wasn't him turning on the people who had nailed him to the tree this was the shout of a man who had achieved total victory for all who will look to him by faith he said it is finished and when he did this was the cry of a champion just like a

lion roars in the jungle when it's made a kill so the lion of the tribe of Judah roared his great victory so that you and I would know today that there is hope in Jesus

Christ that victorious shout from the cross sent fear rippling down the spine of the enemy of our soul that cry from the cross sounded the doom of Satan's dominion over the earth and among humans that cry from the cross sends waves of rejoicing down through generations of his people even today look at what the word finished means it's a beautiful word it's a precious word it's rich in its meaning it's a servant's word used when a servant completes a task it's finished it's a merchant's word it's used when a deal has been struck when all the haggling has ended when both parties are satisfied it's an artist's word used when the final touches have been applied to a masterpiece it's finished you see the cross of Jesus

Christ wasn't a time of defeat it wasn't a time of gloom it was a time of joy it was a time of anticipation Hebrews chapter 12 says Jesus the founder the perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despised the shame he rejoiced when the battle was won let us never be ashamed in what he accomplished on the cross instead let us glory let us take glory in the cross of Jesus and let us bless his holy name that he loved sinners to that depth and to that degree that he loved you to that extent look at him resurrecting thank God that this story does not finish with him hanging dead on a cross or lying in a sealed tomb forever no three days after his death he rose from the dead to become the first fruits the first evidences of the resurrection of the dead for you and for me his power was greater than the power of death he robbed the grave of his victory and he took the sting out of death

I read a story about a wee boy who was maybe three or four years old just a little lad and he was sitting on his mother's knee one day and he was cuddling his mum and the wee fella all of a sudden he became frightened and he pulled into his mum and so she asked what's the matter son and he said it's a bee mummy I'm scared of the bee she held him tight and she said it's okay son don't be scared of the bee but mummy the bee will sting me no darling the bee won't sting you don't be afraid well the boy wondered about this and he sat up and he said why won't the bee sting me mummy and so she lifted out her hand and she showed it to him and as she did so she pulled the bee sting out of her hand and she said you don't need to be afraid of that bee because it's already stung your mummy and that means it can't sting you it is only one sting and I've already taken the sting he's already taken the sting for you look at his reigning look at his reigning after he rose from the grave after Jesus rose from the grave he ascended up into heaven and he sat down on the right hand of his father in glory the sitting there also shows that his work of salvation was finished and he's there today as our intercessor he is our legal representative in the highest court that there is and he is there before the father pleading our case and it's not our goodness that he's pleading it's not how good or how holy or how upright we are that is the basis of his pleading it's that he has finished the work and he will return someday to receive us to receive you and to receive me and the bible calls us his bride and he will take his bride to himself and he will take his bride to his house of many mansions what this means is that the same

Jesus who came from heaven to die on the cross at Calvary he is the same Jesus who is sitting in heaven today waiting for the very moment when he will come and return and claim his people and he is the same Jesus who freely today offers eternal salvation to all who will come to him by faith he is the same Jesus who died for you and if you will come to him he will save you by his grace and he will give you eternal life in 1865 after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated his body was carried for three weeks in a funeral train from city to city across the United States so that as many people as possible could pay their last respects to the great emancipator and as the train passed through Albany in New York State an African

[31 : 02] American woman a freed slave she lifted her little son up as high as she could reach above the heads of the crowds and she said to him take a long look honey he died for you I wish that today I could take you to Calvary's Hill on that first Good Friday and if I could I would stand beside you and I would point you towards the middle of the three crosses that are there on the top of Calvary's Hill and I would say to you friend take a long long look he died for you that's why the king of glory that's why he set aside his glory that's why he veiled his glory that's why he came to walk this earth that's why he was conceived as a child in the womb of the virgin Mary think of it this was the king of glory this was the creator of the universe in a woman's womb dependent on her for his sustenance and for his strength and for his nourishment and yet at the same time because he was God he was keeping her and protecting her and all of that was for you that's why the king of

glory was born in a stable that's why his first home was a barn that's why he lived in poverty it was all for you that's why the king of glory died a death that was steeped in shame and in agony that's why

God's only beloved son in whom he was well pleased that's why he was made the focus of God's wrath God's anger and God's curse and punishment for sin and that's why the king of glory rose on the first day of the week early in the morning triumphant all for you he did it just for you he did everything that he did so that you could call on him by faith and that you could be saved by his grace so that you could get away from hell and get into heaven he did every single thing that he did just for you nobody else has ever done so much for you as Jesus did no one else has ever given as much for you as Jesus has nobody else has cared as much for you as Jesus did Nobody else has suffered as much for you as Jesus did.

Nobody else has died for you. Nobody else has died for you. So here's the question. Here's the multi-million dollar question.

What have you done for him? Amen. Let us pray. Eternal Father, we thank you and praise you that it was all for us.

The work of salvation was all for us. From the moment that it was conceived in the courts of heaven, until the stone was rolled away, and until Jesus Christ was received up into heaven again, it was all for us.

[34 : 42] Remove the clay from our eyes, Lord, so that we would see this, that we would realize all that was done for us. Before we were ever thought of, there was a plan of salvation to bring us into a closer relationship with our God and Father.

Bless your word to us. Abide in our hearts, we pray. For Jesus' sake. Amen.