

Communion Sermon - English

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 February 2020

Preacher: Rev Andrew Macleod

- [0 : 00] Well, turning back with me in your Bibles to Luke chapter 23. You can read again. Luke 23 and verse 46. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
- And having said this, he breathed his last. While living here in the highlands and the islands, we don't expect too much sun exposure from day to day and from year to year. We're reluctantly accepting of how much sunlight we receive. That the night gets longer. That the days are getting shorter through the winter.
- But you know, no matter how dark we think it gets, it will never get as dark as this day at Calvary. We're told between the sixth hour and the ninth hour, the land was plunged into darkness.
- [1 : 28] Samuel Rutherford writes that when Jesus went out of the earth, the sun would not stay behind him. As if the sun had said to Jesus, Lord, if you are going out of this world, I'm going with you.
- It was clearly supernatural. The finger of God did it at his will. What does it mean? What does the darkness mean?
- It means judgment is being poured out and sorrow is being experienced. We were singing about and praying about in Psalm 32.
- For your sin to be forgiven. For our sin to be hidden from God's face. This period of darkness had to come.
- The Father is marking the death of His Son with this visible and public event. He did the same at the birth of Jesus.
- [2 : 38] He marked the birth of Jesus with a star. Here is the light of the world coming into your lives. But here at Calvary, there is no light.
- The public event is darkness. The land was plunged into darkness. The prophet Amos, in the Old Testament, he wrote concerning that day of judgment.
- He said, In that day, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.
- He was talking about this day at Calvary. Here at the cross, sin has been judged once and for all who believe.
- It has been exposed in all of its darkness. Unbelief, greed, anger, sexual immorality, inhumanity.
- [3 : 49] All of this, and far more besides, been displayed and paraded and been dealt with in these hours of darkness.
- The darkness is the result of all of your sin. You blessed people who believe and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your sin been forgiven. But you know, as this darkness reigns, as the darkness has plunged into the land, as your sin was being dealt with, we now see, as we come to our verse that we're going to concentrate on this morning, the darkness has now been illuminated by the light once again.

The curtain of the temple has now been torn in two. The sacrifice has been accepted and now the way is open for all of us to come in.

All of us to come in. The cry that pierced the darkness when Jesus said, and we sang, My God, My God, why?

[5 : 12] This was not to be his last words. He did not die forsaken. Rather, he will cry out again to the fathers. I want us to linger this morning on this final words of Jesus, his final statement here on the cross.

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And three ways that we can hold on to this and walk our way through this statement.

He meant, Dependence, Distance, and Destination. Dependence, Distance, and Destination.

Well, we begin with his dependence. Many of us have sat at the bedside of those whom you loved as they passed away from this life.

No matter how compass mentis the individual was, or in the latter days what actions they could perform, when the final hours came, life slowly and surely ebbed away.

[6 : 32] No matter how much they fought, death overcame them. But not so with our Jesus. He overcame death.

As he rises from that darkness, he calls out to his father. You know, the gospel writers, Matthew and Mark and Luke, they all record that it was with a loud voice.

A sign that there was strength in this man to the very end. He was in control. He chose when he would lay his life down and when it would be brought back up again.

He keeps, as it were, death waiting. Some of you have dogs. You tell the dogs, stay at the door.

Don't come in. Jesus is saying to death, stay at the door. It's not time yet. I will give you the command.

[7 : 36] You do not know when the Son of Man will go or when he will come again. He is saying to death, stay at the door and then I will tell you when you can come in.

He was not helpless in his death as he was at his birth. The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay. He was dependent then on his mother Mary.

But now at the cross his mother Mary realizes that she is dependent on him and are as are each and every one of us.

After all that was said and done then he chose to release his soul and to breathe his last. That's death.

The separation of the soul and the body. His spirit went immediately to glory and his body into the grave. I'm sure that most of us are familiar with the scheme the Duke of Edinburgh.

[8 : 51] that many youngsters will engage in and sign up to volunteer. And you go through three different stages of bronze and silver and gold.

I managed my bronze and silver when I was younger but never quite made it to the gold. However in my time when I did volunteer at various local groups and clubs I remember the leaders of these clubs and groups saying to me from time to time thanking me for what a sacrifice that you are making to come and to be with us and to help us.

Well you know it didn't seem much like a sacrifice when I received my reward at the end of each year for what I was doing. It certainly didn't seem like a sacrifice when I placed it onto my CV and it was part of the reason I received my first job.

You see there was benefit in it for me. When Jesus volunteered to be your sacrifice the benefit was not for himself it was for all of you.

Calvin writes that no proper sacrifice could have been offered unless Christ disregarded his own feelings subjected and yielded himself wholly to the Father's will.

[10:18] That is why in Gethsemane he was able to say Father not my will be done but yours. You see if there was to be a sacrifice for sin that would take our guilt away and grant us that peace with God it could not be the blood of bulls and goats it must be and it could only be he who himself was fully perfect fully God fully man and fully willing he gave himself to life as he gave himself to death man.

We must not step over too easily the fact that the Son of God became man that he left the realm of glory where he existed in harmony and in fellowship with the Father and the Spirit and enters into now the state of dependence dependence dependence upon God waiting on God trusting God believing in God looking to God longing for God and while in this world feeling his need of God when Jesus said Father into your hands I commit my spirit he was saying nothing then in his death that he hadn't been saying throughout his life every step was a step of dependence and reliance and trust upon his heavenly Father we're going to sing later in

Psalm 31 and in Psalm 31 David is referring the psalmist is referring to his own life he is saying no matter what experiences I go through no matter what the enemy does to me I will trust in you O Lord and you know in verse 5 of that Psalm Psalm 31 that's Jesus quoting he is quoting that verse here on the cross Psalm 31 verse 5 says into your hands I commit my spirit redeem me O Lord the God of truth you know as Jesus took every step in the state of dependence on God so you and I must do that as well take every step every step trusting in God that's not every Sunday that's not every communion that is every step and every day totally dependent and reliant upon the

God of all grace and the mercy that he has shown to you blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy as Jesus was in his life so he was in his death resting in the arms of his father so how would it be any different for you or me friend the privilege of us as the Christians as the blessed ones is to imitate Jesus Christ to receive all that he has received the love the protection the support from the father we should make the same prayer David prayed and the same cry Jesus cried father into your hands I commit my spirit I just want to say something as a side note isn't it interesting that

Jesus used scripture Psalm 31 in his prayers he does it several times here on the cross he does it when he rebukes Satan in the wilderness he uses scripture no prayer can be hard can't it prayer can be hard maybe many reasons why you are struggling in your prayer life why any of us are but perhaps one major reason is because we have detached prayer from a serious study of God's word day by day as you read your bible the words of scripture should be colouring your prayers the Lord did that to me this morning as I prepared to come and preach his gospel I very often in my reading on a

[15 : 12] Sunday morning before going out to preach will seek for the Lord to share something to give me that promise that he is with me you know this morning I was meant to read psalm 29 but for whatever reason I didn't and I read psalm 28 in my Bible reading plan that I am going through and I was meant to read psalm 29 but I read psalm 28 you may say by accident I say the Lord brought me to it the very first verse to you oh Lord I call my rock be not deaf lest of you be silent to me I become like those who go down to the pits hear the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cry to you for help when I lift up my hands towards your most holy sanctuary the psalmist and I are crying out for the Lord don't be silent to me speak to me hear my prayer and assure me you know he goes on to say after he speaks about his enemies here in psalm 28 the enemies who are encompassing him he says once the

Lord has answered his prayer he will rejoice and spontaneously give thanks and glory to God the prayer will be answered the Lord will speak but when I realized that I was meant to read psalm 29 I went and read it and you know the whole of psalm 29 if you even saw it it is in every verse or every second verse it's the voice of the Lord says the voice of the Lord says the voice of the Lord says the Lord speaks and he speaks and he speaks he will not be silent and he will answer your prayer as I pray before I preach I am standing there and saying Lord will you be with me and I smile because he is abundantly shown that he will hear my prayer and he will speak to me you know we need to take the word of God it must color our prayers as we read it meditate on it that's the missing link that's the key between your

Bible reading and prayer it is meditation taking time to your heart what you have read and then bring it to the Lord in prayer but that word time has turned a lot of you off I don't have time you say don't have time to spend with Jesus there's no fast track there's no microwave version of Christianity it is a day by day and it is a step by step journey for a lifetime depending and leaning on the hands of God so we come then secondly past the dependence and on to the distance secondly the distance now some of you in here have spent many years of your life working away from the island perhaps or husbands have or family members have on oil rigs or maybe you've gone to the far country over to

Africa or America or Asia or down in the deep sea on the ships you've journeyed far and wide you've travelled many miles over your lives this was your work it was your duty to travel these distances but you know no matter how many times you've journeyed around the world you've sailed or you've flown it does not come close to the distance that our Lord Jesus has travelled because of your sin Ephesians 4 Paul tells us how Jesus has left the highest heights to come to the lowest depths to return to the highest heights and he's going to come back and take us to be where he is it was Jesus' work that drove him into the darkness to journey on that road that leads away from God and arrives then at the far country the abyss where there's nowhere further that he could travel

Jesus in that darkness in that three hours he reached the very end why did he go to the very end he went to the very end so that he could take you and get you and to bring you home to be with him he would go the whole way to ensure that he would miss not one of his flock he would leave nobody behind you know it was in that pit of despair that he released you and me from the chains of sin that attached us to Satan Jesus went the whole road and in that ninth hour he cried out my God my God why have you forsaken me now this was the hell this was his hell where he suffered to such an extent where he had lost sight of the father but he could still exclaim my

[20 : 58] God he could still make that cry of faith the first the only cry of faith to rise out of hell for all of eternity there are lost souls crying from that pit even this morning but none crying in faith yes in hatred anger despair but not in faith but Jesus did my God he cried but as we've said now the darkness is over now the light has come again it has passed it's all behind him now the light the favor and the fellowship with the father is restored and in that moment he shall return to his place in glory everything was behind him now only he and the father remained as he faced his final act of breathing his last on the cross his final words were not a dying wish father into your hands

I commit my spirit it wasn't saying take me will you take me there's no question mark it's a cry of faith and trust and assurance father into your hands I commit my spirit friends we will leave everybody behind only you and the father will remain in that final moment live as you want to die because you are going to die as you have lived he went the whole road he went to that abyss to the destination to collect you to bring you to free you to take you home will we come lastly to the destination thirdly the destination and the last point I want to make about Jesus' statement here on the cross is that the work is now complete not just the work on the cross but the work the father had given him to do you know what the first recorded words of

Jesus are in the new testament we find them in Luke chapter 23:46 Jesus says to Mary and Joseph did you not know that I must be in my father's house that I must be about my father's business and the last recorded words of Jesus while on humiliation here on earth are these father into your hands I commit my spirit all his work all his hopes all his prayers all his desires were caught up in the glory and the blessing of the father father not my will be done but yours the mission has been accomplished he can now return to send us return to home base but you know it's important that we acknowledge that the work is finished that there is not some more hell to endure while his body lay in the grave for three days it has been defeated that is why

Paul can exclaim oh death where is your victory oh grave where is your sting he has been to the lowest Jesus has paid the full price he has paid it all that is why he can say to the converted thief on the cross today you will be with me in paradise not in three days but today Jesus goes from Golgotha to paradise into the arms of a proud and loving father others in the last week or so I was in one of our schools in Firm and I tentatively asked the pupils a question I said where is Jesus it's always risky to ask them anything you never know what might come out but the first response was amazing Jesus was born in the world

Jesus died on the cross Jesus is now with God out of the mouths of children Jesus is now in glory at the right hand of the throne Jesus is at rest God there is a sense in which the creation order from Genesis is echoed here at Calvary God in Genesis made everything in six days and on the seventh day he rested on the seventh day it was finished there is an echo of that pattern in what the Lord says here on the cross these great words that Jesus makes the interpret all that he is doing six words he said or the sixth word he said seven words on the cross the sixth word it registers the fact what did he say it is finished on the sixth day of creation the work was finished but now what we have been looking at this morning is the seventh word of Jesus here the seventh word like the resting of God at creation is the word of great satisfaction it is the word of great contentment it is the word of great rest everything is now done and all that is left to be done is to dismiss his spirit into the caring and loving arms of his father father into your hands he says

[27 : 41] I commit my spirit and when he had said this he breathed his last this remarkable final word of Jesus is a word of faith contentment trust and confidence as he comes now to breathe his last his mother Mary heard his first breath and now she sees him taking his last when God rested from his creating work he surveyed it all and what did he say he said it is very good Jesus now comes to the end of his work and the conclusion oh it is very good Jesus does not often talk about the hands of his father to put it like that but he does in John chapter 10 in connection with his sheep in connection with his children he says no one shall pluck them out of my hands and the father who is greater than all no one shall snatch them out of the father's hand his sheep are in his father's hands and now he the lamb is going into the father's hands

I said he doesn't speak often about the father's hands but he does speak a lot about the hands of men he told his disciples that the hour is coming when the son of man will be handed over into the hands of men in Matthew 17 the hands of men were going to take him in Matthew 26 the hands of sinners were going to take him on the day of Pentecost the wicked hands Peter says would take him and took him and crucified him there is a sense in which Jesus has been here on earth in the hands of men and all the things that the hands of men did to our Jesus incredibly it was the hand of God that gave him into the hands of sinful men it was the hand of God that was raised above the sun it was the will of the Lord to crush him and to cause him to suffer it was the hand of God that was raised above the sun in order to punish him to punish the sin that he bore but my friends no more no more it was now the hands of God which will welcome him home it is now the hands of God that he is crying out for father into your hands

I commit my spirit I know the father's hands are safe hands they are secure hands they are powerful hands they are protecting and they are loving his hands are rock solid after his resurrection you know Jesus in scripture is never seen in the company of sinful men again he was never with those who hated him who wanted to destroy him he is only with his friends no more sinful hands will touch him and Christian lover of the Lord Jesus Christ this is all true of you today too today you are still safe in the hands of our

God no power of hell no scheme of man will ever pluck you from his hands till he returns or calls you home here in the power of Christ I'll stand amen let us pray Lord Lord our God we thank you and we praise you for the safety and the security of the father's hands and as Jesus and the psalmist make that prayer and cry to be in the father's hands that is our prayer and cry this morning again too and so Lord we pray that we would be secure that we would be assured that we are the Lord's children that we are in fellowship and relationship with your

God we ask all of these things in Jesus name amen but we come to see