

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter number 23. We're going to continue here on the way to the cross. Pastor Bo and I brought a cross in this morning because we're going to spend some time surveying the cross in this portion of Scripture.

I don't say this without sincerity. I always feel inadequate when it comes to standing between sharing God's Word with God's people. It's just incredible what God would communicate to us, especially when we come to speaking about the greatest event of all history.

When it comes to the cross, our words seem to be so woefully inadequate. And so we want to make sure we spend our time looking at the picture that is given here, look at the story as it's told to us by God, to survey the cross in a way that will allow us to see what the intended purpose of the Scripture here is for us.

As we meditate on the cross today, as we consider, as we survey the cross, there should be these feelings that would come in our heart. There's a mourning for sin that put Him there.

We'd be mindful of it. My sin put my Savior on the cross. There's a horror of God's dreadful judgment. There's a required price. That's in our story today. It ought to become personal.

[1 : 17] There's a judgment coming for all of us. And there's a gratitude for the great love and the mercy of the Savior. Our heart just ought to be filled with gratitude. So what should have been happening as those young ladies sing that song there, and just those different descriptions of who Jesus Christ is, our heart should be filled with gratitude and awe at the fact that such is the one as He would do such a thing as this for a sinner like you and I.

And so we're going to spend some time surveying the cross and looking at it, looking at the response of different people here in Luke chapter number 23. So verses 26 through 32, I'm going to read here in a moment, that's called the way of the cross as He's leading.

We've already left Herod. We've already lost Pilate. He's already been sentenced to death. And now He's going to Golgotha. He's going to the place of the skull where He will die. And then actual crucifixion will take place in my reading.

Verses 33 through 43. We're going to understand that. It's recorded here and also in Matthew and Mark and in John, spoken about throughout the New Testament, prophesied in the Old Testament, and then all over the pages of every history around it, this event recorded for us by God.

And then that final section, verses 44 through 49, is the actual account of His death and the impact of these events on those that are witnessing a centurion, a crowd, the women who are following Jesus there, and then the women who come from Galilee.

[2 : 44] And so each of the gospel records that we have share different information to us. But in the book of Luke, we have three pieces of information in this story that we don't find in other gospel records.

One is the conversation that Jesus has with these women of Jerusalem, where He looks at them and gives prophecy, also gives them a proverb. Then the conversation, the conversion of the thief on the cross, we will see Him.

And these wonderful words of verse 34, which is, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. So that's the structure. Would you follow along with me? I'm going to read verses 26 through 49.

And then I'm going to pray for us. And as they led Him away, they laid hold upon Him when Simon, a Syrian, coming out of the country, and on Him they laid the cross, that He might bear it after Jesus.

And there followed Him a great company of people and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. And Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

[3 : 48] For behold, the days are coming in, that in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bear, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills cover us.

For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him in the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment and cast lots. And the people stood beholding, and the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ and the chosen of God.

And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. And the superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew, this is the king of the Jews.

And one of the malefactors, which was hanged, reeled on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. And the other answering rebuked Him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

[5 : 03] And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds. But this man has done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was ran in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, in thy hands I commit to my spirit, having said thus. He gave up the ghost.

Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that site, beholding the things which were done, smoked their breasts and returned.

And all of his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things. And we'll do the same thing today. We will stand with them, and we will behold these things.

[6 : 01] I don't know how many years that God would give me on this earth, but I could spend every Sunday in this portion of Scripture and not ever come close to exhausting all that we can see about our Savior.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for this opportunity, this time that has been set aside, Lord, on our calendar, a day, Lord, that's been set aside some 2,000 years ago when those first disciples gathered together to celebrate the resurrection.

And, Lord, it's continued ever since. So, Lord, I am thankful. Thankful for what we know of this story. We thank you for having it preserved and recorded for us so that we could read and see.

Father, I pray that you would help us today as we would survey the cross, as we would look at it from a proper perspective. We would see it as God-fearing people. We would see it as people that know that they're sinners.

We would see it as a perfect Savior upon a cross. We would see it as people that would call out and help from you and that our lives would be forever changed by this personal encounter with seeing the cross.

[7 : 05] In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. The words of Simeon in Luke chapter number 2. I've read to you here in Luke 23 of a man named Simon. We'll speak about him in a little bit.

But in Luke chapter number 2, there's a man named Simeon. And he wanted to live long enough to see Jesus. And God allowed that for him. And so Jesus is brought into the temple there.

And Simeon holds him. He gets the hold, the creator of the universe, in his arms. And it says in Luke chapter number 2, verse number 34, And Simeon blessed him and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be spoken against.

That's a pretty strong statement. A few weeks ago, we had a baby dedication. Could you imagine if I would have taken one of those babies, maybe a little Hudson Vincent and held them, and said, This baby is going to bring the rise and fall and make a division here in our country.

It would have caught your attention. And so Simeon says that about Jesus, who will be the light unto the Gentiles. The one that the Messiah that's been prophesied in the Old Testament.

[8 : 15] In our portion of scripture, in our reading, it doesn't appear that this is true. Because everybody seems to be united against Jesus at this time. We saw last week how Herod and Pilate, they were antagonistic towards each other.

A power struggle between two political leaders. But then when it came, they were in agreement that this Jesus had to die and that they would step back and allow the people to have their will.

We saw Pilate in that struggle of his conscience. He knew that this man was innocent, but he was going to give people what they wanted. And Herod was in agreement. The Roman authorities and the Jewish officials who were frequently at odds with one another, now they're together against.

And so at this portion of the scripture, it doesn't seem that there will be a division. It seems that everybody here has made a decision and they will crucify him. But that is not us, is it?

We are people that have properly surveyed the cross. We are people that have seen it and come to decide that as we meditate upon the teachings of scriptures. We sing songs about it, not just when we meet together, but throughout the week.

[9 : 21] We come together on Sundays and throughout the week and we study about the cross and we have decided that he is the one that Ben said that we want to show our allegiance to, our affections to, and we teach it in the next generation.

It's what's happening in other rooms right now. People are teaching about the significance of the cross, a proper understanding. Lauren's dad, Pastor Tony Howith, when he was in Valdosta many years ago pastoring there, he had a marriage counseling with a couple in his office and things weren't going very well.

And so he got up and left the room, went into the auditorium, picked up the cross that they had, took it back into his office and set it between them. It said, let's look to the cross right here.

And he said, if we would all just look at the cross here and recognize where we're at, it would make a world of difference here in your marriage. And Lauren shared with me this morning that the man in the marriage counseling, he said, can I take this cross home with me?

And he took it home with him when he left. And so any one of you want to take the cross afterwards, you can take it home with you. But just a very literal way of just saying, let's reset our hearts and our minds by looking at what the cross means, what it says about us, what it says about him, what it says about forgiveness and love.

[10 : 37] It's central to everything that we do as God's people, this cross. Galatians chapter number 6:14 says, but God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross. That's strong language. That God forbid language in the Bible, that is strong language that you ought to pay attention to, that I want glory in anything outside of that cross.

And so a very good question, a very simple question that we'd ask is, how do I consider the deep wonders of the cross? How do I make it so that I just glory in that cross?

You know, the Bible speaks of rejoicing and boasting in other things. In Romans 5 too, it talks about the hope of our glory, that we've accessed by faith and rejoice in the hope of glory.

Also, we're told in Romans 5:3 that we should glory in our tribulations because they weren't patience in us. Not just our tribulations, but our weaknesses and our infirmities.

[11 : 41] 2 Corinthians 12:9, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. And in the 1 Thessalonians, we're told that even in other believers, for what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing are not even ye.

So the hope of glory, tribulations, weaknesses, infirmities, other believers, we are told that we can glory in these. So how is this possible? How is it possible that we're not in contradiction here?

And the way that this is possible is that the glory of the cross is the foundation for every good you will ever experience. If you boast in anything at all, you also should be boasting in the cross.

All Christians are sinners and do not deserve anything but judgment. I don't know if I've seen John Horvat here this morning, but me and him had a great moment yesterday underneath the portico during the wedding.

And he was just telling me how special it is, having worked in children's ministry for many years, how to see people like Greg and Grace grow up and get married and he gets invitations, the college graduations, and he just talks about how good God has been to him.

[12 : 52] And his heart is just overflowing and seeing John get emotional makes me get emotional. You know, some people, I'm a social emotional person, all right? If my friend's crying, I'll join you, all right? And just join the party.

And so this moment, and then he said something that was pivotal, that was so important, that explained how his heart could get to that place. And he just said, and we don't deserve any of it.

A heart can be filled to that capacity of gratitude if it doesn't also have the realization we don't deserve any of it. So yesterday, with my good friend Greg, I stood right here and I realized he wasn't deserving of any of this.

I wasn't deserving of any of this. And just overwhelmed with that knowledge. Why do people who don't deserve anything good, who don't deserve to have bad things turn for good, get so many good things, and get all their bad things turned to good for them?

And the answer is, Christ died for us. He died for me. And so we will look at the response of several people over the next several weeks.

[14 : 00] And through the response are varied. They're fundamentally only two different responses to the cross. When you survey the cross, there's fundamentally only two different types of responses that you could have.

On a Sunday afternoon, a young man named Isaac Watts was complaining to his dad and he said that when they sing the psalms in their church, that they don't do it very fervently and he didn't enjoy the song service very much.

So his dad rebuked him and he says, I'd like to see you write something better. And he took the challenge and he went home and did it and they sung his songs that night, which is wonderful.

At a young age, even as of the age of 18, he began writing music and my favorite song, which is, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, was intended originally to be a communion hymn.

It gives us plenty to contemplate about the cross of Christ and is based upon Galatians 6.14, which I've already read, which is, But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

[15 : 06] So he was calling on us to focus our attention on our response to Christ's crucifixion that was for us. And you see it in those words. One verse here, first verse is, Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God.

See Galatians right there in him. And all vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them through his blood. Another verse says, See from his head, in his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.

Did ever such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown? Those two things coming together, love and sorrow, could only be met together at the cross.

What John Horvat was explaining to me yesterday, his heart was filled with gratitude, is all that God's been given us, and we were so undeserving, and those two things came together, and were reconciled together, and were reconciled on that cross.

It's an astonishing statement. The second part of Galatians 6.14 says, By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. And one of the verses that Watts eliminated, that didn't get included, is this line right here.

[16 : 18] He says, the missing verse, it says, His dying crimson, like a robe, spreads over his body on the tree, then I am dead to all the globe, and all the globe is dead to me.

Just, you can have all this world, but give me Jesus. It's another way we communicate that today. And so let's, with our time remaining, let's look at some people, and they're surveying the cross. Verse number 32, And there were also two male factors, led with him to be put to death.

Now there's three crosses there, Jesus will be on the middle one, and there's two men, we don't know where they are at, we know the admission, that they are guilty of a crime, one will say that they're guilty, and Jesus isn't, and recognizing it.

I would suppose that possibly, that third cross would prepare it already, for Barabbas. The things in Jesus' trial, escalated quite quickly. Barabbas should have been put to death, but as we saw last time, as we looked at it, that he was released.

And so there's two other men, that are going to have, an opportunity to see the cross, right there at it. Both of them are suffering the same pain, both of them are guilty of a crime, both of them will see Jesus, and they'll see the sign overhead, written in three languages, that says that he is the king of the Jews.

[17 : 32] They will also be right there, when they hear him say, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. And both of these thieves, desperately want to be saved, from their death.

Same situation, same circumstances, living in the same world, but their view of the cross, is going to be drastically different. Common response, the two thieves represent, two ways of responding, the suffering, and relating to Christ, and the suffering.

The common response, verse 39, if thou be Christ, save thyself, and us. You know, many people do not understand, why Jesus would not save them, from their troubles.

They have no real understanding, of their sin. If the man did, he would not ask Jesus, to remove him from the cross, but he would cry out to the Lord, and he would say, stay here with me. The man would have recognized, the seriousness of his sin, that it was not only on, there in Jerusalem, not only was he guilty, before Herod, or Pilate, or whoever had brought him, to that place, but he was guilty, before the God, of heaven.

So there's two types, of sinners here. So there's a thief, that's no spirit of brokenness, no guilt, no penitence, no humility. He could only see Jesus, as a possible power, by which to escape. He did not see him, as a king, to be followed.

[18 : 49] And so, it leaves us with two options here. Such a, he is such a great, and powerful, loving God, then why am I experiencing, the problems of this world? Say, and then also, there's those who acknowledge, that they are sinners, and they don't deserve, any good thing, and they cry out for mercy, and help, at the time of desperation.

And so the first thing, that we see, about the one who has, properly surveyed the cross, he says in verse 40, But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear of God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

Do you not fear God? What is the beginning of knowledge, that we were taught, in Proverbs? It is the fear of God. Could it be shown, any more clearly here? The man having a proper fear of God, had an understanding, of where he was at.

He had an understanding, of why he was on the cross. He had an understanding, that Jesus Christ, was sinless. Though he was a man, that feared God. There is no understanding, of this cross, the symbol of it, if you are not, a God fearing person.

If you don't recognize, that this world, had a creator, and you are not him. That there is a world, in which there are, laws of nature, and that there is a conscience, that is built, and that you understand, that you have sinned against.

[20 : 02] The beginning of knowledge, is the fear of God. The beginning of salvation, for that man's day, came, when he acknowledged, his fear of God. Verse 41, And we indeed, justly, for we receive, the due reward, of our deeds.

But this man, has done nothing, amiss. That fear of God, leads to acknowledging, that he was a sinner, and that he was, deserving of punishment. We indeed, justly, we deserve this.

This man's done nothing. He's admitting, his guilt. Not just to the people, at the foot of the cross, but to the God, of heaven. He admitted it here. He deserved it. And this is the real test, of humility, before God.

Anger at your circumstances, reveals, that you do not feel, undeserving, before God. You hear people, often say, I just can't, believe that this would happen to you, or this happened to so and so, because they were just, they're just good people, and they just want to do right, and I can't believe, that anything bad, would come to them.

True humility says, that I deserve far worse, than anything that will ever come to me. I deserve far worse, than anything that will come to me. The true test here, of humility before God, is that he deserved, what had come.

[21 : 16] He deserved the consequences, of his sin. He had the same, same understanding, that Job would have had, in Job 121, when he said, naked came I, out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return.

Thither the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name, of the Lord. And he was there, recognizing he deserved, to be upon that cross, that he was there. But if that's where the story, would have stopped, we would have been hopeless.

There would have been no, hope for the hopeless, that was sung about. We would be in just, such a horrible place. Where, what does I, what do I do with that? What can I do with my sin? I deserve to be on this cross.

But verse 41, and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward, but this man, has done nothing, amiss. He didn't make any, to him, it mattered that this man, was innocent.

To the other thief, on the cross, it didn't make any difference, at all, if Jesus was right or wrong, or if he was sinless. Have you ever considered, the great implications, of the fact that Jesus, was sinless? There is no middle ground.

[22 : 16] He was a sinless savior, that died and rose again, and so he must be the king, of your life, or he wasn't. The second man, didn't care. He just knew his circumstances, and he wanted out of them.

And so, the thief, that surveys the cross, appropriately, he recognizes Jesus, as king. Verse 42, and he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me, when thou comest, into thy kingdom.

Who has a kingdom? A king. When he says, remember me, when you go into your kingdom, he is saying, you are the king. The man on the cross, recognized that this man, Jesus, was not like, any other man, that he was absolutely perfect.

And it would have been demonstrated, in the testimony about him, and what people had seen, but this man, in this short amount of time, looking at Jesus, before those that were, persecuting him, where he would say, Father, forgive them.

He said, he knew, this man was not like, any other man. This man is from another kingdom, and he is the king, of it. And he prayed for those, and Jesus prayed for those, that persecuted, the man on the cross, there beside him, said, when you enter, in your kingdom, king, take me with you.

[23 : 20] And he pleads, for help, verse 42, and he said, unto Jesus, Lord, remember me, when thou comest, into the kingdom. Both of the thieves, the one on the right, and the left, they wanted to be saved, from their death, but how differently, they sought for their salvation, only one of them, surveyed Jesus, and the cross, the way that they should have, properly.

And so, what motive, does Jesus give us, to follow in his steps, of this penitent thief? There was two men, upon the cross, but every one of us, in here, have to make that same, type of decision, about Jesus.

Jesus, we've already read it here, but in verses 27, and 28, Jesus is followed, by a great company, of people, that day, that have come, with them. And as they're following them, Jesus is walking, and Simon comes, and we'll talk about that, here in a second, but as he is going, there's a group of women, that are following.

Later on in the passage, there's a group of women, that came from Galilee, that will stay with him, all through this story. That's not the same, group of women. This is a group of women, that had followed this road, many times, as the Roman authorities, had taken people, and crucified them.

They're the ones, that are crying, and they're sad, about the condition, of their people. And as they're following Jesus, as serving in the role, of a professional crier, as they would have had, to show in respect, to this man, that is going to go and die, and as they're behind him, crying and wailing, Jesus, with full knowledge, Jesus who is all wise, and Jesus that is all compassionate, turns and looks at them, and says, don't cry for me, but cry for yourselves.

[24 : 53] Because there's coming a day, where those who don't have children, will be glad, that they don't. Because there's a day, that is coming, a day of judgment. Many weeks ago, we talked about, there'll be something, that happens historically, and 40 years from now, where Jerusalem will be, ransacked, and completely destroyed, but to the end of all ages, there's a day of coming, that is judgment.

For you and I, we are told in Hebrews, that we are told, that it's appointed on the man, once to die, that after this, comes the judgment. And so there's a prophecy, that is happening here, that a judgment is coming.

So there's the prophecy, but the proverb goes like this, and if they do these things, in a green tree, what shall be done, in the dry? You don't have to spend, much time outdoors, to know that trees, trees do not naturally burn, when they are green, but they are highly flammable, when they are dry.

I don't know if I see Zach here, the day when we used to be neighbors, many years ago, I like to collect people's old, Christmas trees, and I like to get old pine trees, and I stacked up like, Jared, like 15 of them one time, in my backyard, and they were really dry.

And I put it on there, and for good measure, I put a little gasoline on it, because that's what all rednecks do, when they have 15 pine trees. You know, I wanted to make sure, that it would take, and I threw a match on that, and my neighbor ran out of his shoes, from the other side of the road, to the backyard, to see what I had blown up this time, all right?

[26 : 12] And the things went, which is a side note, if you have any old Christmas trees, I'm collecting them, all right? Please bring them. It was a sight to see. But you know, the dryness of how it happened. Jesus here, the perfect and innocent, that's how they're treating them.

And the time that he was at, and that's what was happening to him, there's going to be a time, that is coming, a judgment that was appointed unto all men, appointed unto them, and what are you going to do? Recognize.

It's personal. This isn't just about me, Jesus speaking to his women. It's not just about me dying upon a cross. It's about you having judgment that is coming. You coming from the judgment of your sins.

Make it personal. And then lastly here, it became very personal to a man. Verse number 36, And Simon Assyrian, coming out of the country, and on him laid the cross. This story is told in the gospel records, and we don't have a lot of information about Simon.

And I find it interesting, as I study and pray, and say, God, show me, you know, what am I able to learn about Simon here? Every detail of your crucifixion, I want to know about. But Lord, show me here, what you would have, your intended purpose.

[27 : 14] And we're seeing this contrast, between the way the world, and sin treats people, the kindness of our Savior. But it says that he was coming out of the country. And what's important about that, is you need to know that Jesus wasn't part of the, Simon wasn't part of the crowd that was walking with Jesus.

That Jesus is walking towards the cross, and Simon is coming in the other direction. And the authorities there tell him, take that cross today, and help carry it.

He had no choice about it. This also reminds us, that the cross wasn't just a practical tool, to put somebody to death. But it was a means of torture. It's fulfillment of scripture.

But it was also, they wanted to keep him alive. They wanted to keep Jesus alive, to take him to that cross, to inflict that pain upon him. Why not just let him fall down?

So they weren't showing compassion, and they weren't showing mercy. But they were just helping him, get to the cross. And there was Simon, as that was laid upon him. So much could be seen, and spoken about, like every portion, about discipleship here.

[28 : 17] But we see here, that it wasn't just practical, but it was a statement. If the weight was too great, they would provide help, this instrument of torture. And so we have, a historical connection here. Simon, a real historical person, and a real historical moment.

In the book of Mark, we get a little bit more information, about him. We get to find out, what Simon's kids are named. And we find that he has two kids, named Alexander, and Rufus.

And that's such a great name, alright? If you haven't named your kid, you're expecting, consider Rufus, alright? Who hasn't been used in a while. And Rufus, the bear of the cross. And so when Mark speaks about it, who'd been, spent time with Peter, he knows this information, about him, and he knows the man's name.

Which means, there would have been a time, there in the church, they would have said, he's the one, who carried the cross. Isn't that amazing? You can go and talk to him, and ask him, what it was like, in a historical person.

But in the book of Romans, we have a man named Rufus, very likely the same one, who said that, he was a mother, as a mother unto me, as he appears there.

[29 : 22] The influence, it appears, I'm inferring here, that it appears that day, that guy had an unexpected encounter, with the cross, and it changed his family. It seems that his, his sons become, believing people, that are part of a church.

He's an historical man, but he, it becomes personal, to Simon that day. He was just taking a walk, but as he comes upon that walk, they said, you carry that cross. I don't know the story, complete, of Simon's story, about Alexander, and Rufus, and all those things, but I pray that every one of you, have had an encounter, with the cross.

This morning, in our life group today, I said that Luke Littlefield's, childhood was different, because his dad, his family, encountered the cross, before he was born. Some of you in here, your life was different, because somebody, encountered the cross, in your life, and now it's completely different.

And just like Simon, had to survey the cross, up close and personal, you have the same decision, to make in your life, as well. There seems to be, varied responses, but fundamentally, there's only two different, types of responses.

The ones that looks upon the cross, and said, I deserve everything, that I'm giving, and this man is perfect, and I cry out for help. And then there's another one, that just says, how do I get out of this mess, and can you help me, in not recognizing, that they are a sinner.

[30 : 38] And so I would encourage you today, to survey this cross. It warns us, of the judgment to come, as Jesus told those women, as he was walking to it. And look to the example, of the thief, who has properly surveyed the cross.

He feared God. Are you a God-fearing person? Do you recognize, that you were created, to worship him? A God-fearing person. One that acknowledges, that you're a sinner, and deserving, a punishment.

That's what the man, on the cross knew. This man's done nothing, but you and I deserve this. It is just, that we would be here. And in that, he admits that Jesus, is righteous, recognizing that he was the king, and then lastly, he pleads for help.

Do you remember that time, when you surveyed the cross, when it stopped, just being a story for you, it stopped being something else, that meant, a lot to somebody else, but when it became central, to everything that you understand, about this world, do you see it as that way?

Is your heart able, to be filled with gratitude, because of the cross? And if it isn't today, it has to do with the fact, that you like that man, on the cross, don't recognize, that you are deserving, of the judgment, that was coming your way.

[31 : 50] And today, I would encourage you, fear God, acknowledge that you're a sinner, admit that Jesus is righteous, recognize that he is the king, and then plead, for help. Would you mind, bowing your heads, and praying with me, and musicians will come up here, and I speak first of us, to us as believers.

It's Sunday morning, we're a group of believers, that meet here, and as we look upon the cross, there's decisions for us, to consider, as we look back on that day, it being central. I told the story, that was somewhat comical, of a couple, that put the cross, right at the middle, but would you consider, how far out of sight, the cross has been, in your family, or in your marriage, and in your life, and would you bring the cross, right to the middle of it, that recognizing, that you, did not deserve the goodness, and all the goodness, of your life, flows out of the fact, yesterday, we celebrated, the two people were married, but more important, than the fact, that they were married, they had first been forgiven, by the God of heaven, and that because of that, all rejoicing, is possible, boast only in the cross believer, that's what I call upon you, that from scripture of the day, where is your boasting, are you finding it, in lesser things, then reset the day, reset the saying, that the thing that matters, far above everything else, in my life, is my salvation, is that cross, and as believers, are praying there, speaking to the Lord, in your seat, or at an altar,

I speak to those, that are here today, or those that will watch online, or those that may watch, someday in the future, and you've never had, this understanding of the cross, you knew that it was, part of history, you knew that it was, spoken about at church, but you have never come, like Simon, where you just had to face it, and look at it, you've never been like, the men upon the cross, you've never been like, those women, that heard about judgment, you've never made, a personal decision, and in fearing God today, acknowledge that you're a sinner, you have not met, his perfect standard, we have all fallen short, of those, and acknowledge as a sinner, that you need, that man on that middle cross, to live that sinless life, and to die in your place, and that he alone, is the righteous one, he alone, is your king, and plead for help today, ask him, tell him through prayer, with a sincere heart, you recognize your need, of a savior, ask him to forgive you, your sins, recognize, recognize that he is, the rightful place, upon the throne, of your heart, heavenly father,

I thank you for your word, thank you for, us seeing this story, laid out for us, Lord so clearly, I pray that everyone, in here today, comes to a place, of a personal decision, that every believer, in here would decide, that the cross, will be central, to their story, to their decision making, to their home, and Lord I pray, that those in here today, who have never properly, surveyed the cross, that they will, that they will find a place, Lord at the next steps table, that they will, meet with somebody, Lord immediately, the day, and that they will, see the cross, as it is to be seen, we love you Lord, our hearts are filled, with gratitude, and overflowing, you have been, so abundantly good, for us to us Lord, far greater, than we could ever, expect or deserve, and Father we recognize, the day that, naked we came into this world, and Lord naked we could leave, and that there is nothing, we have done Lord, that merit anything, but all that we have, is just from your goodness, because you loved us, and sent your son, to die for us, and we say thank you, in Jesus name I pray,

Amen.