

PP **Seven Sermons from the Cross-The Depth of His Suffering!**
Part 4-Matthew 27:45-46

3/10-11

Illus Imagine somewhere in the universe there is a huge ocean, not filled with water, but with sin

All the sins of all humanity who have ever lived filled it, and today, are still emptying into it
All the lies, theft, adultery, pornography, gluttony, drug abuse, cursing, crime
Floating somewhere in that ocean, as two drops of sin, was the disobedience of Adam and Eve
Just their sin alone had the destructive power of shattering the image of God and bringing death
Just their sin tore apart the peace of creation, producing earthquakes and killer avalanches
And those are just two drops in an unimaginably big ocean of sin, and its entire quantity was poured out onto Jesus Christ that terrible Friday, beginning at noon

We've seen the incredible mercy of Jesus in His first statement and our hearts responded with deep relief and amazement at His mercy

We saw the power of the gospel in his second statement and how could we not be amazed at the ability of our God to save even the worst of sinners

Last week we saw His deep love for His spiritual family, and we were filled with a desire to be with Him walking faithfully

But this week, in His fourth statement, we see the awful spiritual agony that He suffered through as He stood in our place, as a guilty sinner though He was perfectly innocent

The 4th statement that Jesus made from the cross is a cry of pain and anguish!

He knew that His Father had forsaken Him, a word that means abandoned or deserted

This may well be the most profound and deepest mystery in the bible: how the Father could forsake His Son who bore our sins

No one has sounded these depths and found the bottom, no one

"God forsaking God, no man can understand that!" Martin Luther

And I am certainly not the exception, so we approach this statement carefully

PP 1-This was a personal cry

Every year on the 10th of Nisan, 4 days before the Passover, fathers all over Israel selected their lamb that would be sacrificed for his family's sins and their Passover meal

Nothing less than a perfect lamb could or would be chosen

And each father would take that chosen lamb and bring it into the home, to be with his family

His children would play with it as a pet, he would often walk with it on his shoulders

Four days they would connect to this little lamb personally, so that when it was killed for their sins, they would grieve and experience sorrow that their sin caused its death

Yet never was there a personal connection like that between God the Father and His spotless Lamb of God, His Son Jesus Christ

It is this relationship that we are drawn to in the cry of anguish from Jesus: ***"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"***

And for the *first time in all the gospels*, Jesus addressed His Father as ***'God'***

It's amazing and sad what some will do when they get into this deep mystery

Some have taught that the human person Jesus became divine at His baptism, and that the divine

nature left and returned to heaven while He was on the cross
His cry of forsaken pain then was the human part of Jesus mourning the loss of the divine
Others explain that the Father could no longer bear the sight of His Son's suffering, and He
turned away from His Son in revulsion
Still others insist that the Father could never forsake the Son, that Jesus only felt forsaken,
primarily that He could then sympathize with us better as our High Priest
Yet if He was not truly forsaken then no atonement occurred because forsakenness was the
penalty for sin that God established in the Old Testament for sin
And Jesus never ceased to be fully man and fully God
He was the Son of God, crying out to His Father, in what we see was a pain-filled cry

PP 2-This was a pain-filled cry

PP (Exodus 2:23-25) Do you remember the plight that the people of Israel in Egypt?
They cried out for help and God heard, remembered, He saw and knew, and He acted
Then they were trapped and afraid at the Red Sea with the armies of Pharaoh pursuing them, and
they cried out to the Lord, and again the Lord powerfully saved them
All through the Old Testament, God heard and responded to the cries of His people

Illus Last year, Denise and 3 of our kids slept outside the house in our camper, while Andrew,
our then-5 year old who wasn't feeling well, slept in the house with me
As strong storm passed through in the middle of the night
And at one point, during that cacophony of noise and flashing lights, Andy woke up enough to
reach out his hand until he found me, and with that assurance, fell back asleep
Yet, on the cross, Jesus reached out to His Father, but His hand could not find Him

***“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And
about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice” Matthew 27:45-46a***

Our new day begins one second after midnight, but for Galilean Jews, it began at sun up, 6am
So at the sixth hour, noon, ***‘there was darkness over all the land’***

PP The Old Testament spoke of it hundreds of years before this day: ***“And on that day,”
declares the Lord God, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in
broad daylight...I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like
a bitter day.” Amos 8:9-10***

Some have explained this as an eclipse but the Passover was celebrated at the full moon, and not
only can an eclipse not happen at a full moon, they only last for a few minutes
Darkness in Scripture is consistently a symbol of divine judgment
This darkness was the judgment of God being poured out on His Son, the sin bearer
For three hours, noon until this moment just before 3 pm, God was doing what the fathers would
do with that lamb they had selected
As the fathers stood before the priests, and at his signal, they would lay their hands upon the
heads of their little lambs, symbolically transmitting their families' sins onto that
innocent animal
For three hours, the Holy Father poured out His wrath and that ocean of sin onto the soul of His
Son
Jesus, the innocent One, took our guilt upon Himself!

On that darkened Friday, the unbroken, perfect, and eternal fellowship between Father and Son,
was broken for the first time ever, because of our sins
This was what Jesus had seen in that cup just hours before when He was in the garden

It wasn't the pain of crucifixion, the horrors of being nailed alive to a cross and unable to
breathe, that made him cry out to His Father for deliverance
Thousands of Christians have been crucified and killed in unspeakable ways
The Roman Emperor Nero would crucify Christians upside down, cover them in tar and set them
on fire to light his gardens for his parties
Repeatedly we have witnesses who spoke of the boldness of Christians as they faced death
Are we to believe that they met such cruel death with unspeakable joy while the Captain of their
souls cowered in a garden, fearing the same torture?
What He shrank from in that garden was wrath of His Father as that ocean of sin was poured out
on Him

PP 3-This was a prophetic cry

Haven't you ever been curious as to why this statement is in the form of a question?
Why didn't Jesus cry out, "***My God, My God, You have forsaken Me!***"
Does Jesus not know why God had forsaken Him, is He struggling with doubt
Yet this was a cry of distress, but not distrust as the pronouns insist, "***My God, My God***"
But to the Jews listening, Jesus was doing something incredibly important in what He said

In Christ's day, the Old Testament wasn't laid out in numbered chapters and verses
When a rabbi taught, he didn't tell his listeners to turn to a passage, he would recite the first lines
of the text, and his hearers would then think on the familiar passage it introduced
The cry of Jesus was actually the first verse of Psalm 22, written 1,000 years before Christ,
by David, who gives an astonishing prophecy of the crucifixion of the Son of God
Here are some excerpts from Psalm 22,

PP "***But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"*** Psalm 22:6-8

PP "***I am poured out like water...my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws...a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and 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."*** Psalm 22:14-18

And it all begins with verse 1, "***My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***"
Jesus, in the midst of anguish, is saying, *I am the fulfillment of David's Psalm, I am the Messiah, the redeemer you have been waiting for*
It was a prophetic cry

PP 4-Finally, this was a cry of punishment

Parents, imagine your little boy or girl playing and falling down scraping his or her knees

And as your child tearfully looks to you, you walk away

PP Multiply that by infinity and you have cosmic impact of these words, ***“Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him”*** **Isaiah 53:10**

The Father found no gleeful pleasure in pouring out His wrath onto His Son and turning away
No other means had the power to put away sin, only the death of the perfect Lamb of God
And it moves us again to Psalm 22, to find the answer to the questioning cry of pain of Jesus
David answered this question for us and it is found in verse 3, it’s because, ***“You are holy”***
God’s holiness and purity moved Him to forsake His sin-bearing Son

We need to know what the holiness of God is, but not so much by definition, by demonstration
As you try and define holiness, you tend to reduce it and strip of its power
It’s defined as the sinless perfection of God, His separateness from sin, His devotion to His own
honor and glory

But hearing me say that, well does it really fill your heart with awe and worship for God?
Likely not, which is the reason the Scriptures doesn’t seem to give a neat definition of holiness
What it does give is picture after picture of the human response to God’s holiness

Moses was to take his shoes off before the burning bush because he was standing on holy ground
Israel was to bury their excrement because their holy God walked in the midst of their camp
Whatever symbolized filth was to be put away, or God would not be present
And nothing was as filthy to God as sin

God is so holy that no human being can look on Him and live

Even the Seraphim, powerful angelic beings who preside near God’s throne, had to cover their
faces with their wings, God’s holiness is so glorious

In Him is pure light with no stain or darkness

PP A glimpse of God made Abraham cry out ***‘I am but dust and ashes.’*** **Genesis 18:27**

PP A glimpse moved **Job** to confess ***“I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”*** **42:6**

PP **Isaiah** had a vision of the Holy God on His throne and he said ***“Woe is me! For I am a man of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”*** **6:5**

PP **Daniel**, who saw a vision of God, said ***‘no strength was left in me.’*** **10:8**

Over and over God’s holiness is unimaginably overwhelming and absolutely incompatible with
anything or anyone morally unclean

PP ***“You Who are of purer eyes than to see evil, and cannot look on wrong...”*** **Hab 1:13**

The face of God, His eyes too pure to look on the sin-bearing Son, turned away!

God’s too holy to bless sin and when that ocean of guilt was poured onto Jesus, God turned away

PP (**Numbers 6:24-26**) The Jews understood that God’s blessings meant that His face was
turned toward is people

The opposite of blessed was cursed, when the Lord would turn His face away and bring His
judgment

PP Murderous Cain said to God when he received judgment: ***‘from your face I shall be hidden’***
Genesis 4:14

PP And now on that Friday afternoon, Jesus Christ became the sin-bearer: ***“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”*** **Galatians 3:13**

God had poured out the ocean of the filth of our sins upon Him, and His holy eyes looked away,
and the darkness of His judgment fell, as Luke wrote, ***“the sun’s light failed”***

And the darkness did not come to hide Jesus from the eyes of those there looking on
It was to hide the sin-bearing Son from the eyes of His Father Who could not look on Him
His heavenly Father turned away from His Son, Who had become curse

“My God, My God. Why have You forsaken Me?” was a hellish cry because Jesus experienced
the full fury and pain of hell, that God-forsaken, cursed place
The worst thing about hell is not the eternal fiery pain and darkness
Infinitely worse is that it is an eternally God-forsaken place, a cursed place forever

Friends, Jesus was forsaken that you might never be forsaken.
He was abandoned that you might never be abandoned.
He was deserted that you might never be deserted.
He was forgotten that you might never be forgotten.
He experienced hell for you so you wouldn't
That is the love that God for His children!

You know, Jesus and David weren't the only ones who cried out in forsaken pain

PP The people of Israel, when suffering severe discipline of God for their sins said: ***“The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.”*** Isaiah 49:14

PP And God, actually Jesus, the Son of God, the LORD answered their cry: ***“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;”*** Isaiah 49:14-16

That great awful ocean of sin was poured out on the Son and for three hours He experienced the agonies of hell, but as He died, He called out ***“with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”*** 23:46

No longer ***“My God”***, but ***“Father”***

Jesus died not in forsaken pain, but in His Father's loving hands

The Father turned His face away from His Son, but He did not forget Him

And neither will God forget us, for He engraved us on His palms, referring to crucifixion scars

PP (slide of 4 main points) He was forsaken, so that we would never be

Pray