**20200322\_WhyHaveYouForsakenMe**

**Mark Willey:** We're going to look at Matthew chapter 27 verses 45 and 46 and here's what we read from noon until three in the afternoon, darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice. Eli, Eli Lamesa Bhakti NA, which means, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Let's pray.

Well, it'll, we gathered this morning and we thank you for drawing aside the curtain and allowing us to enter into this astonishing interplay between deity. We hear your son speaking from the very depths of his soul to you. God, I pray that you would be our teacher. Draw us in to this experience. Lord, may we learn from it may we'd be just awestruck with what's going on here.

As Jesus expresses these words and even more awestruck with the significance that these words are in our own lives. Teachers. To that end, father, I pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're looking at the seven last statements of Jesus in these weeks. We saw the first statement that Jesus made on the cross, and there were three statements that he made that occurred in the first three hours on the cross.

The first of those was father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing. The second statement was today, as he addressed the criminal on the cross, today you will be with me in paradise. Last week, Michael chance presented to us. Great message on the third one, woman, behold your son, son. Behold your mother.

Three hours have now been accomplished on the cross. And now we're into a second group of three hours from 12 to three in the afternoon. We're at the very end of that time. It's been a silent, solemn, uh. All inspiring situation there at the cross. Now Jesus expresses the first of four statements he will make.

These statements will be my ma, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The second one, or actually the fifth statement will be I thirst. That will be followed by it is finished and then. Father into your hands. I commit my spirit. Darkness has spread over the earth, sovereignly by God illustrating and expressing the solidness of this moment and these moments.

My God, my God, what? Why have you forsaken me? What do these words tell us about Jesus as he expresses them. And then secondly, we're going to look in more briefly. We're going to look at what do these words tell us about ourselves first we find that what it tells us about Jesus is that Jesus really was forsaken.

The word used it to translate it here, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Is used in second Timothy four 10 Paul writes about it and Paul says this, Demas Demas because he loved this world has. Deserted me. It's the same word has deserted me and has gone to Thessaloniki. Now, why in the world would God the father, desert Jesus, forsake him, abandoned him, turn his back on Jesus all which are terms which are appropriate translations of this word in the original, and we need to understand what the cross was all about in order to understand the significance of this statement.

That God, the father has deserted, forsaken, turned his back on the son. Jesus was there as a substitute for others. As you look at the scriptures, you find passages like Romans chapter six verse 23 where it talks about our sin and it says this, for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The death that is referred to their enrollments. Chapter six that is a consequence of sin is any eternal death because the comparison is the eternal life that is provided for us. This death is as all expressions of death in the scripture. Best understood death in biblical terminology actually means separation.

If I dropped dead here on the stage, what has actually happened is my immaterial part, my soul spirit has separated from my material part, my, my body, my earth suit, if you will. That's a physical death is, that's why he says, we say when they died, they gave up the ghost. They gave up the spirit, literally the immaterial apart.

The real part of who we are leaves our body spiritual death. Is also separation. It is our spirit being separated from God. It is a disconnect that there is disconnection in our relationship, in the vertical relationship and the state of being separated from God is called being spiritually dead. That is a state that will go on eternally if something doesn't take place, and that is why it says.

We will experience eternal death, eternal disconnect, eternal separation, be separated from God forever. And what hell is, is simply the place of separation. Hell is where God has forsaken, has abandoned people to their own choices, their own sin. He will not restrain it there. He will not. He has turned from it.

Hell is where God turns his back on sinners and gives them control of their own lives forever. You might say that sounds pretty good. Not really, because it means there will never be any other restraint to sin. There will never be restraint to ourself absorption to our self centeredness, ours, and everybody else's.

But what we're told is that so hell is where God has abandoned people. To their their own desires. He has turned them over to their sins forever. Hell is simply the place where that takes place. Hell is review re is reserved then for those who have refused to say yes to God in this world. CS Lewis says it beautifully.

I think as he says it this way, in his book, mere Christianity in the end, there are only two kinds of people in this world. Those who say to God. Thy will be done, and those to whom God says, in the end, thy will be done. Jesus came to rescue people from that destiny. He came to rescue people from a state of eternal abandonment or separation from God.

He came to be a substitute for them. He came to take their place. He bore the guilt of their sin. Literally, that's what the scripture says, that that, that our sins were nailed upon him on the cross, and that when he did that, he bore then the penalty for that sin. What Jesus was doing on the cross was bearing.

Eternal separation from God. And you might say, wait a minute. Okay. I'm sort of tracking with you, Mark this idea that, that Jesus came as a substitute, that he bore our punishment for sin, but his time on the cross was like, what, six hours? And, and it seems like the latter part is when this, this separation take place, but you said he's, he's paying any terminal.

Dad and eternal punishment. I mean, how can I do that in a, in a, in a measurable amount of time on the cross because of who he is. Jesus Christ is a man, but Jesus Christ is God. He is the God man. He is the eternal being that is able to pay an eternal penalty to experience any eternal separation and the expanse of that.

In a way no other human being can do. No human being could. God pays an eternal punishment in the person of the son. He bears eternal forsaking. If he bears eternal abandonment and he does it for others, God the father literally Forsa and abandoned Jesus. He was separated from him for the only time in all of the epics of world and and cosmic history.

Jesus really was forsaken by the father on the cross and he did it for others. Secondly, Jesus was expressing a emotional pain. Not seeking an answer. One of the most puzzling theological questions about the whole experience of the cross is this statement that Jesus makes. Jesus says this, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

I mean, was Jesus caught off guard by this thing? How does that reconcile with statements like John chapter 18 verse four where it says this and it's early in the passion account, it says, Jesus, knowing. All that was going to happen to him. How do we reconcile this question of Jesus? Why are you forsaking me with the fact that Jesus knew everything that was gonna happen?

He knew the whole thing. It even says he in Hebrews, it says he endured the cross despising the chain for the joy that was set before him. He knew what was coming afterwards. So what does he say? Father, why are you forsaking me. Let me try to illustrate it, and this is a, a pretty simplistic illustration, but a couple of years ago, Marian and I took a vacation.

Uh, we're on our way to Michigan and we stopped for a couple of days at Lake George, New York, and we went parasailing. Now I'm a big roller coaster guy. I, I've never met a roller coaster that I didn't want to do. The bigger, the better, the bigger the drop, the better. But. At amusement parts. They also have another ride that is called the swings.

I don't know if you've ever done with Cedar point. It has one that's 300 feet off the ground where you're just literally in a swing. And as something about for me, a roller coaster car, I'm in a car, I got a wall, I got my little box and it feels great. But when I'm in swings and my feet are swinging, some of you right now are just getting sick in your stomach and even imagining, cause you're like me.

All of my fear of Heights just kicks in and I, and so I knew parasailing was going to be the same experience. It was going to be an experience where your feet are swinging you, you don't really, and I looked at them, I'd watch people doing them. And of course you're attached, uh, to this, this parachute, the bolt pulls you in.

The two of us would be up there. And so I lined up parasailing for Marion and I, and. We got up there and Marion sweeter feeder swinging. She's chattering away about the beauty, how wonderful this is, and I am literally holding onto the wires with a death grip. I can hardly even turn one way or another.

I'm just let it in, let it in. Now, there was a very significant part of me that was saying while I was up there, why. Did I do this now? I knew why I did it. I know exactly why I did it. Here were my reasons because I love the thought of seeing the beauty of Lake George from an aerial view because it was a great thing for us to do together.

I did it because I knew Marion would love it, and quite frankly, I partly did it because it sounds cool to say I did it. I knew all those things. I had all my reasons. I knew why I was doing this. But I still was out there with that emotional response. Why would I do this? This is, this is I believe Jesus Christ is not asking a theological question.

Jesus knows how this will end. He's not looking for for new data. He knows victory will come, but his agony and suffering are real. He is crying out a cry of agony, not theological curiosity. It says, he shouted with a loud voice. and he says these words, Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani NA. We note that this statement is the only statement that is recorded in two gospels, not one.

And it is the only statement that actually of these where Jesus, where they give not only Jesus' words in one language, but then they translate it for us. What's going on here. Well, the statement that Jesus speaks, Eli, Eli Lama, Suboxone, I is actually in Aramaic. Want to tell you about the three languages is going on and why I believe this is recorded the way it is.

First of all, there was the Hebrew language, which only was spoken by the Jews, and it was not a language that they, they typically use to speak to one another. It was the language of the scriptures. It was the language that the priest would know. A teacher would be proficient in Hebrew, but it was not the day to day common language of people in Jesus' day, even among the Jews.

Secondly, there was Greek that was spoken, and this was the trade language. This was the language of commerce. Uh, this would become more and more prominent in Palestine. And actually in the next few decades, it would be some become so prominent that when they actually put down the new Testament, they put it in, in Greek.

They translated all of the, uh, Hebrew and, um, Aramaic scriptures. They put them into Greek. Paul wrote his letters to the church at role in the church at Ephesus, the church of Colossi and so forth. He wrote those in grief because he was writing to Greeks, but the gospels were expressing people and quoting people in their common language, which was called Aramaic.

Aramaic was the language that the Jews talked with each other in the first century. Aramaic was the language that Jesus grew up with in his hometown of, uh. Uh, up North in Nazareth, Jesus, uh, spoke this language. He heard it in his home. It was the language of his soul. When you talk to missionaries or anybody that's been overseas, it said a second language.

They talk about how they know they finally embraced the, the foreign language or a new language to them because they start dreaming in that language as well. Jesus dreamed in Aramaic, this was his heart and soul language. So why did Matthew recur record these words of Jesus in Aramaic? Because this is the moment of soul agony for Jesus.

And when the book of Matthew was recorded into Greek, they kept this expression. They wanted to say, this is what Jesus sounded like. Eli Eli Lama, Suboxone. It was the very guttural heart, soul expression. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This was a moment of astonishing emotional anguish for Christ, and it's this of Matthew and Mark, and they both did the same thing.

They said, as we're writing our letters now in, in Greek, to you. We're giving the original expression of Jesus . He actually said these words cause we want you to hear him in his own heart language. We want you to hear the gut level emotional expression of Jesus soul. The third thing we find about what this statement meant to Jesus is that Jesus was fulfilling scripture and a God designed plan of salvation.

If you hear the words in verse in this passage in verse 46 where Jesus is making this statement, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He's quoting Psalm 22 here's the first verse. Psalm 22 my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me so far from my cries of anguish? As you'd go through the remainder of Psalm 22 you find that it is a script for Jesus.

Last hours, verse seven said, all who seek me, mock me. They wag their heads, literally meant they just look at you the side of be like this and they're looking at Jesus and this was him.

I don't know if you've ever spoken somewhere. I have where you actually had somebody in the first or second row that's actually doing that too. It's very unsettling, uh, because it's, it's a way of mocking. It's somebody just gone, what an idiot. What a fool. And it says in the gospels that when they actually says they were wagging their heads at them, they made statements like this.

You said you would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Come down from there. All of that was fulfillment of Psalm 22 it says in verse 16 of Psalm 22 the have pierced my hands and feet. He was nailed to the cross by hands and by feet. and Psalms 22 verse 18 they cast lots for my clothing, which of course the Roman soldiers did everything that Jesus is doing on the cross.

Was planned in eternity past and the script was written down a thousand years before in the book of Psalms, Psalm 22 Jesus is fulfilling that even as he says this statement, the first verse of Psalm 22 my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Okay, what do these words tell us about ourselves. The first thing they tell us about ourselves is that Jesus was forsaken, so we would that he would know our pain.

Hebrews four verse 14 verse 15 and 16 says this, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

All of you who feel rejected, forgotten, deserted, and are bearing the utter aloneness of that

and count on this reality. Jesus knows how it feels. Jesus knows. And part of what Hebrews is saying is all the things that Jesus went through, including this moment of absolute aloneness, of this sense of, of the one he loved most, who had been loved for eternity, has actually literally turned his back on him.

And he did it for you. But there's a bigger reason Jesus was forsaken so that you would not be. There's a famous book by Charles Dickens titled the tale of two cities. It's a story of a guy named Charles Darnay. Charles Darnay was, um, an immigrant from France to, uh, England, but East end, he was visiting France and later in his life he was a beloved father.

Husband. But he was, uh, betrayed. It was treachery and he was sentenced to the guillotine. And in the story of this, another guy named Sidney carton, Sidney carton was a look alike. Um, just happened to be that way. They didn't know each other really. Sidney carton was a lookalike of Charles Darnay, and he was a lawyer, and he's sort of a devout guy, and yet he, he, he loved the family.

He was concerned for them. He was particularly concerned for Charles Darnay, his wife. And so he went into the prison where Darnay was waiting to biggie and T and the next day took, um, a handkerchief with some narcotic on it. Uh, that drug that, that IX fixated. He fainted, he got him taken out, he switched places, and the next day, uh, Sidney carton died in the place of Charles Darnay.

And that's where the famous statement, it's a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done. It's a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known. That's what he quoted as he was facing the guillotine. What happened on the cross was Jesus Christ experienced being forsaken, deserted, abandoned, his back, turned to him from his father that you would never have to experience that.

Now, this is profoundly true in an eternal sense. It is what enables us to count on heaven because we have experienced life in the place of death because Jesus experienced that eternal death for us. But it is also true in day to day experience. With this. I'm going to wrap up. There are two particular examples of this in the scripture.

This sense of. Not being abandoned because of what Jesus has done. Paul says it is true when facing hardship. Paul uses this very word to describe what he experiences in the face of suffering and afflictions. In second Corinthians chapter four verse eight and nine where he says, we are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed.

Perplexed. But not in despair. Persecuted, but not abandoned. Struck down, but not destroyed. Persecuted, but not abandoned. The word persecuted is literally the word to be pursued, to, to be hounded. Whether it is by slander of someone, whether it's direct attacks, when you are persecuted, when you are pursued, when you are hounded.

It is an incredibly lonely place to be. No one understands it. If they're not the target of it. You can feel extraordinarily alone, but you are not abandoned, not abandoned. You will never need to say, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Because. He will not foresee even in those times when you feel totally alone, but no one else understands, could possibly comprehend what you're going through.

Persecuted but not abandoned. The second practical application is Christians in the first century when facing financial fears and other threatening fears. Their world was turned upside down. It was a fearful, unsettling time. It sounds very relevant to them. These believers that are addressed in Hebrews 13 in the book of Hebrews, these were Christians that were being hounded, that were in fear, that were worried about their finances.

Here's what he rues 13 verse five and six says. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God has said, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. So we can say with confidence, the Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. God never desserts his children.

He abandoned Jesus once that you would never have to be abandoned in this life or in the life to come this morning I'm going to pray and after that I'm going to extinguish another of the candles. These candles represent. The statements of Jesus as we finish each one and today we're finishing the fourth, but they also express the life of Jesus.

And as I extinguish that candle, it is saying more of Jesus. Life is going. He is expiring a little more. And in this moment of his expiring, he reminds us that he chose to be abandoned. You would never have to be Lord, how we love you. It's you are with us in our season of trouble it because of what Jesus did on the cross and the awfulness of that, that moment

did even in the confusion and the darkness and the scariness of this time in our homes, in our. Our towns in our nation, in our world,

we are never abandoned. We are never deserted by the God who knows us and loves us because Jesus was abandoned for us. Lord, how are we love you for it? In Jesus name. Amen.