

“Forsaken by God”
Mark 15:33-39
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This week we continue our mini-series on the 7 last sayings of Christ in preparation for the celebration of the high-point of human history: Easter.

It’s interesting – we love to celebrate winning. This week, we celebrate losing.

This week we turn to Mark 15 where we find a plea that is as remarkable as it is sobering.

My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me?

*This inquiry is recorded in the gospel of Matthew and is found earlier in Psalm 22. I chose the Mark 15 text over Matthew’s account only because it was shorter, but we will end up turning to Psalm 22 occasionally so it wouldn’t hurt to have your Bibles open in both places.

Uttered in Jesus’ darkest hour, these words tell us a lot about Christ, the character of God, and the purpose of the cross.

This morning I want Christ to be exalted in our midst. I want us to hear and see the love and glory of Jesus as he speaks these words. God is inviting us to encounter his awesome fury against sin and the unmitigated loyalty of his only Son who willingly accepted the worst kind of suffering in order to bring you-and-me-type sinners to himself.

This morning I want these words to resonate in our souls because they disclose 3 earth-shattering, death-defeating, love-triumphing truths that – if you let them, will completely change your life.

1. [The judgment on Christ]

- Most immediately apparent feature
- Apex of judgment not physical/emotional suffering, but spiritual suffering: being forsaken by God
 - Adam & Eve’s curse – being cut off from life
 - **Sin: treason against God**
 - Here Jesus dies *for* God. It was God’s anger and God’s wrath towards sin that Jesus satisfies
- Ps. 22 *(foretelling vs. pattern fulfillment):
 - Like David in Ps. 22, Jesus *felt* [not actually, however] forsaken by God (Ps. 37:25)
 - *I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken*
 - Unlike David, Jesus *actually* was forsaken by God (Is. 53:10)
 - *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt...*
 - Fortunately for both: this was *a* last word; not *the* last word (21b)
 - *I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you*
- Jesus was truly forsaken *and* God was still God (the trinity remained unbroken)
 - How? A mystery

- See Luke 2:52 “And Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, favor”
- Can you possibly imagine being cut off from and forsaken by God?
 - God is the source of all good things; God is light and in him there is no darkness at all
 - Hell is the *eternal* absence of all things good
 - If God didn’t spare his own Son when sin rested on him, what hope do you have if your sins remain on you?
 - Is that an eternity you want for yourself? For your family, friends, co-workers, etc?

Do you hear, do you see holy perfection of the Father and his hatred towards sin? Do you hear, do you see the righteous judgment on Christ for sin?

2. [The devotion of Christ]

However severe God’s judgment for sin might have been, however great the Father’s plan for a supremely satisfying sacrifice, none of it would have made any difference if it weren’t for a perfectly obedient Son.

- Christ’s devotion is demonstrated here in two ways:
 - Loyalty to the Father
 - “My God” – God was still *his* God, no matter the (worst) circumstance
 - “...*you* [have] forsaken me” – His circumstance he attributes to God’s hand
 - *man* did a work (Acts 2:23)
 - *Satan* did a work (Gen. 3:16)

- *Ultimately* God did the work
 - He *could* have (had the power to) act in a very human, self-preserving way – but didn’t!
 - “Let this cup pass... not my will but yours be done” – Here he acts on these words
 - Forsaken by the Father, Jesus didn’t forsake God – how about you?
- Love for his bride (the church)
 - Willingly embraced sin
 - Willingly embraced the Father’s fury
 - This is true love:
 - “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13)
 - “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1c)
- Christ is a *better* David (Ps. 22)
 - Background: David saw some hard times (Saul, Absalom) – and David remained loyal in most of them, trusting in God’s covenant promises (2 Sam. 7)
 - David was loyal in *some* circumstances, sinning with Bathsheba, becoming a disobedient covenant partner
 - Jesus remained loyal in *all* circumstances – even unto death!
 - “Though he slay me, yet I will trust Him” (Job 13:15)

3. [Our acceptance through Christ]

Christ's loyalty to God's plan out of a love for God's people secured the way for our acceptance into God's family.

- The Father forsook the Son to accept us
 - "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" (Gal. 3:13)
 - "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21)
- We are accepted as *family*!
 - "He predestined us for adoption as *sons* through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:5)
 - *Not* because of our work but Jesus'
 - "Christ also suffered once for sins, the Righteous for the unrighteous that he might *bring us to God*" (1 Peter 3:18)
- You may feel as David felt, but if you love Jesus, you will never know what Jesus knew the moment he uttered, "why have you forsaken me?"
 - Whatever trial; whatever hardship – you will never be forsaken by God!
 - "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but *not forsaken*; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Cor. 4:8-9)
- THIS truth [Our acceptance through Christ] frees us in two ways:

1. We are free to forsake our sin and the things of this world for the sake of holiness

- a. Being accepted by God is the *only* thing that really matters
- b. Being accepted by God = being *in Christ*
- c. Be who you are (in Christ) and work out your salvation. Be conformed to the image of Christ – no matter the cost!
- d. **Sin:** "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Rom. 8:13)
- e. **The world:** "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

2. We are free to be forsaken by the people of this world for the sake of the gospel

- a. "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26)
- b. "Indeed all who desire to lead a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (1 Tim. 3:12).

- c. “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28)

Concluding application:

- Does the wrath of God remain on you today? Could you bear it? If God didn't spare his own Son when sin rested on him, what hope do you have if your sins remain on you?
- Marvel at the devotion and loyal love of Jesus!
 - *Always* loyal to the Father in *every* circumstance – even unto true death
 - In *all* things loving his bride, the church (you and me)!
- Give thanks for the gift of permanent and total acceptance we can enjoy through Jesus leading to...
 - Forsaking the things of this world unto holiness
 - Being forsaken by this world for the gospel

- What is one thing you need to start or stop doing in light of these truths?
- Who is at least one other person that needs to know about the fierce judgment upon Christ, the loyal love of Christ, or the incomprehensible joy of being accepted through Christ? Pray for and reach out to them.