

CRIES FROM THE CROSS

A Journey into the heart of Jesus.

3. A Cry of Anguish

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me"- Mt. 27:46

In fact, the loneliness of Jesus began from the entry into Gethsemane, His close associates fell asleep knowing nothing about the passion of their Master. The ties of the chords of the Earth were broken and now at the cross His Father forsook Him (turned His face from His Son). At Golgotha His love burst upon the world with definite clarity and brilliance, here at last we believe that there was a genuine meeting between God and Man. **At the cross, the gravity of God's holiness and boundless love collided, and with a cry of anguish, we were redeemed. Here is sin with all its horror and grace, with all its wonder.** The first three cries of the cross were uttered in day light. But now nature blanketed the suffering of its creator with darkness. And He cried, ***"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me"?***

- 1. It was a cry of Separation (Loneliness):** "Why have you forsaken Me?". Forsaken. It is a powerful word. The hiding of His Father's face was the most bitter sip of the cup of sorrow He chose to drink it. Being forsaken by God is horrible and literally going through hellish experience. Habakkuk declared of God, "Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil, and Thou canst not look on wickedness with favour" (Hab. 1:13). The Father forsook the Son because the Son took upon Himself "our transgressions, our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5). Jesus "was delivered up because of our transgression" (Rom. 4:25) and "died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3). He "who knew no sin [became] sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5:21) and became "a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross" (1 Pet. 2:24), "died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3:18), and became "the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). It was the will of God to crush Him; He has put him to grief (Is.53:10), but imagine of an angry God exacting every ounce of payment from a submissive Christ.
- 2. It was a cry of Suffering:** The Father forsook His Son and the Son suffer, **Because His Holiness requires it.** Nahum asked a question, "who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces, by him" (Nah.1:6). **Only Jesus could withstand the indignation of the father.** At this moment, the Father did not seem to be acting like a father. The suffering of the Son was intolerable enough, but to endure it without the father's presence magnified the horror. These are the words of unquenchable anguish; this mark the climax of His sufferings. **The suffering in the hands of men is over and He endured silently, but when the Father turned His face, He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me"?**

3. **It was a cry Un-answered:** “*why have you forsaken Me*”, the cry of the Lord was a question which was un-answered. Who can answer? Can angels in heaven answer? Can any Man on earth answer? Even the Father was silent, when all prayed, He answered, but His Son cried out at the misery of His life, He was silent. Someone said, how wonder it could be if silence was given speech. This cry exemplifies the irrevocable righteous judgement of God upon the Sin, in fact we all suppose to cry this cry in hell for eternity, because He cried once for all, we need not cry forever. For a moment the father left the hand of His Son, as a result we are blessed with a promise from the Father saying, “I will never leave you nor forsake you”. And finally God did a work by exhibiting His justice and love by His wrath was poured out on His Son. If God is to bless us, He must turn His back upon Himself. Surely, we must approach the cross with wonder.

The Wonder of the darkness: According to Jewish custom, a new day begin at 6:00 in the morning. So when we read that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, we understand this to be at 9:00 am. So for three hours He hung in the morning sunlight. But then at the sixth hour, that is at midday, darkness spread over the land (Mt.27:45). Why night, at noon? Darkness is always associated with the Judgement of God for great sin. In those hours of darkness, Jesus became legally guilt of our sin, and for that He was Judged. How appropriate that when the sinless one was “made sin for us.” The event was veiled from human eyes. Recall that, in Egypt, the last plague before the Passover was a “darkness that can be felt” (Exd.10:21). Now, just before this Passover lamb was slain, darkness covered the world like a blanket. Only when He died light return.

The Wonder of the Question: what a contrast with His previous experience with the Father! In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus has a God who strengthens Him; on the cross He has a God who turns away from Him. In Gethsemane, He can call twelve legions of angels who would have been quick to deliver Him; on the cross, He cries to God, who refuses deliverance. Previously, He said the Father ha not left Him alone; now, the Father has turned his face. In Gethsemane, the Son was tempted to forsake the Father; on the cross, the Father forsook the Son. Unless His soul had shared in the punishment, he would have been the redeemer of the bodies alone.

The Wonder of the Silence: two thousand years before this, Abraham was asked to offer his son on the altar on the mount Moriah, but just as his knife was raised to the sky, the Lord intervened, and said do not lay your hand upon the boy. So Isaac’s life was spared. But the voice that called out on Moriah is now silent at Calvary. This explains the cup He would have preferred not to drink. He was abandoned into outer darkness that we might walk in the light. Look at these hours on the cross and you are looking into hell: darkness, loneliness and abandonment.

The wonder of the Human Heart: what was their response of those who were around the cross? Some says, “this man is calling Elijah” (Mt.27:47). Some says, “wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him” (v49). They misunderstood His words. **What would it have taken for these people to come to their senses and accept Jesus as the Son of God? The more the light is given, the harder the human heart must become to reject it.**

Lessons to learn:

1. The purpose of the cross was not for us primarily, but for God. “when I see the blood, I will Passover you” (Ex.12:13). Whether the members of the family had committed great sin or lesser ones, it mattered not; when the Angel of Death saw the blood, the house was spared from judgement.
2. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom.8:1).
3. Great exchange took place on the cross between the sinner and the Saviour.
4. For those who die in Christ, the darkness has passed.
5. For Christ is my substitute. God reckoned me one with the saviour. His death was mine.