

Guest Preacher

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Preacher: Rev. Paul Amed

- [0 : 00] About the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, Lambus of Akhthene, which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
- And I want us to dwell tonight on these words. Difficult words, but wonderful words.
- And I wonder if any of you watched that program on television about ancestry, long lost families. I'm sure many of you do.
- And you see lots of people there, parents and sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. And after many years, they meet up again with great joy.
- And the forsakenness that they endured has all been healed and fixed.
- [0 : 59] But we do see and read and listen to people on that program who were indeed forsaken. Forsaken by parents, forsaken by one another, forsaken by members of the family.
- To be a bit more personal, in my own experience, at the age of one and a half, I was left by my mother with my father. And it wasn't until years later that I felt that I had been a little forsaken.
- And then when I was 10, my father died abruptly and quickly. And I was very, very angry with God. How dare he let my father die when I loved him so much?
- And so again, I felt so, so forsaken, even by my own father. And then 15 years later, my stepmother, she allowed my stepfather to bar my way into the family home.
- And I was asked to leave and she stood there and did nothing. And so once again, I felt very, very forsaken. Of course, through the years, through faith in Christ, all of that for me has been healed.
- [2 : 09] But there may be some here tonight, and you know you have a memory of a time when you were forsaken. Those who are watching online, you may have a memory. You may even feel now that you are being forsaken by a loved one, by a parent, a brother or a sister.
- And if that's the case, this sermon, this sermon is for you. This sermon is for you. The Lord's birth, we know, was marked by a supernatural burst of light.
- His death is now marked with a supernatural darkness. We read from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, darkness came all over the land.
- For three hours from midday, God covered the land in darkness. God covered in the land, the land in darkness, to hide man's prying gaze.
- From the momentous transaction which took place between God and his Son, between the Father and his Son. It's now late in the afternoon, and Jesus' words are dramatically different from all his previous words.
- [3 : 23] As we hear Jesus loudly utter the most harrowing cry ever to pierce the heavens, and dare we say, to pierce the throne room of God.
- My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And I know some preachers, when they quote those words, when they quote that text, some quote it loudly, aggressively, some quote them quietly, but none of us could ever quote them like Christ did.

We'll never really understand the depth, the hurt, the pain, the hope, that was contained in these words, when Jesus said, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It's a great cry. The cry of dereliction, a cry of separation, even seems to be a cry of desperation. You'll know through the scriptures, soon after his birth, when Mary took Jesus to the temple to have him consecrated to God, there was this godly man, Simeon.

And with Jesus in his arms, he spoke to Mary, saying, This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against.

[4 : 47] So the thoughts of many will be revealed, and a sword will pierce your own soul too. And now, that day has come.

At the cross, there are those who are receiving him to be eternally blessed, but there are also those who are rejecting him to be eternally lost.

He's been spoken against, as he is being spoken against. It reveals the hatred towards him in the hearts of many who have gathered round the cross that day.

There are cries of scorn, contempt, lies, and as Mary hears the noise and witnesses her son suffer the humiliating death of a criminal, unable to offer him any help.

The sword is piercing her own soul. The sword is piercing her own soul. And how deep it pierces her soul, we'll never know.

[5 : 54] We'll never know. Although I'm sure there are those gathered here, some watching online, and you've known moments, even days like that, when your own soul has been pierced, the loss of a loved one, an affliction, a trial, a tribulation, something dark has entered your experience, and a sword has pierced your soul.

There's great pain in the soul of Mary at this time. And I know that very often when we speak of God's grace and his help and power and peace, you and I have gone through many trials and tribulations, and God has come in Christ.

The Holy Spirit has lifted us out of the trial and the tribulation. There's a sense of peace. But very often, very often, he leaves the sword there.

He leaves the sword there. And we still have the pain. And you know, in the experience of God's people, it shows us that pain has a special office to perform in the work of sanctification.

God uses pain. God uses the pain in our lives and the weaknesses, along with other afflictions, as the chisel for sculpting his people.

[7 : 21] He fashions us. Not on the mountaintop when everything's going great, but in the valley. In the valley, when the sword is piercing our own soul.

When the pain is at its sharpest. I've said on the mountain, I've said on many occasions through the preaching of God's word, you know, sometimes, God hurts us. God hurts us.

But for a purpose and for a plan. And his love outshines and outdoes that hurt that we sometimes have to go through. But it's a necessity.

It's part of our fasting, our sanctifying. You know, the more wounded we are at times, the more broken, the more weak, the more we lean upon the Lord. And the more we lean upon the Lord, the more we grow spiritually.

And the more we grow spiritually, the more we become more and more Christ-like. The sword is piercing her own soul. Now, some weeks earlier, Jesus had said to the crowds, the reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again.

[8 : 33] No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

This command I received from my Father. Jesus laid down his life. Voluntarily. You know, he could have stopped his arrest, his trial, and indeed the crucifixion.

We read in Matthew's Gospel that when Peter tried to intervene in Jesus' arrest, even to the striking of Malchus, the high priest's servant, and as they were leaving the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to Peter, Put your sword back into its place.

For all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled which says that it must happen this way? He voluntarily laid his life down.

[9 : 42] And if you are a Christian tonight, he voluntarily laid his life down for you and for me. Surely that's something to encourage us, something to speak about, something to rejoice in.

Not one, not even a zealous Peter could stop the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption. It was necessary, it was necessary for Jesus to suffer, to die, and to rise again.

You see, love must conquer. Promises must be fulfilled. God's plan will not fail. Satan must be defeated. Souls will be saved.

the church of Christ shall be redeemed. How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled which say it must happen, it must happen this way.

And in John's Gospel we read Jesus commanded Peter put your sword away shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me.

[10 : 48] You see, when God gave, when God gave his Son to the cross, this was love's sacrifice, love's sacrifice to win back an alien world from the love of sin and of power and from the enemy.

You see, God in planning redemption he planned that he himself, that he himself would provide all that was required. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

And now what is offered to men and women in the Gospel is not the possibility of being saved nor the opportunity of being saved but what is offered is salvation through faith.

And even then, faith itself is not the cause of salvation but the means by which we receive it. And herein lies the condescending goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes, for our sakes he became poor so that you through his poverty might become rich.

[12 : 04] Jesus felt so forsaken, he was forsaken and yet in some mysterious way although he was forsaken by God, by his Father, I don't believe his Father ever stopped loving him.

The Father who delighted in him and who on three occasions declared from heaven, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

And it was the Father's will, the Father's desire that the divine fullness should dwell within his Son. Paul writing to the Colossians said of Jesus, for God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.

In Colossians 2 and 9, for in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form. And you want to know what God is all about, something of God's ways, compassion, love, and peace, then you look at Christ.

Then you get to know Christ in a more deeper way. Feed on him, read of him, read of him in the scriptures, and he will reveal to you more and more and more of the almighty, the almighty and the holiness of God.

[13 : 26] A little girl once said to her mother, mother, I like you better than God. Oh, you must not say that, replied the mother. Yes, but really mother, I do like you better than God.

Shocked, her mother inquired, dear, what makes you say that? The child answered simply, because I can hug you, because I can hug you.

That little girl expressed the universal desire of men and women to have contact with God in a personal way, a tangible way, and in Christ.

In Christ, we have that personal relationship for, in the incarnation, for God coming in Christ, through Christ's incarnation, it brought God within embracing distance.

It brought God to us in embracing distance. Earlier at Gethsemane, Jesus was forsaken by his disciples.

[14 : 33] We read, he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. They couldn't keep their eyes open, and they fell asleep. At Gabbatha, the place of Jesus' trial, Jesus was forsaken by his nation.

As the Jews cried out, take me away, and crucify him, crucify him. And now here at Calvary, Jesus is forsaken by his God.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? the prophet Habakkuk said of God's holiness, your eyes are too pure to look on evil.

You cannot tolerate wrong. And I wonder if that's why there's darkness all over the land as God turned his eyes from Jesus and as Jesus bore your sin and my sin in his own body on the tree.

on the tree. Because we know then the whole of creation, the whole of creation came out in sympathy with him. The sun shut down, the birds stopped singing, and the universe groaned.

[15 : 46] A sweet fellowship with the father and the son was broken. The sweet fellowship stopped. God sent three days of darkness to the land of Egypt before the first Passover when the lambs were slain to protect the firstborn.

And God sent three hours of darkness before the lamb of God would die for the sins of the world. It was as though God were putting a curtain around the cross as Christ suffered and died for our sins.

Paul writes God made him, that's Jesus, who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

That great exchange, the one who had no sin became sin for us, took our sins upon himself, so that through faith in him we might become the righteousness of God, we may become right with God.

You know, sin must be an awful, terrible, terrible thing, a tremendously awful thing in the sight of God, when he could not and will not accept any other way of forgiving sin, but by making the soul of Jesus a guilt offering for sin and his precious blood alone, able to wash away your sins and my sins.

[17 : 19] What a difference, what a depth of difference, what an infinite depth of difference, his soul and my sin, his soul and my sin.

Think upon these things, take these things home, contemplate, meditate upon the greatness, the holiness and the love of God for you and I who have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

We are blessed, we are blessed in a world that seems to be spiraling out of control, it's not, God is sovereign, but nevertheless, we are seeing so much blackness, so much sin, so much enmity, we are seeing all that the Bible speaks about, God is not getting caught out, we are seeing Revelation, the book of Revelation and the things that happen there, we are seeing wee snippets of it beginning to happen and yet, and yet, we are safe, safe in the hands of Jesus, those nail pierced hands, if God before us, who can be against us?

his soul and my sin, he poured out the treasures, he poured out the treasures of his soul, that the sin of my soul may be taken away and exchanged for the righteousness of God, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Now it's impossible, now it's impossible for God to look upon Jesus as he takes the sinner's place, he no longer cries, father, but he takes the place, he takes the place of a lost soul, he takes your place and my place, he was forsaken for us and yet he has pledged, he has pledged that by no beings will he ever forsake you and I, we shall never be forsaken by him, the son of God became the son of man in order that the sons of men might become the sons of God but the profoundest mystery of Calvary is not what men did to Jesus but what God did to his own son my God my God why have you forsaken me and then we read in Isaiah yet he pleased the

[19 : 44] Lord Jehovah it pleased the Lord to bruise him he hath put him to grief my God my God why have you forsaken me yet he pleased he pleased Jehovah to bruise him he hath put him to grief this is the God who declares that he has no pleasure in the death of sinners and yet he was pleased he was pleased to bruise his own sinless son because there was no other way there was no other way by which sinners could escape eternal death but none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through he found his sheep that was lost my God my God why have you forsaken me this cry might be the most heart wrenching in all of the

Bible it's a quote from Psalm 22 and verse 1 and there it identifies for us Jesus as the righteous sufferer of that psalm and the cry was not only a physical cry a psychological confusion and the dread of death no it's a cry it's a cry of the Son of God who's now experiencing something that he had never known in all of eternity separation separation and forsakenness by God Jesus cry and the darkness that covered the land declared the truth that there was a real abandonment by the Father as Jesus took upon himself the sins of his people Isaiah writes in 53 and verse 6 the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all we need to remember that if our faith is in

Christ we're involved in all of this it's for us we're part of it the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all this was the price that he would pay as a ransom for many in this one moment in all of time and eternity he views himself he knows himself not as the father's son but as the sinner's sacrifice God separated from God who can understand that who can understand this this deep mystery we may never never understand it even when we get to heaven we may never understand it but we shall forever praise him for it the sinless son of God died the sinner's death feeling the bitter desolation of separation from the holy God and his cry my God my God why have you forsaken me was the sound it was the sound of sin's price being paid in full as he was indeed the ransom for many

Paul writing to the Ephesians in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of his grace it's all of God it's all of grace it's all of love it's all of his plan it's all of his purpose we had nothing to offer the only thing you and I can provide in this wonderful act of redemption of forgiveness are the sins that we need redeeming from and the forgiveness that we must have that's all that you and I could ever contribute to this wonderful and glorious redemption that we now have in Christ did the father ever leave him before well if you read the four evangelists if you read them through you won't find any previous instance in which he complains of his father having forsaken him no he said he said of his father I know that you always hear me he lived in constant touch with his father his fellowship with the father was always near and dear and clear but now now for the first time he cries why why have you forsaken me the lord was taking our place that we might have his peace he took our sin that we might have his salvation

Christ has crossed out the black lines of our sin with the red lines of his own blood bringing us to God but also bringing God to us very quickly what can we learn in the moments we have left what can we learn from this cry of forsakenness well first and foremost he teaches us the greatness surely the greatness of the love of God this was the greatest display of love the world could ever could ever know you cannot measure this love for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son who delivered Jesus up to die well not Judas for money not Pilate for fear not the Jews out of envy but the father but the father for for love and the point is this not that the world is so big that it takes a great deal of love to embrace it but the world is so bad the world is so bad that it takes an exceedingly great kind of love to love it all and how great then

[25 : 45] God's love must be that he should bruise his own son rather than let you and I perish measure measure such love if you can secondly teaches us the greatness of the love of Jesus Christ Paul writes into the Ephesians just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God and we are never nearer Christ than when we find ourselves just lost or in awe or holy amazement at his unspeakable love and that he should give his life he should be our substitute he should feel the wrath of God the terrors of God be condemned by God in our room and in our stead that you and I through faith in Christ would never know condemnation would never know judgment

Paul could write excuse me Paul could write and surely we can share in these words I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me the life I now live in the body I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me who loved me and gave himself for me this is this is saving grace God's riches at Christ's expense grace the unmerited love and favour of God in Christ for undeserving sinners like you and I and the first link the first link between my soul and Christ was not my goodness but my badness not not any merits

I had of my own but the misery I was in not my riches but my rebellion and now surely with identification in that we can all say I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me the hymn writer wrote I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean thirdly then in the mysterious providence of God both son and father were in this together though God as it were had to turn his face away from Jesus when he was made sin for you and I yet at that very moment the Lord Jesus was at the very centre the very heart of the father's will and in doing so he was one with the father there are mysteries within the gospel there are mysteries that are revealed to us there are mysteries that belong to God only

I repeat for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and fourthly this cry of forsaken us it teaches something that surely we no need no longer need any teaching on but it teaches us the enormity of sin if anyone thinks that sin is a trivial matter then think again then think again and turn and turn to the cross we are born in sin and we spend our lives coping with its consequences you see sin is not only an offence which needs forgiving but sin is a pollution which needs cleansing and the measure of what Jesus did on the cross accomplished both come now let us reason together says the Lord though your sins are like scarlet they shall be as white as snow though they are as crimson they shall be like wool and the hymn writer again because the sinless saviour died my sinful soul is counted free for

God the just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me here on the cross then the holiness of God and the sinfulness of men are met together in awful conflict the cross which reveals God in Christ at his best if we might put it that way at the same time the cross which reveals man at his worst now you and I we are we are richly blessed we have God's word and there are many texts that assure us of our forgiveness and our joy and our peace and our hope of eternal life therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God how many blessings you and I have how lavish is the love of God which was poured upon us you see at the cross the cross of Christ is a two way street we've been brought to

[31 : 30] God and God has been brought to us and the simplest word of faith should be the deepest word of theology Christ died for our sins Paul writing to the Ephesians for it is by grace you have been saved through faith and this not from yourselves it is the gift of God not by works so that no one can boast nothing to boast in like the apostle Paul the only thing we should boast in is in our weaknesses because when we're weak the Lord can enter into our experience our situation our circumstance and bring his strength to bear in our lives we are saved we are saved by grace the Lord showed me how crooked I was grace came and straightened me out and someone has said grace is a ring of gold and Christ is the sparkling diamond in that ring there's much more and time is catching up with us but let me let me give you this illustration

Shimmel was the leader of a Corsican people that had long resisted the Russian advance in lands between the Black and Caspian seas among his people bribery and corruption were on the increase so Shimmel passed a severe law that after a certain date any person convicted of bribery should be brought to the whipping post and receive 100 lashes on the bare back the first offender was Shimmel's own mother would he spare her or would the 100 lashes be inflicted on his mother's back love said release her justice said punish her the people appealing to him for the final decision waited to see what he would do then came the sentence taking her to the whipping post

Shimmel attended personally after five strokes had descended on her bare back Shimmel said stop release her then stripping off his uniform and shirt he said I'll take the rest as his mother looked on 95 strokes fell on his bare back justice was satisfied and love bore the brunt of the penalty but the love of God goes even further the love of God goes beyond that Jesus paid it all that the sinner you and I may go free justice has been completely satisfied and grace has triumphed bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior my

God my God why have you forsaken me when Charles Wesley wrote his great hymn and can it be that I should gain he began the second verse with a line that could have been written with this statement in view tis mystery all immortal dies who can explore his strange design and so we'll never understand we'll never truly understand what it meant for Christ to die in our place taking upon our sins upon himself bearing our punishment that you and I might be forgiven forever perhaps the more we search the scriptures the more we study the scriptures the more the Holy Spirit reveals to us the truths of God maybe when we get to glory we'll be able to ask the Lord some more but rest in this simple truth he was forsaken that you and I might never be forsaken and those who trust in him will never be disappointed in this life and nor the life to come amazing grace how can it be that thou my God should die for me and now I do close with this short illustration a certain medieval monk announced he would be preaching next Sunday evening on the love of God as the shadows fell and the light ceased to come through the cathedral windows the congregation gathered in the darkness of the altar the monk lit a candle and carried it to a crucifix first he illumined the crown of thorns then the two wounded hands and then the marks of the spear wound in the hush that fell he blew out the candle and left the chancel there was nothing else to say there was nothing else to say and tonight there's nothing else to say but praise the Lord praise the

Lord our loving heavenly father we thank you again Lord for that short Lord understanding a little understanding of something of the height and depth of your love for us revealed in Christ on the cross of Calvary and we pray our loving heavenly father we would hold that in our hearts it would encourage us and help us especially Lord when we feel forsaken or when we go through trials and difficulties when we're experiencing pain in our own lives we would know there was one altogether lovely the rose of Sharon the one who is the fairest of ten thousand my soul the one who is God's heart in view even Jesus Christ our Lord so be with us Lord we pray and we thank you again for all that you are and all that you mean to us perhaps tonight our loving heavenly father there's that one or two maybe here or watching online and they're not sure and they're not certain oh look to Jesus look to Jesus he paid it all there's nothing there's nothing we can do there's nothing we can offer but our sins and when we do that he'll he'll forgive us and love us and he'll love us right into the family of God so be with us we pray now for Jesus sake we ask it

[38 : 24] Amen let's close then by singing from from Psalm Psalm 41 and at verse 10 Psalm 41 and at verse 10 down to the end but Lord be merciful to me and up again me raise that I may justly them requite according to their ways by this I know that certainly I favoured am by thee because my hateful enemy triumphs not over me verses 10 to 13 of Psalm 41 you'll find it on page 262 in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 41 sorry 262 met the Gymnest Father God

God have raised that I may trust the every quiet according to their ways by this I know that certainly I've never come by thee because my hope let me triumphs not over me but thus for me thou be opposed in my integrity and be for thine countenance process continually the

Lord the God of Israel he rests forever then from his truth eternally amen yea and amen and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with us all now and forever more amen