

The Fourth Saying: Anguish

Matthew 27:45-46

"45 Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Christ's question is a startling one. The Son throughout eternity has been the Father's daily delight (Proverbs 8:30). From eternity through the thirty-three years of public ministry the Father was "well pleased with His beloved Son." Yet here Christ cries, "Why have you forsaken me?" Christ doesn't cry out when the spikes pierce His skin. He doesn't cry out when the thorns crown His brow. He doesn't cry when mocked and ridiculed. At the ninth hour, forsaken by the Father, the Savior Himself cries out!

I. There is a great mystery in this cry of anguish.

God never forsakes anyone but for one cause --- sin. It was for sin that Adam was cast from the garden. It was for sin that Israel wandered in the desert. It is sin that separates us all from God. But we are talking of the Christ! "God forsaken of God --- who can understand" Martin Luther.

A. Christ dies a sinner's death . . . "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me"

Christ never called Jehovah anything but "Father," never God. "Father, forgive them." "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit . . ." Christ lost His intimacy with God the Father at that hour. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13).

B. Christ cries in sudden darkness . . . "There was darkness over all the land . . ."

It was dark from noon till 3:00 p.m. Spurgeon said it was "Midnight at Midday." Light typifies the revealed presence of God. Sinners walk in darkness. Ichabod: "The Glory of God has departed."

C. Christ feels a sad despair . . . "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?"

"Christ is now without a sense of the gracious presence of God, and was filled with a sense of divine wrath . . . for one part of the punishment of in is loss of the divine presence" John Gill. "Depart from me, you who do iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). "Cast from God's presence" (II Thess. 1:9).

II. There is a great meaning to this cry of anguish.

"For all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). "The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). In the plan of God, the cross was provided before the offense. Before sin there was a Savior. Grace wins in the end.

A. The young bull (ox) on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).

The priest laid hands on the bullock, and then the blood taken to the Ark of the Covenant. The priest entered into communion after the death a substitute who died in the place of Israel.

B. The leper in Israel was banished from the camp (Leviticus 13:46).

Two birds are used. One bird is slain and the blood sprinkled on the leper (Lev. 14:7). The other bird is set free. The priest offers the sin and the trespass offerings and the leper is cleansed.

C. Those bitten in Israel died if they never looked to the serpent on the pole (Numbers 21:9).

Snakes in the desert bit the Israelites, but everyone who looked to brass serpent would live.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. 3:13).

III. There is a great message drawn from this cry of anguish.

Our relationship with God is not due to our works, or our holiness, or our righteousness, or our efforts. We have a relationship with God because of His great love for sinners in giving to us His Son who became our substitute on the cross. We can boast in nothing, save Christ.

"He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made righteous in Him." (II Cor. 5:21)