

Forsaken! – For Us

(Mark 15:33-43 March 6, 2016)

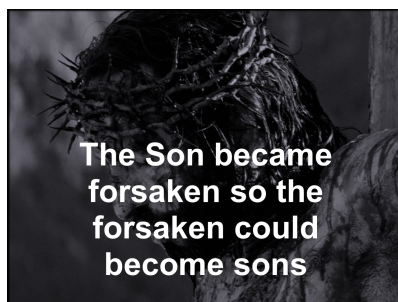


Jesus was on the cross for six hours one Friday.

What happened in those six hours – changed the course of eternity.

The question I want us to look at this morning is – what actually happened while Jesus hung on that cross – and why is it so crucial for us today?

What I want you to see is that our passage this morning declares that:



The Son became forsaken so the forsaken could become sons.

As we look at the cross – I trust you will have an appreciation for what it means to be forsaken – and just what it cost Jesus to save us – and I trust it will inspire you to love Him more.

First we will look at:



The Son becomes forsaken.

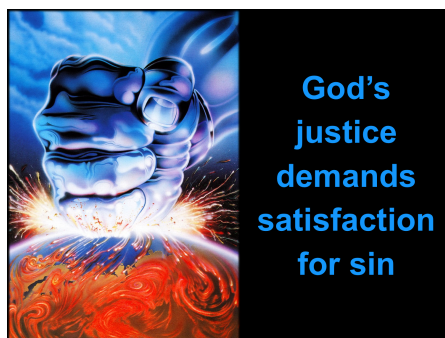
Turn with me to Mark 15:33:

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

On one level this verse seems so innocuous – but I believe that behind this seemingly ordinary verse lies many of what are perhaps among the most important concepts found in the Bible.

To understand just what is going on, to see what it means that darkness came over the land, we need to step back and remind ourselves briefly of some key biblical truths.

We need to remember that the Scripture teaches us that:



God's justice demands satisfaction for sin.

We are told that one of the attributes of God is that He is perfectly holy.

He is without any blemish of sin.

This holy God created man in His own image. Man was good. But then man chose to sin – to rebel against His Maker.

This is a colossal sin. A created being choosing to rebel against his infinite, holy Creator.

God's justice demands satisfaction for sin.

The Scriptures – Old and New are filled with promises that the wrath of God **will** be poured out to satisfy this affront against a holy God.

I am only going to give you a few – there are so many of them.

Nahum 1:2–6:

The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. ... The LORD will by no means clear the guilty. ... Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger?

Psalm 75:8:

For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.

The idea is that in no way do you want to be on the receiving end of God's wrath.

And it is not just the Old Testament.

Romans 1:18:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Revelation 19:15:

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

And in case anyone thinks they might somehow escape this day of judgment we have Scriptures like this:

Romans 3:10–11:

None is righteous, no, not one.

Romans 3:23:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

There are two other truths about the wrath of God I want to point out.

The *first* is that the only reason God didn't instantly incinerate Adam when he sinned and has delayed His wrath from falling on you whenever you sin – is grace.

2 Peter 3:9 says:

The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise [of wrath] ... but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

The only reason God stayed His hand is that His love means He is waiting for the full number of the elect to repent and come to salvation.

And the *second* truth is this. Don't confuse the fact that God has delayed His wrath – with wrath not coming.

2 Peter 3:10:

The day of the Lord **will** come.

It will most certainly come.

And as Peter indicated, this day when God's wrath will be poured out in full force is given a name in Scripture – **The Day of the Lord**.

The day when the full number of God's children have been gathered and God withdraws His stay of judgment and the full fury of His wrath is poured out.

Here are a few of those verses.

Isaiah 2:12–19:

For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low; ... And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendour of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.

Joel 2:1–11:

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near ... Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. ... For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

1 Thessalonians 5:2–9:

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ... destined ... for wrath.

Revelation 6:15–17:

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

What is abundantly clear is that the day of wrath **is** coming.

When my children were younger and misbehaved – I had a choice – I could punish them – or not.

But God is bound to act according to His divine nature. Because He is perfectly holy and perfectly just – flowing from that is a *necessity* to punish sin – it is an unalterable Law of creation.

And it even gets worse. Matthew 5:26 tells us we will be punished in hell until we have paid every last part of our debt.

Since nothing we can do can appease our affront to a holy God – we will spend eternity in hell.

So God can't simply choose not to punish us *and* we can never satisfy His justice so the punishment is eternal.

That is the situation of everyone and that is about as bad as it can get. We are forsaken.

So is there any hope for us?

Yes. God found a way that is consistent with His divine nature to save the forsaken.

But we have to ask. If we are all guilty sinners – what could possibly satisfy God's wrath and free us from suffering in hell for all eternity?

The answer to this question comes in one of the most theologically significant passages in all of Scripture.

Romans 3:23–25:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [but the elect] are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith.

The key word here is the word **propitiation**. It is a technical term which means:



The satisfaction of the wrath of God by an acceptable sacrifice.

God's wrath against us can be propitiated – satisfied – by an acceptable sacrifice.

If we have sinned against an almighty, all powerful God – what kind of sacrifice could possible satisfy His justice and wrath?

Paul said – the propitiation – the acceptable sacrifice – is the blood – the death of Jesus.

Jesus is the promised sacrifice – the Lamb without a blemish – the One who is divine and man – priest and King – Lord and Servant.

Jesus is the One who will meet the demands of God's justice. The One who will be an acceptable sacrifice. The One who will do what the blood of bulls and goats and the labours of our hands could never do.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus he cried – Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus is the *only* acceptable sacrifice.

But, how does Jesus' death actually satisfy the wrath of God?

And now we finally come to our passage for today. Look again at Mark 15:33:

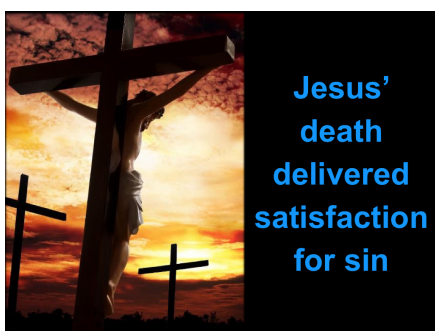
And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

We have seen that passage after passage teaches us that:



God's justice demands satisfaction for sin.

Now what we will see is that:



Jesus' death delivered satisfaction for sin.

Justice said a price must be paid.

In the death of Jesus – it **was** paid and paid in full.

To see this, we need to understand the significance of the darkness.

I told you that Scripture promises a day of judgment, a Day of the Lord – a day when the wrath of God is poured out undiluted.

There are two key marks of that day – darkness and the quaking of the earth.

Consider a few of the many passages that tell us *darkness* and *earthquakes* are the marks of the Day of the Lord.

Isaiah 13:9–10:

Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.

Joel 2:1–10:

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! ... The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

Joel 2:31:

The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Amos 5:18–20:

Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! ... It is darkness, and not light. ... Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

Amos 8:9:

“And on that day,” declares the Lord GOD, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.

Zephaniah 1:14–15:

The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast. ... A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

We see the same in the New Testament:

Mark 13:24:

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light.

Revelation 6:12:

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth.

While Mark only mentions the coming of darkness – in Matthew 27:51 we read that at the death of Jesus – the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

Darkness and quaking are marks identifying the Day of the Lord.

So one of the clearest passages that helps us understand what happened on the cross is Amos 8:9:

“And on that day – [on the Day of the Lord],” declares the Lord GOD, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.

This is exactly what happened as Jesus hung on the cross. At the sixth hour – midday – the earth was darkened.

What all of this means is that in a sense Jesus suffered the wrath of Day of the Lord for us – the wrath of God fell on Him.

I know I have thrown so many concepts and passages at you your head is probably spinning.

Let me see if I can draw all of it together in a more succinct way now.

What we have seen is that God’s very nature means He *has* to punish sin – and it can’t be a mere slap on the wrist – it has to be His full, undiluted fury poured out till justice is completely satisfied.

But what the gracious love of God did is provide a way of escape.

The way of escape is through the death of Jesus – a sacrifice that satisfies the wrath of God.

How does His death wash away our sin?

Scripture teaches that when we come to Christ – we are *in* Him – and He is *in* us.

What happened to Him on the cross happened to us.

We are placed inside Jesus – covered by Jesus. This means that when the wrath of God fell on Jesus – it was **my** sin that was punished.

When Jesus hung on the cross – I hung there in Him. As His blood was poured out – as His life was given up – my sin was paid for.

Galatians 2:20:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

As Jesus was crucified – the wrath of God was poured out in full on Him – and therefore on me.

The wrath of God against me was satisfied.

And so when the day of judgment – the Day of the Lord – does come – my sins have already been punished so I will escape the coming wrath of God.

Romans 5:9:

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

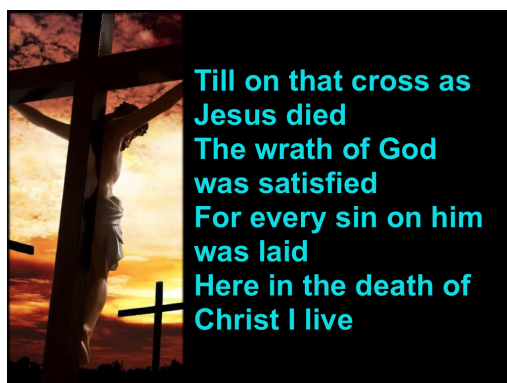
It is unfortunate that to reach this point I have had to cover a lot of theology and use some complex theological terms like propitiation.

However, it is fortunate that one of the things the great hymn and song writers do so well is they take all of this complex theology and make it come to life clearly in a few sentences – in a way that makes men like me very envious of their God-given gift.

I know envy is wrong – but I sure would love to write like them.

So what truth is the coming of the darkness at the death of Jesus supposed to convey to us?

The song *In Christ Alone* puts it this way:

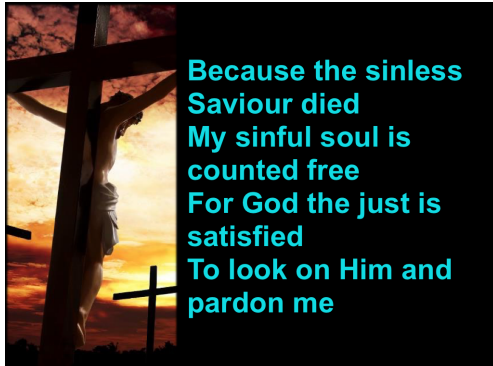


Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For **every** sin on him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

As Jesus died – the wrath of God was completely satisfied for me. Every sin laid on Him so I live.

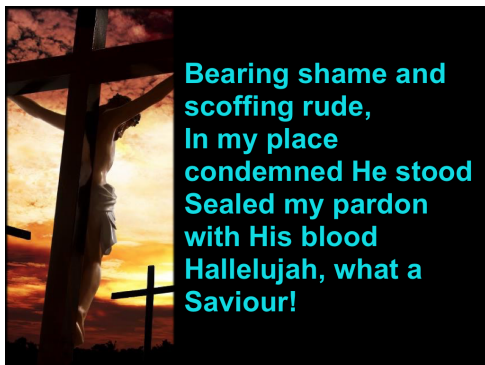
That is the gospel in a few lines.

Before the Throne Above says it like this:



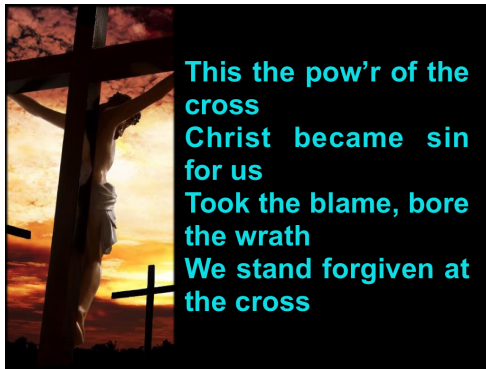
Because the sinless Saviour died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me

Or – *Hallelujah, What a Saviour* puts it in these words:



Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood
Sealed my pardon with His blood
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Or – *The Power of the Cross*:



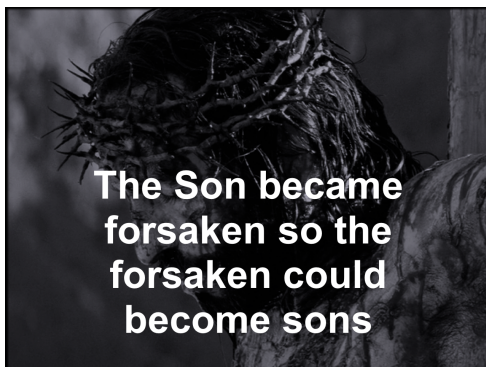
This the pow'r of the cross
Christ became sin for us
Took the blame, bore the wrath
We stand forgiven at the cross

What I would give to be able to write like that!

This is the song we are going to sing in closing – I hope you won't be able to just sing it without grasping how amazing the cross is.

The power of the cross is the fact that Christ became sin for us. He took my blame – He bore my wrath – so now I stand **forgiven** at the cross.

Since I can't steal their words – I have to use mine:



The Son became forsaken so the forsaken could become sons.

We see that this is in fact exactly what is occurring by looking at the next verses.

Mark 15:34–36:

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.” And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.”

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? – Is a quotation from Psalm 22.

The suffering righteous man offered sour wine to quench His thirst – is a reference from Psalm 69.

In both Psalms it speaks of a righteous one being punished by the unrighteous.

But now in the perfect righteous One – His suffering pays the penalty for sinners.

The bystanders knew exactly what Jesus said – but they mock Him by saying – hey hear that – the King of the Jews is calling for Elijah to save Him – lets see if Elijah comes.

John tells us that Jesus cried – I thirst – and then was given the sour wine. Sour wine did not quench thirst well – its only purpose was to prolong Jesus' suffering.

The righteous was suffering at the hands of the unrighteous.

The innocent suffers the punishment.

But the part of this we need to look at carefully is the cry of Jesus – “My God, my God, why have you **forsaken** me?”

I spent a big part of this week reading commentaries and articles saying – I know Jesus says He was forsaken – but He just couldn't be. It can't mean that!

Here is the argument. God would *never* forsake Jesus because I wouldn't forsake my son.

I am a sinful, weak man – yet as a father – I would never forsake my son no matter what he did.

So how can God – the perfect Father forsake Jesus?

They also place a great deal of emphasis on John 16:32 where Jesus says:

You will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

They say things like – Jesus felt forsaken – but He wasn't actually forsaken.

I think this profoundly misunderstands the cross and the nature of the atonement.

So what is going on when Jesus says He is forsaken?

A key verse is 2 Corinthians 5:21:

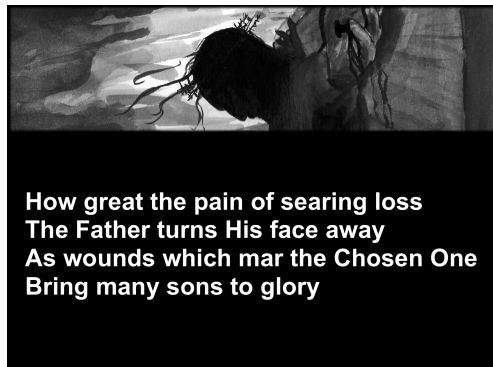
For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

He bore our sins by becoming sin – and as He became sin – the wrath of His holy Father was poured out in full measure on Him.

And this led Him to be forsaken. Habakkuk 1:13:

You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.

And so as Jesus became sin for us – as the wrath of God fell on Him – the Father **did** forsake Him. Or as **How Deep The Father's Love** puts it:



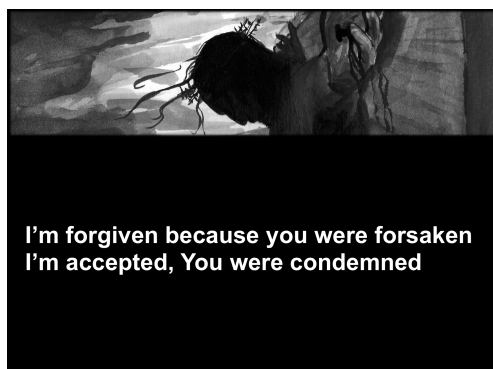
How great the pain of searing loss –
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

For a time, Jesus did become sin – He became the object of divine wrath – and was forsaken.

God **did** turn His face away.

Just think of how great a cost that is! I can barely grasp the magnitude of this sacrifice.

Chris Tomlin summed it up in his song – **You are my King**.



I'm forgiven because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned

I'm forgiven because He was forsaken.

I want us to pause here for a moment and consider what this meant.

Here you have Jesus – the spotless Lamb of God – the Son who always did the will of the Father – who never sinned – the One in whom the Father was well pleased.

Jesus who had never known sin – never lied, lusted, unrighteous anger, jealousy – nothing.

Jesus who was one with the Father and had always been one with the Father.

What did He bear?

On the cross Jesus did die for the world. There are ways in which all men – saved and unsaved – benefit by the cross – but in terms of sin – He bore the sins of *every* elect son and daughter of God in history.

I am 53 years old.

There is not a day I have not sinned in thought and deed. There is not a day when I have not *repeatedly* sinned in thought and deed. Small sins, bigger sins – and far too many doozies to count.

Then consider how many elect saints there are in history.

Every saint from before Israel, every Jewish saint, every Christian.

Hundreds of millions, billions of saints – all with lifetimes of continual sin – and any one of those sins would be enough to sentence a soul to eternity in hell.

He who had never known sin – in any shape or form – took every one of those sins and bore them in His body on the cross.

When Jesus was sweating great drops of blood in Gethsemane crying – Father – remove this cup from Me – the very small part was the pain of suffering beatings and scourings and mockings and nails through bone and tendon and nerve.

No – the cup He was primarily concerned about was the cup of God's wrath about to be poured out in full measure on Him.

I can't imagine the pain and suffering for a sinless One – who is always united with the Father – to bear sin and become forsaken.

So as the darkness lifted – as the fullness of wrath and sin-bearing was laid upon Him – He cried out – My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?

He **chose** to become forsaken – so we would not be forsaken.

I'm forgiven because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned

I truly believe that is what this passage teaches.

It has become less popular to teach this today.

However, there are two objections to this understanding of the passage.

Some say that the death of Jesus was not an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the world. He could not be forsaken in our place because it just can't pay the penalty.

Here is the argument.

If I sin once in my entire life – I will spend eternity in the lake of fire because my torment alone can never atone for sin. My punishment and torment cannot appease the wrath of God because – which means that because the sin remains God's wrath remains.

So you have billions of believers with untold trillions of sins – every one of them deserving eternity and hell.

And I am supposed to believe that Jesus hangs on a cross for **six hours** – and this supposedly satisfies the wrath of God for every saint for all eternity?

Absolutely you better believe that!

In truth – this argument is near blasphemous. It fails to grasp that the One who died on the cross is not a finite man – but is the infinite, divine sacrifice.

As the God-man, He bore the full force of the fury of the wrath of the Father and His sacrifice was of infinite value!

You have to believe that His suffering was worth far more than the eternal suffering of every sinner combined! – Far more!

That is why the justice of God was completely satisfied in the cross of Jesus.

A second objection is that some say that this idea Jesus was forsaken is akin to divine child abuse. In fact, they say it is worse than abuse because God the Father is punishing His Son – who He knows is innocent.

Let me say this. Jesus was no child – He was the divine God man – and He *chose* this path.

In John 10 He tells us – the good shepherd willingly lays down His life for His sheep. No one takes His life – He chooses to lay it down.

We see that in verse 37:

And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

John 19:30 says this:

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

No one took His life – He offered it up and when the time came He chose when to give up His spirit and breathe His last.

So in these verses we have seen that:

The Son becomes forsaken.

That is what happened on the cross.

Jesus became sin for us – He became forsaken for us.

And now we see that because of this:



The forsaken become sons.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

All live under the threat of the coming wrath of God.

But now – because of the cross – now – there is hope.

Mark 15:38:

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Our sin separates us from God. The forsaken cannot draw near. And the whole layout of the Temple showed this.

The outermost court was known as *the Court of the Gentiles*. Everyone, Jew and Gentile was permitted to enter this area.

Then, a low inner wall enclosed three further courts, *the Court of the Women* – beyond which Jewish women may not go, *the Court of the Israelites* – into which Jewish men may go, and finally *the Court of the Priests* – the innermost of the courts into which only priests might set foot.

Within the Court of the Priests was the Temple proper where the sacrifices were conducted. There were actually two veils in this portion of the Temple.

One led into the Holy place with the Table of Showbread, the Altar of Incense and the Candelabrum.

At the rear of the Holy place was a final curtain which led into the Holy of Holies. Entrance to this place was only permitted once per year when the High Priest would enter to make atonement for the sins of the nation.

This whole setup showed the separation between God and man. Areas beyond which Gentiles could not pass. Areas beyond which women could not pass. Areas beyond which men who were not priests could not pass. And an area beyond which no one could pass except the High Priest and then he could pass only once per year to make atonement for the sins of the nation.

It is designed to show the separation between holy God and sinful man.

But, when Jesus died this inner curtain was torn in two.

The forsaken become sons. The forsaken can approach the Father.

Jesus made atonement for the sins of His people. The whole system of sacrifice was now passed away.

He paid our penalty. He satisfied the wrath of God. He made us sons.

Now all who are sons can draw near to our holy God. What was once unthinkable was possible.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Those in Christ can now approach God without fear of His wrath.

And we see the results of this salvation in *three* surprising conversions.

First:

A murdering pagan

Verse 39:

And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

Matthew tells us that this man saw the darkness and the earthquake and became frightened.

Luke tells us that when he realises this was the Son of God – he began praising God.

Was this man converted? – the context of Mark seems to indicate he was.

Mark opens his Gospel with these words:

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Son of God is a crucial title in this book.

In the Gospels – Son of God – refers to the fact that Jesus is God in human flesh – it is a title of deity.

So far in Mark the only ones to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God – is God the Father and the demons.

Now, this unlikely man – the one who murdered Jesus – becomes the first human being to recognize who Jesus is.

God used the darkness and the earthquake, but especially the death of Christ to open his eyes to the truth.

He came to know – This man is the Son of God.

On the cross Jesus pray for forgiveness for those who killed Him.

This centurion would have been a part of the battalion that brutalised and mocked and beat and spat upon Jesus.

If he did not hammer the nails into Jesus himself – he at least oversaw the crucifixion.

But – here is the incredible truth – by faith even these enormous, unthinkable sins can be forgiven.

Jesus' death provides forgiveness even for this.

God forgives. He forgave Peter who denied him three times. He forgave Paul who murdered His people.

And now this man and the soldiers with him – the very ones who hammered in the nails – he was the first recipient of the Lord's dying prayer – Father forgive them!

Ancient tradition says that the centurion's name was Longinus and that he was soundly converted and that he became one of the earliest members of the Christian Church.

Whether all of that is true or not – the truth is that just as Christ forgave this man who nailed Him to the cross, so He forgives us and our sins which nailed Him to the cross.

You have to know that if this man can be forgiven – anyone can be forgiven.

Whatever your sin – Jesus can and will forgive it and His death can and will pay for it.

There is a second group there:

Some ordinary women

Verses 40-41:

There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

Here we have a contrasting group to the centurion and the soldiers. The soldiers were men with rank and pagans. These women were culturally insignificant.

Jewish ... women ... from Galilee.

So ordinary.

They looked on from a distance – probably because they could not bear to see the sufferings of the One they loved up close. Mark mentions three of them.

Mary Magdalene from whom Jesus has cast seven demons.

Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses. It is not sure who this Mary is. It is possible that she is Mary the mother of Jesus. Jesus had brothers called James and Joses. John tells us that Jesus' mother was there. But the designation James the Less is used of one of the Apostles. So this may well be a different Mary. John tells us that one of the women was Mary the wife of Clopas so this may be her. It is impossible to be certain.

The third woman Mark mentions is Salome. When we compare the various gospel accounts we find that Salome was the mother of James and John the Apostles and she was also the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother.

What we do know is these are faithful women who remained loyal.

While the disciples left Him – these women stayed with Jesus.

Truth is they are anything but ordinary.

At the foot of the cross they became extraordinary – sons of God.

Finally, there is:

A secret disciple

Verses 42-43:

And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

We know a few things about this man.

He was a good and righteous man according to Luke.

He had been looking for the kingdom of God and had come to suspect that Jesus was sent from God.

Somewhere in the previous three years, He had become a disciple of Jesus. John tells us that he was a secret disciple for fear of the Jews. He kept his thoughts about Jesus secret.

He has a lot to lose. He is not just a member of the Sanhedrin, but a *prominent* member who was rich.

Luke says that Joseph had not consented to the Sanhedrin's decision. In Mark 14:64 we read that everyone present agreed Jesus must die so the inference is that Joseph was not there.

It seems he did not want to go against their decision. He did not want to be branded. He stayed a secret disciple.

But now – a few hours later – he comes out of the shadows and casts his lot with the crucified Jesus.

He stayed secret when Jesus was alive – you would think that he would be even more inclined to stay secret now Jesus was dead. But he didn't.

In asking for the body of Jesus – Joseph was burning every bridge to his old life.

We aren't told what led to this change of heart – but I imagine he was like the centurion and the women – he watched the death of Jesus and determined – truly this man was the Son of God.

And so, this once secret disciple summoned his courage and fully aware of the cost approached Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus.

He chose to join the crucified Christ.

A murdering pagan, some ordinary women, a secret disciple – unlikely people to choose be the first through the curtain – even the runaway eleven disciples seemed more likely.

But this disparate group shows us that men and women of *every* type can enter the curtain and become sons of God.

There is no one out of place at the foot of the cross – no matter who you are or what you have done.

So in closing I want us to reflect on what happened in that six hours on the cross.

Jesus was nailed on that cross one with the Father. He was His beloved Son – united in love from all eternity.

Those at the foot of the cross are us – those who were forsaken. Sinners who could never approach a holy God. Sinners without hope of avoiding the wrath of God.

Then by faith those who trust Christ are united in Him in His death.

So as the the wrath of God falls on Him – the loved One becomes the forsaken one – and the forsaken ones become loved.

When God's wrath is finally poured out, then the curtain splits in two. Now the once forsaken are now sons who can enter.

But the story does not end here. It does not end with Jesus forsaken of the Father. It does not end with us forgiven – sons – but destined to one day die.

The rest of the story comes next week – the resurrection – and it is every bit as incredible as the story of the cross.

But for now I want to focus on the cross. If you are here this morning and you are not a Christian – I want to remind you of two truths.

If God poured out His wrath on His Son – you had better believe He will pour it on you if you do not repent and find refuge in Christ.

But because God did pour out His wrath on Jesus – you can repent – you can turn to Him – there is a way of escape through the cross of Jesus.

He forgave the man who put Him on the cross – He will forgive you – if you ask.

For the Christians here this morning – we need to remember the sheer cost of the cross.

Jesus the sinless Lamb of God became sin for us. He did this to make us righteous.

This should inspire us day by day to think of the cross – not just at Easter, not just at the Lord's Table, not just on Sunday – but every day.

It should motivate us to share the glory of the cross – to tell others to flee the wrath to come – to live holy – and to fall on our knees thanks Jesus now and for all eternity for the sacrifice He made for us.

This is the power of the cross.

Forsaken! – For Us **(Mark 15:33-43 March 6, 2016)**

Main Point: The Son became forsaken so the forsaken could become sons.

Read: Mark 15:33-43

- Why is the cross so important we focus on it so regularly – Sunday, Lord's Table, Good Friday?
- What is the wrath of God?
- What is the Day of the Lord?
- What does it mean that the Son becomes forsaken?
- Why does God have to pour out His wrath on sin? Why can't He choose not to – or just forgive us?
- What does the word propitiation mean? How is Jesus a propitiation for our sins?
- How do the darkness and earthquakes indicate that the wrath of the Day of the Lord meant for us is poured out on Jesus?
- How can Jesus' punishment actually pay our penalty? Is that fair and just?
- Why can six hours on the cross satisfy the wrath of God against every saint? Is this just or not – why?
- What is the significance of Gal. 2:20, Rom. 5:9 and 2 Cor. 5:21 in helping us understand the cross?
- What did it cost Jesus to bear our wrath and become forsaken?
- Why is the cross not a form of child abuse?
- What does the tearing of the curtain in the Temple signify? What does it mean for us?
- What do we learn about salvation and forgiveness from the centurion, the women at the cross and from Joseph of Arimathea?
- Why is the cross the only possible way to deal with sin?
- How should our understanding of the cross change how we live, worship, evangelise, prioritise and conduct our lives?
- What is your favourite hymn/song about the cross? Why? What about it moves you and speaks to your heart?

