**Jesus was Forsaken and Died for Us**

Mark 15:33-47 (Key verse 34)

“And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”)

We are at Easter Message once again, its God’s grace if you missed Easter Weekend. However, if you are hearing this again, it is still God’s grace and blessing to you, because we can never hear enough of God’s demonstration of love to us. Many horrible things happened to Jesus after he was captured. As we learned last week, he was humiliated, beaten on his head and flogged many times. The scene was all bloody, painful and distressing. To everyone, this was some ordinary day where those on the cross where punished for crimes against Rome. Little did they know that this was a landmark in history, a day God opened a way for the power of sin in our lives to be done away with. A day in the midst of bloody scene, God’s love was been demonstrated. On the cross, Jesus never said a word, he remained silent. But at three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? It was when God forsook Jesus that Jesus cried out. We want to learn newly today, what did this cry mean? What did it mean to Jesus? What does it mean to us today? Why does it matter now, as in like why cry at this very moment? May God open our hearts and plant his great saving love in our hearts today. Amen!

Look at verse 33, “33At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.” The darkness suggests God’s judgement of sin, we see this in the old testament when God brought judgment over Egypt, Exodus 10:21-23, “21Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness spreads over Egypt—darkness that can be felt.” 22So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. 23No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.” This means that finally the hour had come, God’s full judgement over sin had come.

Let us all read verse 34, “34And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). And so Jesus experienced human humiliation, was beaten, was forsaken even by his disciples and still remained silent. It was when God’s judgement fell upon him, when God the father forsook him that Jesus cried out, Eloi, Eloi, lamasabachathani, My God, My God why have you forsaken me. Let us see what does Jesus’ cry on the cross mean.

**First, Jesus cry on the cross is the demonstration of God’s love for us.** Jesus cry reveals that, God had actually forsaken Jesus. Which means that it is Jesus who is on the hot seat of God’s judgement. We all know that Jesus was holy and had no sin. We also know that, our God is holy. Angels sing, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty. However, it was at this moment that Jesus inherited all our sin. Where the substitution happened. Where the holy exchange happened. And to God sin smells like a dead rotting cat or dog, it is impossible for God to be in some proximity with sin. 1 Corith 5:21 tells us that, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Jesus was made sin for your sake and my sake. And since God does not associate with sin, God the father forsook Jesus. And so Jesus cried out, Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachathani, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me. It was the deepest, most agonizing cry ever. Because Jesus has always been one with the father. Verse 37 says, with a loud cry Jesus breathed his last. Jesus finally died not because of the pain of the nails, or struggling to breath, but because of separation from God. That is why later on Pilate was even surprised that Jesus had died in verse 44.

One commentary said, “Forsaken” indicates that Jesus experienced the alienation that sin causes between man and God (Isaiah 59:2). In other words Jesus paid the full price. In Jesus you and me have no debt before God. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Usually when people talk about love, its all clean and romanticized. Genuine love is sacrificial, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” [John 3:16] what does this mean to you and me? It means we are deeply and greatly loved. God loves you and me. We are greatly loved. It is not a love of words, but God demonstrated his own love for us, while we were still sinners, Jesus died for you and me on that cross.

In this world we will face all kinds of trials and tribulations, family issues, financial issues, failing at achieving our own standards, our own plans failing dismally, health issues, etc. However, no matter what, we should never doubt the love of God. There is this famous verse, Romans 8:38-39, “38For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, k neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is all because of what Jesus did on the cross, Jesus was forsaken on the cross so that you and me may never be forsaken by God. Amen!

**Secondly, Jesus cry on the cross, has granted us full access to God**. Look at verse 37-38, “37With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. 38The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” This curtain separated the holy place from the most holy place. Only the high priests were allowed to enter the most holy place, that means were the only once that had full access to God. However, through Jesus death on the cross, the curtain of the temple was torn. This was a supernatural act, which can only be tributed to God himself. This means that we no longer need a mediator between us and God. However, unfortunately there still Christians who still doubt this. And so they depend on certain people in order to reach God. Some people depend on the dead to mediate for them before God. I know of a certain Church, they have prophets who will go and ask those who have passed, uncles and ants, to assist in choosing a marriage partner. Unfortunately a lot of times, the things we do and practice, questions what Jesus achieved on the cross. It is as though this curtain was not torn. The truth is, God in his divine love, tore the curtain of the temple.

**Third, Jesus cry on the cross is final**. What does this mean? It means Jesus fulfilled all the requirements for you and me to be saved. Jesus, not you or me, met all the requirements for you and me to be saved. In other books Jesus ends up saying, it is finished. However, sadly the cry of Jesus does not assure people the same way. Look at verse 35-36, “35When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.” 36Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said.” Jesus cry still leaves others spiritually blind. They even think they can help Jesus like these people who tried to offer Jesus wine vinegar. They are governed by a self works based salvation. They become self righteous because, Jesus work on the cross is not enough for them. They may say it is enough, however they have become spiritually blind. They are still waiting to see Elijah, which means that they are still waiting for more. However, look at verse 39, “39And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” this is how we should respond, by accepting that truly Jesus is our Messiah. We are saved by the finished work of Jesus. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we are set free. We are free to live for God, because we are free from the power of sin and death. Nothing should ever discourage us to follow Jesus, whatever family backgrounds we come, whatever present or past sin. May we accept Jesus finished work by faith so Jesus can set us free. Amen!

**Fourth, Jesus cry at the cross, reveals God’s faithfulness.** First, Jesus was cared for wile alive. There were some women who were watching from a distance among them, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph and Salome [40]. In verse 41, it says, these women had followed him and cared for Jesus’ needs [41]. Jesus even once said, when someone said they would follow him, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” [Matt 8:20]. When he entered Jerusalem he entered with a donkey though he does not own any donkey. Remember the lord’s supper as well, it was someone’s house. Ultimately, based on next week Sunday message, God raises Jesus from the dead as he promised. Secondly, Jesus is cared for even in death. Look at verse 43, “43Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body.” And so Joseph even brought some linen cloth, took down the body of Jesus wrapped him and paced Jesus in a tomb cut out from a rock. This can be attributed to the fact that Jesus never stopped trusting God, even when God forsook him. That is why Jesus still cried out, “My God”. God was still his heavenly Father. Amen!

**Fifth, Jesus cry at the cross, is ultimately the fulfilment of God’s word**. Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecy. In Psalm 22:1-2,4 we read “1My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? 2My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest…14I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.” In other words, what is happening to Jesus is not some random thing, or some coincidence. It was the fulfillment of God’s plan. It was foretold in scripture, if you continue to read Psalm 22 the details are just shocking.

Lately, I have been challenged as a believer due to a family decision for one income. It is as though the lord wants to challenge certain areas in my life that I had just accepted as the norm. It is clear from this passage that God was intentional for my salvation, Jesus gave his life for me to be freed from power of sin and death. This sin manifests in all kinds of ways. One of the ways has been living a partitioned life, instead of realizing I only have one life. And Jesus died on the cross for the wholeness of my life not for a certain area. For example, my role as a husband, father, leader of this ministry, lecturer at Wits, friend, extended family member, member of society. In all these roles am one person, just different roles. I have been realizing that, In all these roles God is after making me his servant, follower of Jesus. I found myself more intentional about my Christian faith in only certain roles. Even my wife sometimes tells me that, am passive in certain areas in our home, especially the role of a leader in our home. And when I do reflect, I do realize am actually am. Since I find myself not doing bad compared to what other marriages are like I end up thinking am doing well. However, am actually called to follow Jesus, God’s word is the standard not the world. God is after making me his instrument in all areas of my life. And am realizing, there is lots of repenting that still needs to happen. Some of it feels painful because it requires a dying of myself. However, through the cross of Jesus I am encouraged to follow Jesus and rather struggle to repent instead just continuing as normal. This passage is really a great reminder to me that, God is intentional in saving me, and that it is all out of love not performance. It is my prayer to repent of my sinful behaviors of a performance based live with the world, but trust the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Jesus has indeed made me free, please pray with me to trust Jesus, repent and grow as God’s servant in all areas of my roles. Amen.

**In conclusion**, God’s serious about our salvation, it costed Him greatly, He was intentional, how you and me. How are we treating our salvation? Are we casually living our Christian lives or are we intentional in following Jesus and pacing our faith in Jesus? Are we playing with fire, knowing that something might cause us to fall into sin, yet still entertain it in our lives. Are we simply going with the flow in the way we live in this world? Some main point I was leave us with. We learned that, firstly, at the cross Jesus opened a new relationship between us and God. God is not some distant being, whom we need a human mediator to have access to. Psalm 145:18 says, “The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” We now have a love relationship with God. Secondly, at the cross we are made the righteousness of God. Not because of our works but Jesus became our substitution for life. This also means that Christianity is not a competition for good works, but a life of accepting God’s grace and love. I pray that we may truly be moved by God’s love, repent of sinful behaviors and entrust our lives to Jesus. Amen!