



Sermon Notes

Term – Spring 2018

Series – Building to Easter

Gathering & Date – the 10, 25 March

Title – Golgotha

Preacher – Paul Langham

Reading – Mark 15:16-41

Main message of this talk in one sentence – For the Cross to achieve its aim of bringing us ‘in’, Jesus had to be cast ‘out’ – hence his cry of desolation as recorded by Matthew and Mark: ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

Main points –

THE REALITY OF THE CROSS

Psychological and emotional torment

- anticipation (‘My soul is overwhelmed’ – Matthew 26:38, 39)
- arrest as a common criminal (‘a large crowd armed with swords and clubs’ – Matthew 26:47)
- betrayal (‘Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And kissed him’ – Matthew 26:49)
- desertion (‘Then all the disciples deserted him’ – Matthew 26:56)
- false accusation (‘the Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence’ – Matthew 26:59–61)
- betrayal (‘I don’t know the man’ – Matthew 26:74)
- a crowd baying for blood (‘They shouted all the louder, “Crucify him”’ – Matthew 27:23)
- humiliation (‘They stripped him’ – Matthew 27:28)
- mocking (‘They knelt in front of him and mocked him’ – Matthew 27:29)
- intimidation (‘They spat on him ... and struck him ... again and again’ – Matthew 27:30)

Physical trauma

- sleep deprivation (implied in all the texts)
- hunger and thirst (John 19:28)
- the crown of thorns (Matthew 27:29)
- beating (Matthew 27:30)
- flogging (Matthew 27:26)
- crucifixion itself

Spiritual Desolation

- ‘My God, my God, WHY have you forsaken me?’ (Matthew 27:46)

THE ‘WORDS’ FROM THE CROSS

According to the 4 gospels, Jesus uttered 7 ‘words’ (actually short phrases) from the cross during the 6 hours of his crucifixion from 9 am to 3 pm. That different ‘words’ are recorded in different gospels suggests there were various groups of people around the cross, not all necessarily there throughout. Maybe Peter and some of the other disciples were hiding amidst the scoffers? At least one disciple, John, was there, as were 4 women followers.

We must abandon the kind of Hollywood representation of the crucifixion. Jesus in fact would have been only 18 inches or so above any onlookers, and so his words were easy to hear.

1. Father, forgive (Luke 23:34)
2. You will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43)
3. Woman, behold your son (John 19:26-27)
4. My God, my God, WHY...? (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)
5. I thirst (John 19:28)
6. It is finished (John 19:30)
7. Into your hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23:46)

Chris Brown will be speaking on 1, 2 & 7 at the 5 this evening ...

THE FOURTH 'WORD'

It is this 'word' which is at the heart of the reality of the Cross – in order for us to be reconnected to God, the Son of God had to be disconnected

About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'). (Matthew 27:46)

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?') (Mark 15:34)

God – the standard Greek word 'theos', not the usual familiar 'abba' Father: it's as if, all of a sudden, God is a stranger to himself ...

Why – a cry of bewilderment and incomprehension

Have – the word is in the aorist tense: a sudden act like a stab or a thunderclap, taking Jesus by surprise

You – a poignant word, full of longing for an intimate relationship suddenly ruptured

Forsaken – the word 'egkataleipó' carries the sense of abandonment, being left in the lurch, deserted

Me – Jesus' self understanding of his intimacy with the Father has been ripped away, leaving him utterly alone

For the Cross to achieve our homecoming and welcome by the Father, the Son had to experience abandonment. For us to become part of the Father's family, Jesus had to be disowned. For us to become a royal priesthood, Jesus our High Priest had to sacrifice himself. For us to be brought 'in', Jesus had to be cast 'out'

Last week, Paul Sankey spoke from Psalm 23, and suggested that the image of the 'valley of shadow' may have been in Jesus' mind in Gethsemane ...

We can be fairly certain that Psalm 22 was in Jesus' mind as he hung on the Cross – read it slowly, allowing the vivid imagery to become a meditation on what the Son of God suffered for you.

For further thought and prayer –

Read Psalm 22 slowly, repeatedly – how did the psalmist so accurately describe the torment of the Son of God, centuries before he walked the earth, centuries before Crucifixion was used?

Spend some time contemplating the psychological, emotional & physical torment of the Cross
Then consider the Spiritual Desolation of that cry ...

Allow prayers of sorrow, lamentation and thankfulness form around your sense of the suffering Jesus underwent for you.

Then allow Psalm 22:3-5 & 22-31 to raise your hope as these verses must have done for Jesus

Psalm 22

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?
- ² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.
- ³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises.
- ⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted and you delivered them.
- ⁵ To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
- ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
- ⁸ 'He trusts in the Lord,' they say,
'let the Lord rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him.'
- ⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.
- ¹⁰ From birth I was cast on you;
from my mother's womb you have been my God.
- ¹¹ Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.
- ¹² Many bulls surround me;
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- ¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey
open their mouths wide against me.
- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted within me.
- ¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.
- ¹⁶ Dogs surround me,
a pack of villains encircles me;

they pierce my hands and my feet.
¹⁷ All my bones are on display;
people stare and gloat over me.
¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.
¹⁹ But you, Lord, do not be far from me.
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.
²⁰ Deliver me from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dogs.
²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
²² I will declare your name to my people;
in the assembly I will praise you.
²³ You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honour him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
²⁴ For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.
²⁵ From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;
before those who fear you I will fulfil my vows.
²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the Lord will praise him –
may your hearts live for ever!
²⁷ All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,
²⁸ for dominion belongs to the Lord
and he rules over the nations.
²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him –
those who cannot keep themselves alive.
³⁰ Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord.
³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness,
declaring to a people yet unborn:
He has done it!