

Daily Bible Study

“Forsaken & Victorious”

Mark 15:34-47

March 17 – March 23, 2013

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –We take for our text this week **Mark 15:34-47**. So much is contained in this passage and as we approach “Holy Week” it is in God’s providence that our series finds us here at Golgotha. Last week we ended by seeing the earth shrouded in darkness (**verse 33**). For once in his record Mark is quite precise about the details of time. It was the third hour (9 a.m.) when they crucified Jesus and there was darkness over the whole land from the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth hour (3 p.m.) when Jesus cried out and died. We approach this scene, one so terrible that the sky was unnaturally darkened as if to hide the horror of the Divine transaction that was about to take place between The Father and His Son. Read our text **Mark 15:34-47**: “*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, “Look, He is calling for Elijah!” Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.” And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!” There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, humble me & teach me the glorious truth of this Sacred Scripture.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 15:34**: “*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me”*”. This statement, which is known as “the cry of dereliction” are Jesus’ only

words from the cross recorded in Mark’s account. There is little doubt that these words point us quite properly, to the beginning of **Psalm 22** and we here find “David’s greater Son” quoting the words originally declared by King David himself. There are some differing opinions as to “how much of the mood” of **Psalm 22** is to be captured and carried into this quoting found in **Mark 15** as in **Psalm 22** we find a vindication and affirmation of the sufferer as well as the fact the Psalm ends with victory and assurance. It is my personal opinion that we are perfectly warranted to see the victory and assurances written in **Psalm 22** directly pointing to The Saviors victory. In fairness, those who do not see such a direct correlation would argue that Mark’s passage where he writes Jesus’ quoting of the **Psalm** does not match the current mood or circumstances of the story. Nevertheless, we can agree that these only words of Jesus from the cross in Mark are among other things, at least there to remind us of the enormous cost to Jesus, of obedience to the Father’s will. This quote and cry of dereliction is in perfect harmony with Jesus prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He was “*troubled, deeply distressed*” and where His soul was “*exceedingly sorrowful, even to death*” (**14:32–34**). Furthermore, “*the cup*” about which He then prayed, is at this current moment being drunk to the very bottom (**36**). The ransom price is being paid to set “*many*” free (**10:45**). The bread and wine of the covenant is being offered, “*shed for many*”, and the covenant promise being sealed (**14:22–24**). This horrible cry, which in Greek means “to be left behind alone in a deserted place, abandoned and forsaken”, reflects the awfulness of obediently fulfilling the Divine work set before Jesus, the spiritual work described elsewhere in Scripture so graphically (**Romans 3:21–26, 2 Corinthians 5:18–19, 21, 1 Peter 1:18–20**). Jesus was in fact bearing on Himself all the awful consequences of the sin and sinfulness of His people before God. He becomes cursed, and for the first time ever the Father’s face is turned away from His Beloved Son so that all who come by faith to and in Him might be set free of those consequences and be brought at peace to the heavenly Father, and have His face shine upon them in full. From this deep darkness comes this cry of desolation and as usual, Holy Scripture expresses the truth and captures it splendidly.

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, help me to understand the horror of being forsaken by You and see that my sin and its consequences deserves such treatment from You, the Holy God. Thank You Jesus for being cursed for me and taking the guilt, shame, and punishment I deserve. Holy Spirit, help me to repent of my sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ now and always.*

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 15:35-38**: “*Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, “Look, He is calling for Elijah!” Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.” And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*” The cry of Jesus that we studied yesterday was most likely a Greek transliteration by Mark of an Aramaic form of **Psalm 22:1**. Jesus and the Apostles (and all Jews in Palestine of the first century) spoke Aramaic. Mark, writing to Romans, always translates these Aramaic phrases, which Peter remembered so well.

These wicked mockers whether intentionally or not distort the first two words of Jesus and what is a very interesting thing to note, disregard the rest. We saw yesterday the phrase Jesus cried from the cross is so startling as He felt so alienated from the Father. Elijah was traditionally the prophet who would come in times of trouble and before the Messiah (**Malachi 3:1–6, 4:4–6**); therefore, the people at the scene may have assumed Jesus was praying for him to come help Him. He is offered a drink and mocked. But there was nothing more to happen now as Jesus *cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last*. Death by crucifixion could last for days but Mark wants us to know that when Jesus had completed His work, He died. Even here he was in control. Now we have a shift; as Lenski comments, “Jesus is dead, His lips are silent; God now speaks in a language of His own.” After Jesus dies we read of *the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom*. According to Alfred Edersheim, in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, the Veil before the Most Holy Place was 40 cubits (60 feet) long, and 20 (30 feet) wide, and the thickness of the palm of the hand (4+ inches), weighed about 4 tons, and was wrought in 72 squares joined together. It was said to need 300 priests to manipulate it. He goes on to explain that if the veil could not have been torn in two by a mere earthquake or the fall of the lintel. Obviously it could only have been torn by God Himself. The tearing of the temple curtain *from top to bottom* obviously has great symbolic meaning as well. This veil was between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (**Exodus 26:31–35**), where God’s immediate presence was felt to be. The high priest would enter through that curtain once a year on behalf of all the people on the Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 16**). The tearing of this curtain is used symbolically in the New Testament to describe the immediate access of Christians to God. Jesus, had now come and had entered into the Holy of Holies of heaven itself with his own all-atoning blood (**Hebrews 9:3–15, 6:19, 10:19–20**). As Jesus dies the way is truly opened directly to God for all who come by faith. All at once this mighty curtain was torn as if an unseen hand had severed it by starting at the top and the glorious tearing of the curtain from *top to bottom*, signifies God’s initiative and action in Christ toward us sinners (**2 Corinthians 5:19**). We must constantly remember this in all our reflections on the meaning of Christ’s death. The two pieces fell apart and opened and exposed the Holy of Holies forever.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thanks for Your initiative toward me in Christ. It is You that has provided salvation and opened the way of salvation while I was lost and sinful (Romans 5:8).*

THURSDAY – Mark 15:39-41: “*So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!” There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.*” The centurion knew how Jesus was brought to the cross He had seen the conduct of Jesus throughout. He witnessed the mockery of the Jews and their religious leaders (**Matthew 27:43**) and his soldiers and the words about Jesus being “God’s Son” had been part of that mockery. Perhaps he heard how Pilate had examined Jesus on this very point (**John 19:7**). Then he sees

Jesus die, the loud cry “*Father,*” and immediately the earthquake and rocks splitting. Combining all this, Mark emphasizing the impression made on this man by the manner in which Jesus himself died, he exclaims, “*Truly this Man was the Son of God!*”! A hardened Roman soldier who had fought in many a campaign and he had seen many men die had never seen men die like this and he was sure that Jesus was the Son of God. Luke reports that the centurion said: “*This one was righteous,*” δίκαιος, and thus pronounced a verdict upon Jesus, which was the opposite of the Jewish verdict. Tradition has this Gentile, who is called Longinus, coming to faith beneath the dead Savior’s cross. We will look more deeply at this, this Lord’s Day but suffice to say Jesus attracted many with His teaching and healing but it is the cross which speaks straight to the hearts of men and women. There were also *women looking on from afar*; bewildered, heartbroken, sorrowful—but there nonetheless. They loved Jesus so much that they could not leave. Genuine love clings to Christ even when the intellect cannot understand and it holds on amidst the worst of circumstances (**1 Corinthians 13**).

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thank You for clearly demonstrating to us Jesus Your Son and for giving us eyes to see Him, repentance to turn to Him, and faith to believe Him!*

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Mark 15:42-47: “*Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid.*” The struggle is over and the battle won as Jesus’ work which the Father gave Him is finished (**John 17:4, 19:30**). We read it was already time of *preparation for the Sabbath*, and there is now no time to lose as it would be violating the law to work on the Sabbath and keep a dead man on the cross overnight (**Deuteronomy 21:23**). Frequently the bodies of criminals were never buried at all, but were simply taken down and left for the vultures and the scavenging wild dogs to deal with. But here, as Scripture prophesied (**Isaiah 53:9**) the man *rich* in prominence and wealth, Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate and *asked for the body of Jesus*. He was man who *was himself waiting for the kingdom of God*. When Pilate checked the facts of Jesus death with the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph for burial. Among the many interesting details of Jesus burial we see the power of Jesus life and death on men from the actions of both Joseph and the centurion. Jesus’ words began to be fulfilled that *when he was lifted up from the earth he would draw all people to himself (John 12:32)*.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I thank & praise You holy trinity for the wonderful & powerful good news of the gospel. Help me always learn, love, and look to Jesus.*