**Calvary Fellowship 4.2.2023 Matthew 27:32-50 “Cross My Heart”**

* **So I had a weird thing happen to me last week - my family was at home & we were all swimming in our swimming pool**
* My 11-year old daughter Mia goes inside the house for something & then a few minutes later I decide to go inside & get lunch started
* But when I go to open the door, the handle comes off the door & I am stuck outside - thankfully Mia went inside or I’d still be stuck outside my house
* So I make lunch & then I go to Home Depot to buy a new door handle
* Truth be told, I bought 2 b/c I tried to take the handle off the other door that leads outside & in the process I broke that door handle as well
* So I go to Home Depot & come back w/ the door handles & start installing the 1st one - it’s not working the way it’s supposed to & I’m very frustrated
* It works, but it won’t lock - so Carey says, “Install the other 1 & see if it works”
* So I install the other 1 & it works fine - then I go back to the original door that was giving me problems & I take the whole thing apart
* I watch a Youtube video about how to install it & the girl spokesperson is discouraging me - “This door system is so easy to install. Anyone can do it.”
* Apparently not lady! - So I decide to take the entire thing apart b/c Albert Einstein said that U don’t understand something unless U take it apart
* Actually, I don’t know if he said that, but it sounds pretty good
* So I take it apart & I reassemble it - Then I connect it to the door & the piece that wasn’t working, the handle lock is now working
* I make a typical man, bold proclamation, “It is finished! By the power vested in me & the power of Grayskull, I have done it!”
* All I had to do was tighten the screws - so I tighten the screws & when I do, the handle lock won’t work
* So I take the entire thing apart - by the way, more than 2 hours have past since I got back from Home Depot - I put the thing back together a 2nd time
* Then I reassemble it & it works - I just have to screw it in & keep it working
* So I screw it in ever so slightly & when I’m done I test it and… it doesn’t work
* And I say, “I’m done. I don’t care. Let’s move.” And that’s how it stayed
* So now if U want to lock the door to my house, U shake like you’re inside of a blender & the bolt slides in
* This is the problem w/ human accomplishment - it’s imperfect - but when Jesus said the words “It is finished” - it was perfect
* It was perfect b/c Jesus gave us what we needed before we even knew we needed it - but for it to be perfect for us, it was terrible for Him
* B/c that’s how love works - love involves sacrifice
* Before asking my wife to marry me, I took a 2nd job so I could afford to buy her the ring - when she tells the story our engagement, she talks about the sacrifice that went into it
* **I’ve told this story close to a million times b/c it was a such an act of love & my kids asked me about it recently, so it’s important that I bring it up**
* When my wife & I got married, I sold my 1983 Gibson Les Paul Standard so we could afford to move into our 1st apartment - It was the only guitar I owned
* But I sold the guitar b/c I loved my wife & as U can imagine it was an incredible gesture on my part - but It was a traumatic moment in my life
* My wife has heard me tell this story many times & the last time I told it she said, “U sold a guitar. U got me. Get over it!”
* “U used to play the guitar. Now U play w/ me. Get your life into perspective!”
* It’s hard to argue w/ that airtight logic
* **So this is message #45 in our series through the Gospel of Matthew & Jesus has been arrested, sentenced to die, & carried away for crucifixion**
* And while this is gruesome, this is the greatest act of love that the world has ever known - why? B/c we usually sacrifice for people who love us in return
* Jesus died for every person - mostly of who were indifferent towards Him
* “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8 NKJV)
* Most of us know that Jesus died, but we don’t know how Jesus died & I believe when U know how He died, you’ll love Him that much more
* B/c you’ll really see how much you’re loved by Him…

**———(v. 32-37)———**

**#1 - The Cross is Changing Your Legacy**

* There’s several things happening here that are important - but w/ some help from Simon of Cyrene, Jesus arrive at Golgotha, the place of the skull
* Golgotha is the Hebrew name for it - the Latin name is Calvary
* The stye crucify Jesus, they try to give him something to drink
* “And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.” (Mark 15:23 NKJV)
* This was to dull the pain, but He refuses it & then the soldiers gamble to take His clothes & that’s actually a fulfillment of a prophecy about Messiah in Ps. 22
* “For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” (Psalm 22:16-18 NKJV)
* Every Jewish male wore 5 pieces of clothing:
* #1 - a headband around his forehead/ #2 - sandals on his feet/ #3 - a belt
* #4 - an inner cloak (like night shirt) #5 - an outer tunic or robe
* Romans crucified people naked which is why the clothes became available
* John 19 tells us there were 4 soldiers & they each took a piece
* But there was the inner cloak & they rolled the dice instead of ripping it
* **But I want to talk about this random person that we meet - Simon**
* Who is Simon of Cyrene - he was a Jew from Cyrene, which is in North Africa & he was in town for the Passover & was in the crowd watching everything
* And then he gets picked to carry Jesus cross - Roman soldiers could force U to do stuff like that & U had no recourse
* And I’m sure Simon as thinking, “I can’t believe this. I’m here on vacation for the feast & now I’m carrying some criminal’s cross”
* But that experience changed him & his family
* “And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.” (Mark 15:21 NKJV)
* When Mark wrote his Gospel in the city of Rome, he mentions Simon as the dad of Alexander & Rufas - why? B/c they were known in Christian community
* Simon became a Christian, as did his whole family
* “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.” (Romans 16:13 ESV)
* I don’t know about U, but I’d want my kids to have friends like Paul
* Do U know how that happens? Dads, it’s when U bear the cross like Simon
* U start passionately walking w/ Jesus & they will follow after U
* **When my Xander was 3, he wanted to do everything just like his dad**
* It was very sweet - everyday he wanted to make sure we matched
* If we didn’t, he’d go in his room & change his shirt - but 1 day I was wearing an orange polo & he doesn’t own an orange shirt
* So he said, “Dad, U have to put on a new shirt b/c I don’t have orange.”
* Well 1 night we ordered take-out for dinner & I like to add dressing to the salad by adding the dressing & then shaking the container to mix it up
* So I got my salad & added my dressing, but I turned to grab some napkins & in the 2 seconds that I turned away Xander grabbed the salad
* He said, “Dad, I be like U” & he started shaking the box to mix in the dressing, except he was holding the wrong end of the box & the salad went everywhere
* It was all over him, all over the floor & most importantly, all over me
* So Xander wipes his eyes of vinaigrette & says, “That was not like Dad”
* Dads, listen to me, your kids are modeling their lives after U - they might say they aren’t - they might say it’s not true, but it is
* If U want to transform your family, follow the example of our brother Simon
* He carried the cross & everything changed & he has a legacy that has lasted for generations

**———(v. 38-44)———**

**#2 - The Cross is Changing My Eternity**

* **Everyone around the cross is mocking Jesus - even those who were being crucified w/ Him**
* But then something happens & 1 of them has a change of tune
* “Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” (Luke 23:39-43 NKJV)
* Think about what this man asks Jesus - Jesus is being crucified next to him
* He knows it’s the end for him, but he doesn’t believe it’s the end for Jesus
* He comes to the revelation that not even the cross can stop Jesus
* So he addresses Jesus as “Lord” - he is submitting himself to Jesus & is asking Jesus for hope in the resurrection of the dead
* Jesus gives him even better news - that today, he will be w/ Jesus in paradise
* **That’s the promise Jesus gives to all of us - that the moment we take our last breath on planet earth, we can take our 1st breath in His kingdom**
* Here’s the reality - it was only in those last moments of his life that this man really started to life
* Why do I say this? B/c we were all created to know God & God loved Him so much that He parked him right next to his son on the last day of his life
* **It’s amazing how in this guy’s moment of separation - when he was taken from his family & his life was about to be taken, Jesus was next to him**
* **I used to live in Miami Lakes years ago & I would play the par 3 golf course in the evening sometimes when I started playing golf**
* 1 night I was going to play w/ a couple of friends, but they cancelled, so I decided to play the round by myself
* I got the 2nd hole, which on that course is only 80 yards - I hit it w/ my pitching wedge & when I got on the green, I couldn’t find my ball
* I was looking around in the rough & still couldn’t find it - it was dusk so it was a little hard to see, even w/ the lights on
* Anyway, as a last resort I looked inside the hole & my ball was there - I had hit a hole in 1 & I didn’t even think it was possible
* But that wasn’t even the bad part - the worst part was that I was alone & to this day none of my friends believe it actually happened
* **But let’s answer this question: Why did this have to happen at all?**
* Why did Jesus have to die? Why couldn’t God just forgive us?
* Why does God require something to forgive that we don’t require?
* So let’s start at the beginning - where is that? In my sister’s basement playing darts - 1 Thanksgiving we were there & I was playing darts w/ my nephews
* They went upstairs for a second & it was my turn & it hit the bull’s eye
* The only problem was, no 1 saw me & they didn’t believe that it happened
* They said, ‘Uncle Robert, you’re always joking around.” - “I’m not kidding!”
* Now even if I hit the bull’s eye once, I still miss the mark regularly
* I bring this up b/c the word “sin” is “Hamartia” in Greek & it’s an archery term
* It refers to missing the mark - it’s aiming for the bull’s eye & missing
* “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)
* When I mess up, when I say what I shouldn’t, or do what I know is wrong – it’s me missing the mark of perfection that God has established
* **Here’s the next issue - what’s the penalty for missing the bull’s eye?**
* At the beginning of creation, God set His standard to Adam & Eve
* “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17)
* Here’s the price for missing the mark - death - the harshest sentence possible
* This is the part that people have a problem w/ - we think that’s too strong
* **We struggle w/ it & say, “God should forgive me b/c I’m generally good.”**
* That may be true, but the goal isn’t generally good – That’s not the bull’s eye
* **Good enough isn’t the standard - perfection is the standard**
* “And the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as the person who has broken all of God's laws. For the same God who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” So if you murder someone, you have broken the entire law, even if you do not commit adultery.” (James 2:10-11)
* That’s like telling the police officer that pulls you over for going 80 in a 45, “But officer, look at all the laws I wasn’t breaking. B/c of that I shouldn’t be ticketed.”
* That’s not the way it works – justice demands payment - that’s why Jesus died
* So God can be totally just by setting the highest standard & the harshest penalty, but He can also be incredibly loving by paying the price for us
* **Here’s the deal: I forgive arbitrarily - that is, I forgive who I want, if I want**
* God’s forgiveness isn’t arbitrary - we want God to be just & He is
* So if He’s going to be just & forgive me, He has to forgive U – but what would happen if He only forgave certain people?
* We would cry, “Outrage! That’s not just…That’s not fair.”
* But what God did is that He set the standard to satisfy His justice, ensure fairness, & show His incredible love for us
* B/c although God’s justice demands a standard of perfection, God in His grace sent His Son to meet the demands of the Father
* So He says, “Here is what constitutes good – be perfect. But b/c I know you can’t be perfect, I’ll be perfect for you.”
* That’s why Jesus died - that’s why God can offer forgiveness to anyone who comes to Him through the cross of Jesus - that’s what makes it good news

**———(v. 45-50)———**

**#3 - The Cross is Proving God’s Love**

* **Jesus made 7 statements from the cross - this is statement #4**
* It’s a quotation from Psalm 22 - a Psalm about the sufferings of the Messiah
* But why would Jesus say that He was forsaken? B/c He was quoting the Bible to those who were mocking
* **Jews had a system of teaching & learning called “Remez” or hint**
* That’s why Jesus asked so many questions – it was part of His teaching style
* But the “Remiz” would be a question pertaining to a Bible passage
* So the rabbi would quote a text, but the answer was in the verse before or after
* If question was, “What color is the sky?” Rabbi would say, “Well, roses are red”
* If U don’t realize that, the Gospels might seem a little odd at times
* B/c there are moments when Jesus says something to the Pharisees & the next verse says, “And they decided to kill Jesus.”
* And you’re thinking, “Did I miss something? B/c man these guys on edge.”
* No – if U understand the remez, U know that He’s saying something against them & they were very bothered by that
* Jesus is quoting Psalm 22 b/c there’s a verse that pictures this moment
* All of Psalm 22 its a picture of this moment, but this is a specific picture
* “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’” (Psalm 22:6-8 NKJV)
* **The Hebrew word for worm is “Tolaith" - it’s also translated “Scarlet” b/c these worms is how they dyed clothing scarlet**
* But the Tolaith worm would reproduce by fastening itself to a tree & would die bearing it’s young
* Then the young would eat the body of the worm & all that would left is a scarlet mark on the tree & after about 3 days or so, the spot would dry, turn white & flake off like snow
* “‘Come now, and let us reason together’, says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” (Isaiah 1:18 NKJV)
* **So I want to close by talking about crucifixion - but most of know that Jesus died for us, but few of know how Jesus died for us**
* And for the record, I’m indebted to incredible work of Dr. Mark Eastman, where he details the crucifixion from a physician’s perspective in The Agony of Love
* First, the crossbar of the crucifix weight about 75-100 lbs
* The victim was then placed on his back, arms stretched out and nailed to the cross bar. The nails, which were generally about 7-9 inches long
* The nails were placed between the bones of the forearm & the small bones of the hands (the carpal bones). The nail placement had several effects.
* First, it ensured that the victim would indeed hang there until dead
* 2nd, a nail placed at this point would sever the largest nerve in the hand called the median nerve. The severing of this nerve is a medical catastrophe.
* In addition to severe burning pain the destruction of this nerve causes permanent paralysis of the hand.
* The positioning of the feet is probably the most critical part of the mechanics of crucifixion - The knees were flexed about 45 degrees & bent downward
* An iron nail about 7-9 inches long was driven through the feet between the 2nd and 3rd metatarsal bones. In this position the nail would sever the dorsal pedal artery of the foot, but the resulting bleeding would be insufficient to cause death
* The resulting position on the cross sets up a horrific sequence of events which results in a slow, painful death
* Having been pinned to the cross, the victim now has an impossible position to maintain. As the strength of the legs gives out, the weight of the body must now be borne by the arms and shoulders
* The result is that within a few minutes of being placed on the cross, the shoulders will become dislocated
* Minutes later the elbows and wrists become dislocated. The result of these dislocations is that the arms are as much as 6-9 inches longer than normal
* With the arms dislocated, considerable body weight is transferred to the chest, causing the rib cage to be elevated in a state of perpetual inhalation
* Consequently, in order to exhale the victim must push down on his feet to allow the rib muscles to relax. The problem is that the victim cannot push very long because the legs are extremely fatigued.
* As time goes on, the victim is less and less able to bear weight on the legs, causing further dislocation of the arms and further raising of the chest wall, making breathing more and more difficult.
* "The result of this process is a series of catastrophic physiological effects. Because the victim cannot maintain adequate ventilation of the lungs, the blood oxygen level begins to diminish and the blood carbon dioxide (CO2) level begins to rise. This rising CO2 level stimulates the heart to beat faster in order to increase the delivery of oxygen and the removal of CO2.However, due to the pinning of the victim and the limitations of oxygen delivery, the victim cannot deliver more oxygen and the rising heart rate only increases oxygen demand. So this process sets up a vicious cycle of increasing oxygen demand-which cannot be met-followed by an ever increasing heart rate.”
* After several hours the heart begins to fail, the lungs collapse and fill up with fluid, which further decreases oxygen delivery to the tissues. The blood loss and hyperventilation combines to cause severe dehydration.
* That's why Jesus said, "I thirst.” Over a period of several hours the combination of collapsing lungs, a failing heart, dehydration, and the inability to get adequate oxygen supplies to the tissues cause the eventual death of the victim.
* The victim, in effect, cannot breath properly and slowly suffocates to death
* In cases of severe cardiac stress, such as crucifixion, a victim's heart can even burst. This process is called "Cardiac Rupture."
* Therefore it could be said that Jesus died of a "broken heart!"
* **Listen, Jesus was forsaken so U would never have to be**
* All of the ancient religions in the 1st century believed that if U were sick, in trouble, poor, or hurt - that this was a sign that U are forsaken by God
* But Christianity comes along & says, “Our leader Jesus was forsaken by God when He was crucified so U would never be forsaken.”
* He was the 1 who was restless on the cross, shouting “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” - So we could have a rest that’s found in Him
* So if you’ve ever wondered if God loves U, look no further than the cross
* B/c at the cross is where Jesus didn’t simply say that He loves U, He proved that love by dying for U
* “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45-46 NKJV)
* Jesus is the merchant & U are the pearl of great price - and He sold everything, gave His life, all so He could have U - that’s how loved U are…