


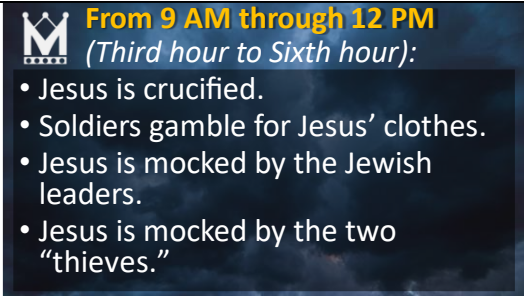



S l i d e 1		<p>Prayer</p> <p>Dear God,</p> <p>As we focus on the 3 hours in which your Son suffered in unnatural darkness, we are reminded of how alone he was despite the crowd gathered all around Him. We can relate to being uneasy in darkness and the feeling of being alone in a crowd but we can't begin to fathom what Jesus experienced as he became sin for us. All we can do is say thank you for the love and grace He extended to each of us who seek Him.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
S l i d e 2		<p>Today's sermon is entitled "The Death of the King."</p> <p>Pastor Erwin McManus once said:</p> <p><i>Jesus' death wasn't to free us from dying, but to free us from the fear of death. Jesus came to liberate us so that we could die up front and then live. Jesus Christ wants to take us to places where only dead men and women can go.</i></p>

		<p>What a great reminder of the true significance and necessity of His death for us.</p>
<p>S i d e 3</p>		<p>Today we will explore three key aspects of Jesus' death on the cross and the events which immediately followed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will begin by exploring the greatest agony Jesus experienced on the cross, the agony of separation. • We will then look at several miracles that immediately follow Jesus' death. • Finally, we will look at the devoted women who become central figures in His ministry including the events leading up to Jesus' resurrection.
<p>S i d e 4</p>		<p>Last week Pastor Ryan took us through the initial events of Jesus' crucifixion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The events that Pastor Ryan shared last week were all events that transpired from 9 am – 12 pm, all of which took place in normal sunlight. However, my text will take us

		<p>from daylight to dark. Our slides today will remind us of that shift.</p>
S l i d e s		<p>The first thought that I would like to share is entitled:</p> <p>The Agony of Separation</p> <p>Turn with me to Matthew 27:45-50:</p> <p><i>⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.</i></p>



From 12 PM through 3 PM
(Sixth hour to Ninth hour):

◆ **An Unnatural Darkness.**

- ◆ Not an eclipse.
- ◆ Over the “land”.
- ◆ A symbol of God’s judgment.

We are now looking at events which all happened between 12 noon and 3 pm, or, to use the biblical terms, from the sixth to ninth hours.

The key thing to understand is that this was not just any darkness. It was an unnatural darkness. Many have tried to provide a natural explanation for this darkness, asserting that it was an eclipse. However, these events take place during the Passover celebrations. Passover always occurs during the new moon. It’s impossible for an eclipse to happen during a new moon.

Our text tells us that this supernatural darkness took place **“over the land.”** We’re not sure how extensive this darkness was. Likely the darkness encompassed Jerusalem and the surrounding region.

- There is an interesting historical confirmation. The Roman historian Phlegon records an unusual darkness and earthquake around the time of Jesus’ crucifixion.

- There is also a tremendous prophetic text predicting this event. In Amos 8:9-10 we read:

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. ¹⁰ I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation. I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.

These words were a prediction of God’s judgment. Darkness often indicates the judgment and wrath of God.



From 12 PM through 3 PM
(Sixth hour to Ninth hour):

◆ **The cry of dereliction.**

- ◆ A cry of despair or a proclamation of victory?
- ◆ “My God” vs. “Father”.
- ◆ The true agony of the cross.

One of the key moments just before Jesus’ death is the first time he cries out with a loud voice. Theologians call it “the cry of dereliction.”

Dereliction is abandonment or neglect. Most agree that Jesus is quoting from Psalm 22:1:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

The cry, “***Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?***” is not in Hebrew, but in Aramaic. We see in our text that some mistake these words, believing that Jesus is crying out to “Eliyahu” the Hebrew and Aramaic pronunciation of Elijah the prophet. Many believed that since Elijah never died that he was a spiritual deliverer to those in distress. This is likely the moment where Jesus says, “***I thirst***” in John 19:28, explaining the action of the guard offering Jesus a drink. It may have been a compassionate act or it may have been cruelly intended to extend Jesus’ time on the cross.


But let's return to Jesus' cry. Some suggest that these words were actually a proclamation of victory. The rationale for this is the closing words of the 22nd Psalm:

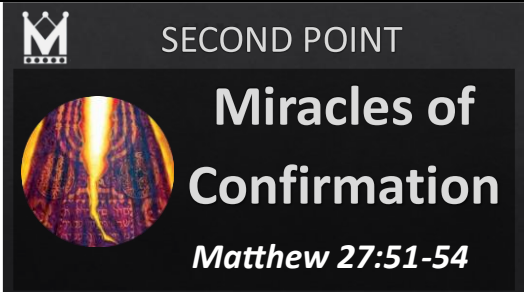
³⁰ Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; ³¹ they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

It is true that this Psalm ends on a positive note, but Jesus doesn't quote from the end of the Psalm. I think it best that we see this cry as a desperate cry. Jesus feels abandoned.

There is a very unique moment in this text. Throughout this gospel Jesus has always referred to God as ***"Father."*** This is the only time he says, ***"My God."*** It's another indication that Jesus is experiencing a disruption in His close relationship with His Father.

The cry of dereliction, ***'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me'***, marks the moment of our redemption. This is the moment

		<p>where Jesus takes on the onus of our sins. This is the instant in time where the Eternal Son of God becomes sin and His Father turns his back on Him. Eternal harmony and fellowship has been disrupted. There is no more agonizing death than a crucifixion. However, here is the deepest moment of agony for Jesus. He has identified with sinners so completely that he is abandoned by His Holy Father.</p> <p>Sometime after this first cry, Jesus speaks the word, “tetelestai”, “it is finished.” The transaction is complete. Sinners have been redeemed.</p>
S i d e 8	<div>From 12 PM through 3 PM (Sixth hour to Ninth hour):</div> <div><p>◆ The second loud cry</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The “cryless” death of the crucified.◆ The significance of Jesus’ loud cry.</div>	<p>Verse 50 marks the moment of death:</p> <p><i>50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.</i></p> <p>The volume of this cry is very important. Typically, the death of the crucified was cryless... silent. Extreme blood loss and extensive trauma resulted in a coma preceding death. But Jesus cried out LOUDLY. I would suggest that this part of the text is best understood</p>

		<p>in connection with Luke's words in Luke 23:46, <i>"Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit."</i> Jesus is fully conscious and fully in control. His life could not be taken from Him, so he surrendered it on our behalf, and then He died.</p> <p>Application:</p> <p>If you are a Christian, these words are the rock upon which your faith is built. Jesus was not a victim... He was a victor. He won the battle. He surrendered his life so that he could take it up again and take us with Him!</p>
S l i d e 9		<p>My second point today is entitled:</p> <p>Miracles of Confirmation</p> <p>Let me take us back a little over a month ago when we were celebrating Christmas. The Christmas story is filled with miracles. Angelic dreams, the Star of Bethlehem, the virgin birth. And, of course, the biggest miracle comes at Easter, the Resurrection. However, we seldom reflect on another set of miracles... the miracles immediately following</p>

Jesus' death. I call these miracles of confirmation because these supernatural events confirm that Jesus truly was who He claimed to be.

Look with me at verses 51-54:

⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"



The Miracles After the Crucifixion

1. The torn veil.



- ◇ The outer veil?
- ◇ The inner veil?

1. The first of these miracles is the torn veil.

The moment Jesus dies, Matthew tells us that the veil in the Temple tore from top to bottom. We tend to picture a big curtain, but that is totally inadequate an image. In Jesus' day, the Temple veil was new and improved. It was 20 feet wide by 60 feet long and 4 inches thick. This is not a cloth you are going to rip with your hands. It would take great force to rend such a veil and its ripping would be thunderous. Matthew doesn't tell us which veil was torn.

- It's possible that the outer veil was torn. This would be visible to many and could well have indicated a message of judgment upon the Temple which in a few decades would be destroyed by the son of the Emperor.
- However, it is more likely that it was the inner veil that was torn in half. This is the veil that separated the Holy Place

	<p>from the Holy of Holies, the place where only the High Priest could go once a year. At one time the Holy of Holies had the Ark of the Covenant inside and the Mercy Seat with the Cherubim statues atop the Ark. But the Ark goes missing since Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed the Temple. It may well have been hidden before Nebuchadnezzar's raid. All that remained in the Holy of Holies in Jesus' day was a raised stone platform indicating where the Ark should be. This elevated bit of flooring was the place where the High Priest scattered his blood. This was the place of atonement. And the tearing of the veil would indicate that Jesus has removed the barrier between men and God. I believe that this is the veil which was torn and the message that God intended to convey.</p>
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S i d e 1 1	 The Miracles After the Crucifixion 2. The shaking of the earth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Global? ◇ Local? 	2. Another miracle is the shaking of the earth, a great earthquake. Earthquakes are not miraculous, in and of themselves. But like the veil, this is a miracle of timing. The fact that the earth was shaken and the rocks were split at the very moment of Jesus' death is significant. This could have been a global event but it was more likely limited to the immediate area. However, this earthquake sets up the next miracle. It is the strangest one of all... the miracle which you will not see in any of the great biblical epic movies.
S i d e 1 2	 The Miracles After the Crucifixion 3. The tombs of the "holy ones". <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Who are the "holy ones"? ◇ When are they resurrected? ◇ Are they resurrected like Jesus or Lazarus? 	3. The tombs of the "holy ones." Look at verses 52-53 again: <i>⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.</i> Why have none of the movie producers ever portrayed this. I

think the answer is because it's confusing.

- **Who are the “holy ones”?**

- Were they recently departed righteous people from Jerusalem?
- Were they the ancient prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel?
- Were they God's friends like Abraham and King David?
- Another key question. When did they rise? Did they rise the moment of Jesus' death. If so, what did they do for the days between Jesus' death and resurrection... sit there in their open graves waiting?
- One more perplexing question. Were they resurrected like Jesus or like Lazarus? Did they live for a time and die again, or did they receive their resurrection bodies early and were they then translated into heaven?

	<p>Do you see why the preachers, teachers and movie directors avoid this dramatic moment? It's shrouded in questions. I can't answer these questions beyond a shadow of a doubt, but I am willing to share some personal conclusions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. First, I lean towards the "holy ones" being righteous people from Jerusalem. The rising of the righteous from their graves and the wicked remaining in their graves would have been a powerful testimony confirming Jesus' power.2. Secondly, I believe that the graves were opened at the time of Jesus' death. The rich were buried in caves. But most people were buried above ground, covered in stones. These graves were exposed and could not be recovered until after the Passover. However, I believe that the dead in these exposed graves rose after Jesus rose on Easter morning, and then they entered Jerusalem, a powerful
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witness to the resurrected Lord.

Greek scholar, Dr. J.W. Wenham, points out that the Greek manuscripts had no punctuation marks. He suggests a period in the middle of verse 52. Our ESV bibles render the verse this way.

⁵² The tombs also were opened [PERIOD] And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,

With characteristic brevity, Matthew conflates these events so that we will see these miracles as a unity of God's miraculous affirmation of Jesus... He is the grave opener and the giver of life, just as we see in Ezekiel 37, where the dry bones are assembled, incarnated and then separately breathed upon, bringing them to life.

3. Thirdly, were they resurrected like Lazarus or Jesus? It's hard to say for sure, but I lean towards a resurrection like Lazarus' resurrection. When Jesus ascends, he has no company. There's no description of a translation of the Holy Ones into heaven. So, I think they likely enjoyed additional years, like Lazarus and the son of the widow of Nain, and then died awaiting the final resurrection of the saints.

I wish someone would make a movie scene of this event. It would be awesome!

Most commentators identify one miracle before Jesus' death, the unnatural darkness, and three after his death, the tearing of the veil, the earthquake, and the raising of the Holy Ones. However, I want to give credit to James Montgomery Boice for identifying a fourth miracle after the crucifixion.



4. The response of the centurion" and his men.



- ◇ "a son of god"?
- ◇ "The Son of God"?


4. The Response of the centurion and his men.

Look at verse 54 again:

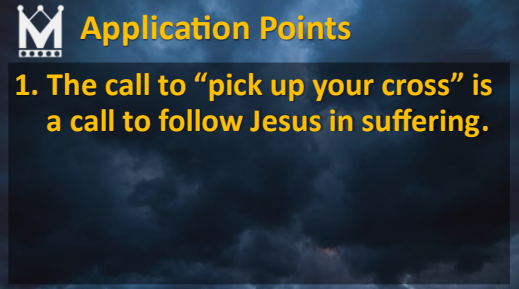
54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

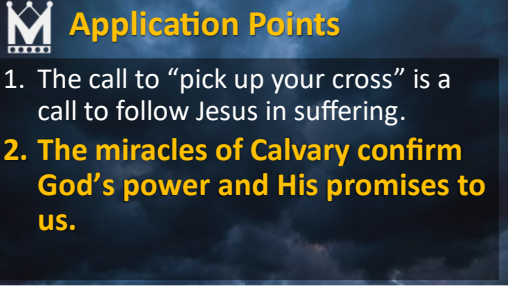
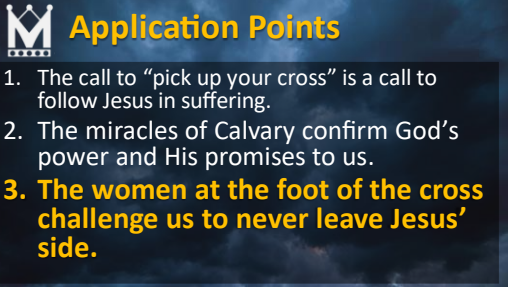
Throughout this gospel we have seen that Matthew often mentions additional participants. The second donkey, the second angel, and here we see this signature of Matthew again – he is the only one of the biblical authors to mention that these words were spoken not only by the centurion but also by the men under his command – the men who crucified Jesus. Some suggest that these words were perhaps more aligned with the lesser testimony of a pagan, "Truly this was a son of God." The Greek doesn't have the definite article, the word "the". However, the Greek language doesn't always use the definite article. Context is king and, in this case, the many miraculous

		<p>signs and the unique circumstances of Jesus words and behavior from the cross suggest that this is perhaps the fourth miracle.</p> <p>Application:</p> <p>It is the miracle that we can experience today... the miracle of hardened hearts being softened by Jesus. His name means salvation and even in his death the hope of salvation is being extended.</p>
S l i d e 1 4	<div data-bbox="240 869 764 1163">  <p>THIRD POINT</p>  <p>Loyalty of Devotion</p> <p><i>Matthew 27:55-56</i></p> </div>	<p>The third point today creates a transition, preparing us for Jesus' burial and resurrection. I've called it the</p> <p>Loyalty of Devotion</p> <p>Turn with me to Matthew 27:55-56:</p> <p><i>⁵⁵ There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him,</i></p> <p><i>⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.</i></p> <p>All of the gospel authors mention Mary Magdalene since she will have</p>

		<p>a major role in witnessing the resurrection. John mentions that Jesus' mother and her sister were present at the foot of the cross. It is possible that Salome is Jesus' aunt, the mother of the Sons of Zebedee... it might explain her boldness in asking Jesus to grant his cousins special honors at his right and left hand. However, none of the gospel authors take pains to identify each of these women. In fact, Matthew goes out of his way to state that there were "many women" standing at a distance watching the horrors of Jesus' final hours.</p>
Summary	<div><h3>The Women at the Cross</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">◇ They were "followers" of Jesus.◇ They had important roles of service.◇ They were more courageous than the apostles.</div>	<p>Matthew brings out three important observations about these women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He tells us that they were "followers" of Jesus. Like the disciples, they too became Jesus' followers. And when he left Galilee, they followed him all the way to the foot of the cross.• Matthew also makes it clear that these women had

	<p>important roles of service. He says that they “ministered” to Jesus. This is the verbal form of our word “deacon.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Who cooked for the disciples?○ Who cleaned? But let’s not stop there.○ Who financed Jesus’ ministry? If Paul’s epistles are suggestive, it would seem likely that some of these women were wealthy patrons.○ One more. Who encouraged the apostles? Who talked them off the ledge when they went off on each other? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● And let’s not forget the courage of these women. They were more courageous than all but one of the apostles. The others were in hiding when Jesus needed them most. But as we read Matthew’s account, we see that the “weaker sex” was also
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		<p>the bolder and more courageous.</p> <p>I believe that it is clear that the Bible limits the role of Elder and Pastor to men. But brothers and sisters, that's the list. That's it. If we fail to give the women of our church numerous and significant roles of ministry within the church we are not following Jesus' example. He valued them and they risked their lives to be with Him.</p> <p>I'd like to close with three brief application points.</p>
S I d e 1 6	 <p>M Application Points</p> <p>1. The call to "pick up your cross" is a call to follow Jesus in suffering.</p>	<p>1. The call to "pick up your cross" is a call to follow Jesus in suffering.</p> <p>Jesus clearly said that a servant is not greater than his master. Jesus was mocked – this will be the experience of his true followers. Jesus suffered the greatest of losses in following God's plan. The prosperity preachers want you to believe that Jesus has a Lexus for you. He never promised you a Lexus or a Rolex. He promised a cross!</p>

S l i d e 1 7	 <p>Application Points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The call to “pick up your cross” is a call to follow Jesus in suffering. 2. The miracles of Calvary confirm God’s power and His promises to us. 	<p>2. The miracles of Calvary confirm God’s power and promises to us.</p> <p>The unnatural darkness, the torn veil and the earthquake timed to the very moment of Jesus’ death and the holy ones whose graves were exposed awaiting resurrection... all of these remind us that the Sanhedrin was not in control... the Romans and even their Emperor were not in control... God was in control then and He is sovereign today. You can trust in His promises including the promise to melt your hard heart and bring you the gift of salvation.</p>
S l i d e 1 8	 <p>Application Points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The call to “pick up your cross” is a call to follow Jesus in suffering. 2. The miracles of Calvary confirm God’s power and His promises to us. 3. The women at the foot of the cross challenge us to never leave Jesus’ side. 	<p>3. Finally, the women at the foot of the cross challenge us to never leave Jesus’ side.</p> <p>People still love darkness. They still resent those who shine Jesus’ light thereby exposing their evil. It has never been easy to take a stand for Jesus. May these women inspire us to minister to others lovingly and stand by Jesus no matter what may come.</p>



Let's Pray.