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THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

COMPASSION ON THE CROSS – PART 2 MATTHEW 27:45-46

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Seven excruciating sayings from the cross

1. What does the God of all creation have to say after being betrayed, falsely arrested, falsely accused, falsely convicted, mocked, beaten, spit upon, stripped bare and nailed to a cross?
2. Father forgive them for they know not what they do – prayer of forgiveness
3. Forgiveness offered is not always forgiveness received – for one it may mean life changing freedom and eternal hope for another it may only solidify an already hardened heart (two thieves on the cross)
 - a) The thief who recognized the righteousness of Jesus and his own sinfulness – who believed in Jesus' ability and desire to save – who begged that Jesus would remember him when He came into His kingdom – Jesus replied "Today you will be with Me in paradise."
4. Finally – as Jesus looks down from the cross on His mother and the apostle John, He establishes a loving, edifying, and encouraging family, united not by blood, but by their mutual faith in this man upon the cross, the only Son of God
 - a) Picture of the care and concern we should have for one another – our brothers and sisters in Christ – we are a family – joined together by one faith, one Spirit, and one God and Father

Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

II. WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

A. The fourth saying of Jesus on the cross begins with one of three divine works during His crucifixion

1. Supernatural events that only reinforced the identity of the One who had been crucified
2. From the sixth hour until the ninth hour – or from noon to 3pm – complete darkness fell over the land
 - a) Throughout scripture darkness represents sin, deception, and judgement.
 - b) Complete and utter darkness was one of the plagues God sent upon the Egyptians
 - (1) Darkness – absence of light - Light represents righteousness, truth, and salvation.

- (2) ***John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.***
- (3) ***John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***

B. Jesus took the sins of all who will ever believe in Him, upon Himself

- 1. This is the moment that God made him who had no sin, sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 2. We see the worst part of hell. Not fire and brimstone, not living out our worst fears over and over again, not demons poking at us with their pitchforks, but eternal separation from God
 - a) It is here that God is judging our sins in Christ

C. Jesus cries out “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

- 1. Cries out – Jesus has been on the cross for six hours – a whisper would have been unbearable, yet He screams out in Aramaic -
- 2. Pronounced Elohi, Elohi, LAMA SHBAKTANI

D. Favorite verse of those who deny the deity of Jesus Christ

- 1. Presents a fair question – If Jesus is God, why would He question God?
 - a) Jesus knew He was going to the cross – why would He question?
- 2. The “why” here is not theological confusion – it’s not a question looking for an answer.
 - a) It is the visceral cry of a Son who knows there is nothing better than being in the presence of His Father and for a moment is experiencing the horrors of being separated from God
- 3. This wasn’t theater – Jesus experience for a moment what far too many will experience for an eternity – this cry will be the tragic cry of those who die in their sins and are separated from God forever

E. There is so much more to Jesus’ words

- 1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound....we can’t help but sing the next line
- 2. Psalm 22 – begins with these words – ***Psalm 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping Me?***
 - a) Aramaic was the language of the common people – uneducated men, women, and children. Hebrew was the language of the religious elite spoken by the scribes, experts in the law, Pharisees, and Sadducees
 - b) The language of the temple – if you were reading or praying in the temple you were speaking Hebrew
 - c) Even though Jesus was quoting scripture – He cried out these words in the language of the common people – so everyone who heard, regardless of their age, gender, or level of education would be drawn to the words of this song
 - d) ***Psalm 22:6 But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. 7 All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 “He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”***

- e) ***Psalm 22:14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. 18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.***
- 3. This is a song written by David one thousand years before the crucifixion of Jesus Christ
 - a) The pain of being forsaken is very real, but in the midst of that pain He reveals this has been the plan all along. He came to suffer and die on our behalf.
 - b) In the midst of the horrors of Calvary, God was working out His plan for our redemption

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" 29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.

III. I THIRST

- A. Spiritual suffering to physical suffering— Jesus' thirst was genuine
 - 1. The Suffering Savior – F.W. Krummacher describes it this way - *"The blood vessels of His sacred body are almost dried up. A dreadful fever rages through His frame. His tongue cleaves to His jaws. His lips burn...There is scarcely a greater torment than that of insatiable thirst"*
 - 2. This wasn't theater – Jesus wasn't pretending to be thirsty to point to a deeper spiritual truth – He was and is fully God and fully man, and He suffered as a man on the cross.
- B. This insatiable thirst is also seen in one of Jesus' parables
 - 1. The parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus – the rich man cries out from hell, pleading with Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool His tongue, "for I am in anguish in this flame."
 - 2. William Boekestein writes *"By nature, because we have forsaken God, "the fountain of living waters," and have "built for" ourselves "broken cisterns that can hold no water", we are the thirsty ones. God's wayward ones are "parched with thirst". We are spiritually dehydrated—a deadly condition. But here, Jesus musters a cry from His dry, hoarse throat—and all He gets is sour wine. Why? Because, on the cross, He "redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us"*
 - a) The heavy darkness, the separation from God, the insatiable thirst – these are the wages of sin – this is death – this is what Jesus endured for you and me so we wouldn't have to endure an eternity this horrendous suffering
 - b) That is why Jesus tells that woman at the well – "everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. That water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

- c) Isaiah 41 – When the poor and needy seek water but there is none, when their tongues fail for thirst, I, the Lord will hear them, and I will not forsake them
- d) Jesus says in John 6 – He who believes in Me shall never thirst
- e) Jesus is the answer to our insatiable thirst – He is our hope that does not disappoint

John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

IV. “IT IS FINISHED”

- A. There’s a rule for presenting or giving a speech called the Aristotelian "triptych"
 - 1. Tell them what you’re going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them
 - 2. That is what we find in the scriptures - God told us what He was going to do (prophecy), did it (the gospels), and then He told us what He did (the epistles)
 - 3. Deut “I will raise up for you prophet like me from your kinsmen. I will put my words in his mouth. – Isaiah Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel - For a child has been born to us, a son given to us, and the authority is upon his shoulder, and the wondrous adviser, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, called his name, "the prince of peace." There will be no end to His reign and His peace - But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. – This is culmination of all that God had promised through the prophets – all the signposts in the Old Testament – the Christ types and their stories – Noah, Moses, Joseph, Boaz, David – small saviors, pointing to the final perfect Savior and His work of suffering, bleeding, and dying to save us
- B. Now we hear the greatest phrase ever spoken – It is finished.
 - 1. A phrase used when a transaction was complete, when a servant finished a task for his master, when a priest completed a sacrifice in the temple, when an artist or a potter completed their work of art
 - a) It is finished. It is complete. There is nothing left to do. There is nothing left undone. The work is over.
 - 2. There is a story of a preacher who was approached by a man and asked “What must I do to be saved from my sins?” The preacher replied “It’s too late.” The man was distraught, “What do you mean it’s too late?” The preacher answered, “You can’t do anything. It’s already been done.”
 - a) This grand cosmic plan – put in motion before the creation of the world – a plan to rescue you and me from the grip of sin and death – to rescue us from eternal separation from the glorious presence of God is done. The work is over.
 - b) All that we can do now is accept it and be grateful for it – that’s the good news

Luke 23:44 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ ” Having said this, He breathed His last.

V. INTO YOUR HANDS

- A. ***Psalm 31:5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord of truth.***
1. A Psalm that Jewish children would pray before closing their eyes and going to sleep.
 2. Jesus, closing His eyes, and falling asleep in His Father's arms
- B. That is why the death of believers is often called "sleep" in scripture
1. Death is not an interruption of life – it is closing our eyes in this life and opening them in the presence of Jesus – the beginning of a brand new eternal life
 2. Because the work of Jesus is complete – death isn't a journey into the void, into the darkness of eternal separation from God – death is stepping into the fullness of our relationship with Jesus – something we have only seen in a dimly lit mirror
 - a) Small yet significant glimpses of the life to come
- C. So easy to be deceived into thinking that this life is all there is – but what comes after this life is far more significant
1. Father forgive them (desire to reconcile us with our Creator), today you will be with Me in paradise (desire to be with us), behold your son (desire to bring us into a loving community of believers), why have you forsaken me (save us from eternal separation from God), I thirst (desire to meet our deepest needs), it is finished (His resolve to see His mission through to the end), into Your hands I commit my Spirit (the promise of what is to come)