

The Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross

THE WORD OF ANGUISH

Mt. 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Recently we have been studying some of “The Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross”. This was a title of an excellent series by A.W. Pink, and it is used by many preachers leading up to Easter. However, when a believer comes to this subject with the Bible in their hands, they cannot fail to have their own thoughts for what the Lord has achieved personally for them.

We began our series under the title, “Glorying in the Cross”, **Gal. 6:14** God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not an actual wooden cross we glory in, but it is what the cross stands for, that is, the atoning work of Christ. In other words, the only means of salvation is through His sacrifice on Calvary when our sins were laid upon Him, in accordance with His Father’s eternal plan.

Then we considered Christ’s word of forgiveness, **Lk. 23:34** Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. **Initially** this prayer was answered when multitudes of pilgrims to Jerusalem were saved on the Day of Pentecost, and the days following, as salvation first came to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles.

In the same chapter we also saw Christ’s word of salvation to the thief, **Lk. 23:43** Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. It doesn’t matter who you are or what you are or where you are, Christ is the only Saviour, and He can save you.

Last time, we considered His words of affection from the cross, firstly, when He said to Mary concerning the disciple John, Woman, behold thy son! (**Jn. 19:26**) ... and secondly, when He said to John concerning Mary, **Jn. 19:27** Behold thy mother! ... and from that day on, John looked after and cared for Mary.

We come now to the words of anguish our Saviour expressed as He suffered the abandonment of His Father. At this point, His attention was turned from the crowds who were vilifying Him, and from the thief on the cross beside Him, and from His beloved mother. ... The physical pain shooting through His body was excruciatingly unbearable. ... It was increasing by the moment. ... He arrived at the point where it became almost so overwhelming, and He cried out, **Mt. 27:46** My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? More than any other aspect of Calvary ... if it was possible for the Son of God *to fear*, this would have been

it! His Father had removed His presence from His Son. This was the darkest hour the world has ever experienced! ... **THE CRY OF DESOLATION.**

It was ‘the ninth hour’, three o’clock in the afternoon, and He had been on the cross for six hours. ... From noon darkness had descended on Calvary. No matter how much noise the crowds created, the words of Jesus sounded above them, *Eli, Eli.* ... All the Jews knew what He was saying for He was quoting from Psalm 22:1, *My God, my God* ... They would have known what He meant ... and when he followed it up with, *lama sabachthani*, they were in no doubt! ... He was screaming, *My God, why have You abandoned Me? why have You deserted Me? why have You left Me?* ... *Utter desolation!* ... It sounds as if His agony almost caused Him to forget the eternal plan, and why He was on the cross. ... His torment affected not only His body, but also His human fears. Jesus, the perfect sinless Son of God, the suffering Servant, the son of Mary!

We cannot understand it and we are careful we do not misrepresent or misinterpret what happened ... for *we do not understand!* ... Martin Luther described it as “God, crucified by God”. God separated from God. God abandoned by God. God the Father turned away from God the Son. ... The prophet Habakkuk recognised, **Hab. 1:13** *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity* ... That tells us the reason God turned His back on His Son, **II Cor. 5:21** *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* ... On the cross, the Father looked away because upon His Son was laid the iniquitous offences committed by His people since the beginning of creation. Our Saviour went from being the most innocent to the guiltiest when our sin was laid upon Him.

Some would dispute they have sinned. They would excuse their behaviour. They would look at others and compare themselves. However, it is not how guilty or otherwise we consider ourselves, but it is what God declares in His ‘courtroom’, and He has judged *all* have sinned for no one can reach the perfect and holy standard required for His approval (Rom. 3:23). ... It is not how *we* see ourselves, but it is as *He* sees us. ... Left to our resources, to try and achieve righteousness by our own efforts, we can never do it and that is why Jesus died on the cross, **Is. 53:6** *we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.*

There are those who reject Jesus as God. They say He was only a man, a good man, a martyr, ... but only a man. ... Jesus was not only a man, Jesus is God

because only Jesus as the Son of God knew the price He alone could pay for our redemption to satisfy His Father. ... We do not understand how vile even the ‘smallest’ sin, - in our estimation, - is to God. The ‘smallest’ sin is in direct violation of all He is, for He is holy! He cannot and will not look upon sin, even when our sin was placed upon His beloved Son Jesus! ... “He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them His very own; He bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered, and died alone.”

On the cross, ... **the cry of desolation**, and also **THE CRY OF SEPARATION** ... He was surrounded by the multitudes, but *He was alone*. ... “I saw *One* hanging on a tree, in agony and blood” ... **Rom. 5:8** ... God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The reason He died on the cross was because of me, and people like me! He was there, because in my Father’s plan to save me, - my sins took Him there and kept Him there! To remove my sins, He shed His precious blood and died ... and that is how I am saved, and that is how there is no other salvation, **Acts 4:12** for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. ... That’s why He came into this world. That is what the angel explained to Joseph before Jesus was born, **Mt. 1:21** thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall *save* his people from their sins. That is what Jesus Himself confirmed, **Mt. 20:28** the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. ... And that is why God turned away from His Son, when our sin was *poured out* upon our Saviour.

Jesus did not stop being God. He not become a lesser divine being or a ‘demigod’. He was not separated from the Trinity. He was not detached or divorced from the Godhead. ... He was separated in terms of intimate fellowship and communion ... like a disobedient child, but the child does not stop belonging to the father, however, the closeness of the relationship is affected, ... and that is how, on the cross, God the Father turned away from God the Son.

The cry of desolation, the cry of separation, THE CRY OF REPARATION. ... Jesus achieved what He came to do. ... In other words, when He screamed out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? ... it was because of what was happening in the dying moments of His life. His Father had left Him because our sin had been placed upon Him, and He was paying the penalty, and suffering to cover the price of removing our guilt. ... “He died that we might be forgiven, He died to make us good, that we might go at last to Heaven, saved by His precious blood”. ... He did this by becoming my Substitute and dying in my

place. He turned away the wrath of God from me ('propitiation'), and He gave His life to remove all my guilty stains by dying the sinner's death ('expiation'). ... Another hymn puts it, "Wounded for me, wounded for me, There on the cross He was wounded for me; Gone my transgressions, and now I am free, All because Jesus was wounded for me."

When He left Glory to arrive in this world, Paul wrote of Him as being in the form of God ... equal with God (Phil. 2:6). However, when He came into this world, ⁷ [He] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ ... he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ... God does not die for He is eternal ... and yet, Jesus died. What a *departure* from His glory! That is what He was referring to when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before they came to arrest Him, *Jn. 17:4* I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, *glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* ... He did not lay aside His deity and divinity for He remained God, but to die for you and me, He laid aside His Heavenly glory, in obedience to His Father's will. ... He did not become a sinner, but He bore all sin. He had no sin of His own, despite being tempted many times, *Heb. 4:15* we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

At the cross His condemnation was more than the pain of the nails and the crown of thorns. He willingly suffered God's wrath which ought to have been poured upon us ... and, - by rights, - we should have to endure it for eternity, but He endured it for us on the cross, for all who believe in Him. He yielded to His Father's will. He prayed in Gethsemane for it to be removed from Him for He knew what it entailed ... and He prayed not once, but three times, *Mt. 26:39* O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt (... v.42,44). He was separated from God, and that is the essence of Hell.

The Bible is clear there are two possible destinations for every human soul following physical death ... For those who receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour, eternity is being with Him forever. For those who reject Him it is separation from Him forever. ... Either Jesus took our punishment, and our sin has been cast into 'the sea of God's forgetfulness' ... or our punishment awaits us, *Jn. 3:17* For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

On the cross, Jesus could contain His pain no longer, - not so much the physical pain, but the pain of separation from His Father. When they beat Him, and drove the nails through His hands and feet, He was silent, ... but He cried out when He could not feel His Father's presence and comfort. That was why He pleaded, why hast thou forsaken me? ... He *knew* why but such was the estrangement He had never before experienced, "where mercy met the anger of God's rod; a penalty was paid and pardon bought, and sinners lost at last to Him were brought". ... That was His plan at Calvary.

At the ninth hour, the darkness came to an end (Mk. 15:33) ... and it was shortly after when Jesus died. The fury of God's wrath was spent, and our redemption was complete for God was satisfied with the work of His Son Who cried out in His final words, It is finished (Jn. 19:30). ... God's plan for our salvation was completed, Satan was condemned, and our place in Heaven was confirmed.

Almost one thousand years earlier, the psalmist wrote, Ps. 22:1, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? ... The battle was never intended to be lost because two verses later, He receives the reply, 3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest *Who art enthroned on!* the praises of Israel. ... God is still on the throne, and nothing has taken His place or *will* take His place! He is holy. He is separate. He is glorious. *He is God.* And when they went to the tomb three days later and found it empty, as W. MacDonald describes, "The resurrection is God's 'Amen' to Christ's cry, 'It is finished'". Isaac Watts,

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut its glories in,
When God the mighty Maker died
For His own creature's sin.

There's nothing like the old, old story, Grace is free, grace is free! ...
There's only hope in trusting Jesus, Grace is free, grace is free!
From sin that doomed He died to free us,
Grace is free, grace is free! (Emma Johnston)