

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

(Text)

I. Introduction

- A. John Adams died July 26, 1826, fifty years after Declaration of Independence
1. These were the last words of the second president of the United States
It is the glorious Fourth of July. It is a great day. It is a good day. God bless it. God bless you all
 - a. He then said, “*Thomas Jefferson...*” and died (*his political rival & friend*)
 - b. He didn’t know that Jefferson died the exact same day— July 4, 1826
 2. When you realize you are about to die, your last words are significant
 - a. Mexican revolutionary Francisco Pancho Villa was shot in an ambush
 - 1) His last words, “*Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something*”
 - 2) His last words should be significant, but didn’t have time for any!
 - b. The “*famous last words*” of a famous person can be very significant
- B. What were the last words of Jesus? That depends on which gospel you read
1. **John:** “*It is finished.*” **Luke:** “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*”
 - a. Those last words are strong and dramatic, last words of faith and victory
 - 1) **Faith:** Jesus commits Himself to God in death just as He had in life
 - 2) **Victory:** Jesus had endured his ordeal to the end and He had won!
(Lucado suggests His arm would be thrust in the air in triumph if not nailed down)
 2. Matthew’s version of His last words are disturbing (**27:46**, *Friday’s reading*)
About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”
— which means, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*”^b
 - a. Why ask this question? Didn’t Jesus already know the answer?
 - 1) Jesus explained his coming death to the apostles (**Matt 16:21**)
From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life
 - 2) The very reason Jesus had come was to go to the cross (**John 12:27**)
Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.
 - 3) Jesus had just summed up his ministry to the apostles (**Matt 20:24**)
just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many
 - b. Jesus knew why He was dying on the cross, so why ask this question?

C. John R. W. Stott, in his book *The Cross of Christ* discusses this question

1. He gives three possible reasons why Jesus utters these last words
 - a. **Despair:** Jesus expected God to deliver, realizes there is no deliverance
 - b. **Loneliness:** Jesus is overwhelmed, it seems like God has rejected Him
 - c. **Victory:** Quotes the beginning of **Psalm 22**, but has in mind the ending *He has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.*
2. Stott rejects all those theories in favor of the more obvious answer.
 - a. Jesus cries that God has forsaken him because God had forsaken him.
 - b. Jesus' last words here is a cry of Jesus absolute abandonment
 - 1) God has in essence left Jesus, and he faces the terror of cross alone
 - 2) Charles Spurgeon points out that the cry of Jesus is directed at God *His one moan is concerning God. It is not, "Why has Peter forsaken me? Why has Judas betrayed me?" These were sharp griefs, but this is the sharpest. This stroke has cut him to the quick: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was no phantom of the gloom; it was a real absence which he mourned.*
3. Cry of abandonment comes after a 3-hour period of darkness (**Matt 27:45**).
 - a. The darkness seems to represent very God-forsakenness Jesus laments.
 - 1) Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind—and God turned away
 - 2) For the time in eternity, there is a rending of the fabric of deity
 - b. Jesus utterly overwhelmed by this desolation and cries

D. The word for “forsaken” can mean “to leave or let remain.” (**Romans 9:29**)
“Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom.”

1. All other times, it’s used in negative, “to desert, to abandon or to forsake.”
 - a. **2 Cor 4:8-9**- *“We are hard pressed...persecuted, but not abandoned.”*
 - b. **2 Timothy 4:10**- *“Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me”*
 - c. **Hebrews 10:25**- *“Let us not give up meeting together as some are...”*
 - d. **Hebrews 13:5**- *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*
2. Jesus was abandoned by God; he is not just lonely or quoting Psalms
 - a. Jesus is overwhelmed by this absolute God-forsaken God-forsakenness.
 - b. **Irony:** *“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ”* (**2 Cor 5:19**)
 - 1) To bring us back to Himself at the cross, He had to abandon Jesus!
 - 2) Jesus became sin and God turned away; Jesus was all alone in dark

II. What We Learn From Jesus' Forsakenness

A. **First**, Jesus cry of abandonment teach us *the full meaning of faithfulness*.

1. Jesus' cry of rejection and despair was ultimately a statement of great faith.
 - a. To cry to God in desperation and despair is always a statement of belief.
 - 1) You don't bother complaining to God who you don't believe is there!
 - 2) You do not question a God that you believe has no answers
 - b. Jesus' cry of abandonment here is a cry of desperate faith in God
2. See desperate faith in others (**Job 30:20-23**, **Psa 13:1-2**, **Jer 20:7-8**)
 - a. When we hear people talking like that, we want them to just shush!
 - b. Want them to be quiet and trust. Job, Jeremiah and Jesus weren't quiet
 - c. God knows desperation we feel, so we might as well give voice to it.
3. When we suffer/struggle, we want to know "*Why does God let it happen?*"
 - a. There is a painting in my office donated by family of one of our members
 - 1) Every other day for 8 months, I visited her as she died of cancer
 - 2) She sometimes held my hand and screamed, "*Why? Why? Why?*"
 - b. We don't always get an answer, but we have God who meets us in pain
 - c. God doesn't always take pain away— didn't take it away from Himself!
4. God meets us in our suffering and gives us strength (**Hebrews 4:15**)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

 - a. Ultimately, the cry of abandonment on the cross was a cry of faithfulness.
 - b. In doing so, he is our example of how to face our suffering and struggle

B. **Second**, the cry of abandonment teaches us how much God really loves us.

1. **Golden Text:** "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*"
 - a. No one except God understood depth of love when words were spoken.
 - b. God gave His son for us, but how He gave His son shows us depth of love
2. One day I will give my daughters away (*So far, I've beat guys off with stick*)
 - a. One day one will ask, "*Who gives this woman in marriage?*" (Ask myself?)
 - b. When I do give my child away, I'll give her away because of love.
 - c. First, I'll have little talk about what will happens if he ever hurts baby!
(*Bill Cosby's speech, "I have a gun and a shovel and nobody will miss you that much!"*)

3. But when God gave His child away, it was for the purpose of being hurt!
 - a. Father and Son knew what would happen at the cross—*the eternal plan*
 - b. That plan they set in motion in Eden and revealed piece by piece by Spirit
 - 1) And while the Son died on the cross, the Father did nothing to help
 - 2) Surely, the agony of God in heaven was as great as God on the cross!
 4. I mentioned Wednesday about running through a plate glass door when 11
(*As it turns out, there is really a reason why parents tell you not to run in the house!*)
 - a. Took 47 stitches, the whole time I screamed, “*Daddy, make him stop!*”
 - b. Dad stood there while doctor hurt me; he said later it tore his heart out.
 5. And it must have broken God’s heart to watch His son crying out on cross
 - a. Jesus experienced God-forsakenness and God experienced helplessness
 - b. God abandoned Jesus so that He wouldn’t have to abandon you and me.
- C. **Communion:** Before we re-experience the cross, let’s remind ourselves (**song**)
“The nails in your hands, the nails in Your feet, they tell me how much you love me”

III. Conclusion

- A. There is one final message in Jesus’ cry of abandonment and despair.
 1. This lesson is just as important as the other two... ***it’s just harder to hear***
 - a. When Jesus took on our sin and rebellion, God turned away from Him.
 - b. This final point is the obvious and chilling implication that—
No matter how much God loves you and wants you to be with Him forever, He will in the end abandon and forsake you if you persist in your sin.
 2. Jesus’ cry from the cross reminds us of how much God loves us.
 - a. But at the same time, it also reminds us of just how much God hates sin.
 - b. At the cross, God shouts His love **and** thunders His judgment against sin
- B. At the cross, God in His grace chose to offer eternal salvation through his Son
 1. But He never forces that love on anyone. *You always have a choice.*
 - a. You can put your faith in Jesus or you can resist and persist in rebellion
 - b. Remain in your rebellion sin and God will forsake you (**2 Tim 2:11-13**)
¹¹ Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.
 2. If you come to the Savior, God will never forsake you. **Choice is yours**