

**Seven Last Words From The Cross:
My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?
Matthew 27:46**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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?"

A man over-looking the wreckage of his home after it has been leveled by a tornado in South Carolina looks heavenward, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

A woman and her husband stand at the side of the bed of their 8-month old daughter, who has just died, she cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Walking out of the doctor's office, having just been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, the young man shakes his fist heavenward, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Job was a righteous man, fearing God and turning away from evil. He was wealthy, he had children. He has a wonderful relationship with God. And yet, all was taken from him. His wealth? Gone! All his children? Dead! And if this were not enough, he was then stricken with boils all over his body.

Job, because of what he saw as his *previous* relationship to God, asks, "Why?" "What have I done?" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Who here has not asked God a similar type question, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Who has not, in their frustration and anger, seen God as that omnipotent being who sits afar off, thinking that He looks down at His creation without any care for the individual lives? Who has not, in their pain and tribulation, thought of God as way off up there who is not paying any attention.

The world tells us that God may have set things in motion at creation, but He has not really been involved with it much since then. And as proof, they point to natural disasters that take place – the tornadoes in Tolar, Texas; the 940+ families homeless in Yendi, Ghana after severe rain storm and flooding; the nor'easter that affected much of the northeastern US; the flooding and tornadoes that tore through the southeast US less than a month ago. How about what ISIS and many in the name of Allah are doing to Christians and those that Muslims believe are unbelievers; by killing torturing, and beheading. Then, add to this the sorrows in each of your own lives, and it is easy to ask, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

When we look at our own little world close around us, it is easy to ask that question. We look at our friends, our neighbors, and even our own family, and we are a people who are frightened of abandonment and in fear of disappointment. How is a child expected to trust the Lord when he cannot even trust his own parents because of broken promises, but always with an excuse, "It was because of work" and other responsibilities? How can someone believe God won't forsake them or fail them, when their spouse of 20 years walks out on them and the children for someone else?

How can people believe God will not forsake them, when everywhere they look, people, even God's people, are leaving one another other and forsaking each other? How can you believe God whom you do not see, when loved ones whom you can see, are breaking their promises even to the ones they claim to love the most?

So, you ask, "Why?" just like Job did.

God does not answer Job's question of why. Instead, He gives Himself. He proclaims all of life comes from Him, "Who laid the foundation of the earth? Who set the lines? Who laid the cornerstone?" Basically, God is asking Job, "Who are you to question me who made all that exists - I have given you all this - and more.

Even as God pointed to Himself, and what He had done as He spoke with Job, you have been given much more.

God doesn't simply look down at His creation. God is not content to be an observer of the play of humanity's woeful existence. No, God steps into creation by taking the form of one of the servants. God, the Second Person of the Trinity, takes upon Himself human flesh. God, in Christ Jesus, experienced hunger and thirst. God knows your sorrow and pain, for His own earthly family thought He was crazy, forsaking Him. He watched those He loved, die. In His great compassion, He wept over the city of Jerusalem, knowing how they would forsake Him. His best friends forsook Him when they abandoned Him on the night when He was betrayed. When He needed their companionship the most, they fled in fear.

Dear friends in Christ, who is speaking the words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This is none other than Jesus Christ, the very Son of God Himself. These are the words of God the Son, in human flesh, from the cross. He is suffering the anguish of a relationship with His Father that is now broken.

As you hear these words from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" I invite you to see a miracle more profound and incredible than the works of creation. In these words, see God Himself take into His flesh, the sin and the guilt of us all. You and I who have forsaken God by turning our back on Him, by selfishly wanting something much less than He desires to give us. So, Jesus Christ is forsaken by His own Father, so that God could keep His promise to you, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

When we ask, "Where is God in the midst of all the human suffering?" He is here, hidden in our suffering, he is hidden in the suffering of our neighbors. We can ask, "Why God?" Others have asked that. Creation asks that same question, it groans with anticipation for the revealing of the sons of God. It labors and struggles under the ravages of sin.

When we ask, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Remember that, while Job did not get the answer from God that he would have liked, God did answer. And, the answer God gave was much more than satisfying.

When you ask the question, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" I encourage you to see and hear the answer God gives. He gives Himself, stripped and beaten, mocked and forsaken, nailed between two thieves. He does not give a detailed answer about the reasons for the sorrows and suffering of mankind.

When you ask the question, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Christ extends the hand that was pierced to grab you, He takes you to Himself in the water of baptism, and holds you there.

As you ask, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Come to the table Christ sets before you. There eat of the very flesh pierced for you, drink of the very blood He shed for you. He does not forsake you, but gives you to eat and drink of Himself. He comes to you and makes His dwelling within you. He feeds and nourishes you, strengthening you to be able to endure all the temptations that come upon you.

As you ask, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Hear these words of Jesus, for God the Father meant them for your ears. They are a declaration of His love for you. At the cross, God says to you, "Never did I leave you, never did I forsake you. Instead, I give my only begotten Son that you might be mine and I might be your Father forever." Amen.