

Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46

March 22, 2006 – LENTEN SERVICE 4

He Spoke a Word of Absolute Anguish ¹

✦ **He spoke this because of me.**

✦ **He spoke this instead of me.**

In the name of Jesus, our suffering Savior, dearly redeemed believers:

Introduction: Of the seven words Jesus spoke from his cross, this word is the only one recorded twice. Matthew has it. So does Mark. Why? Is it because the words seem so unbelievable? So impossible? The Bible could record these words a hundred times, a thousand times, and I still wouldn't be able to fathom them.

Tonight we ponder the words of which Martin Luther once said, "God forsaken of God, who can understand it?" When Jesus spoke this word, he spoke a word of absolute anguish.

I. He spoke this because of me.

A. Six hours on the cross—physical agony.

1. When Jesus spoke this word, he quoted Psalm 22:1.
 - a) Please read through this psalm at home.
 - b) Reads like victim's view while hanging on the cross.
2. Ninth hour—Jews figured time starting at 6:00 A.M. Our time = 3:00 P.M.
3. After six hours on the cross, what was Jesus feeling?
 - a) Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ*.
 - b) Series of bulletin inserts for Lent.
 - (1) Prepared by a medical doctor, exploring physical agony Jesus endured on the cross.
 - (2) Pastor Schwanke stopped using them. Worshipers couldn't handle them.
4. What Jesus endured in those six hours physically (review).
5. Prophetic picture of this suffering:

✦ *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.* (Psalm 22:14-18 NIV)

6. It would make any of us cry out.

B. But Jesus' agony went much deeper.

1. He didn't say, "*Father in heaven, why are you letting them torture me like this?*"
2. He said, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"
3. Impossible words. "*My God, my God.*"
 - a) For the first time, Jesus can't address his Lord as "Father."
 - b) God forsaken of God. The Father abandoning his Son.
 - c) There is distance in this cry. Loneliness. No one was there. No one listened. No one helped. A cry of absolute anguish!

¹ Adapted from 2006 NPH Series: Seven Words He Spoke, Rev. Glenn L. Schwanke.

C. Why?

1. Jesus was abandoned because we abandoned God.
✠ ***There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.*** (Ec 7:20)
2. Jesus lost God's love because we had forsaken our first love for God.
 - a) Jesus spit out.
✠ ***So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.*** (Revelation 3:16 NIV)
 - b) Jesus became accursed.
✠ ***Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*** (Galatians 3:13 NIV)
3. Darkness over the land. A sign of God's judgment.
 - a) Father looks away.
 - b) ***We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*** (Isaiah 53:6 NIV)

Transition: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus Spoke This Word of Absolute Anguish – Because of me...and...

II. He spoke this instead of me.

- A. Jesus endured God's punishment of hell in our place.
 1. The charge for sin is ever so steep!
✠ ***The soul who sins is the one who will die.*** (Ezekiel 18:20 NIV)
 2. Hell! Jesus endured it on the cross.
 3. Why?
 - a) He didn't want us to ever find out what it felt like to say, ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”***
 - b) He didn't want us to spend eternity in hell, knowing it was our own stubbornness, our own silliness, our own apathy that landed us there.
 4. And so our perfect substitute spoke these few words instead of us.
- B. The result? We will never be abandoned!
 1. ***“For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord your Redeemer....***(Isaiah 54:7-10)
 2. Moments after Jesus cried out, ***“My God, my God,”*** he said, ***“It is finished.”***
 - a) Moments must have seemed an eternity.
 - b) Storm surge of God's anger washed away in the greater flood of Jesus' blood.
 - c) God's covenant of grace cemented into place.
 - d) Anguish of the sin-bearer was over.
- C. How shall we thank God? Apply these words to ourselves.
 - 1) Too often we let sins fester like slivers we try to ignore.
 - 2) But sins separates us from God and each other.
✠ ***He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh (עֲוֹנוֹ) them shall have mercy.*** (Proverbs 28:13 KJV)
✠ ***Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*** (James 5:16 NIV)

Conclusion: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” I can read these words a million times, and I still won't understand them. Thank God, that because of what Jesus has said and done for me, I'll never have to. And neither will you – for Jesus' sake. Amen.