

# WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

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**MATTHEW 27:46 • TV108A**

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## **Matthew 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?”*

For our message today turn to the book of **Matthew chapter 27**. I am going to read one verse of Scripture found in **Matthew 27:46**. And it says: *“About the ninth hour that Jesus cried with a loud voice saying: My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?”*

Now, we have concluded from the Scriptures that our Lord’s statements from the cross were seven, seven words from the cross, all of them very meaningful, and all of them very instructive. In fact, all that our Master says is of the utmost importance and value to the believer, but most especially, what our Master cried from the cross of Calvary.

There were seven statements made from the cross. I am going to give you all of these statements and what I believe the Holy Spirit is teaching us in these statements. But my message will be, primarily, on this simple word: *“My God why hast thou forsaken me?”*

**First of all:** Now, the first words that Christ uttered from the cross: He had not been long on that cross, looking down into the hate, ridicule, and the mocking of the people about the cross.

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

The Scripture says: *“They mocked him and ridiculed him and they cried: If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross and we will believe on you.”*

They said: *“He trusted in God: Let’s see if God will have him now,”* and all of these things. They shot out their lips and uttered all kinds of obscenities and blaspheme and words of ridicule.

And Christ looking down into that sea of faces, sea of humanity, filled with hatred and malice, lifted his eyes to heaven and He said: *“Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.”*

Here is Christ the Mediator. Here is Christ the intercessor, Christ praying for us: *“When we were yet sinners, (enemies) Christ died for us.”* And as enemies and sinners Christ is our Mediator when we walk in unbelief, when we walk in rebellion, Christ as Mediator, prayed for us. On the cross of Calvary our hands nailed him to that cross. Our sins put him there. It was our voices that cried: *“Crucify him; we will not have this man reign over us, give us Barabbas.”* Even then he prayed for us.

And today Christ Jesus the Lord on the right hand of the majesty of God prays for us. He’s our Mediator. He’s our intercessor. The apostle Paul says: *“Who can condemn us; Christ died for us, yea rather, is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who intercedes, whoever lives to intercede for us.”* He prays for us. Our Lord Jesus Christ prays for His people.

In this statement I see Christ the Mediator; now listen to me, Christ the intercessor, Christ the mediator, *“Father forgive them; they know not what they do.”* Christ is praying for His people.

Many of these folks around the cross were converted. When Peter preached at Pentecost, he said: *“You with wicked hands have crucified the Lord of glory. And him whom you crucified, the Father hath exalted and made to be both Lord and Christ.”*

And they cried: *“Men and brethren; what shall we do?”* These very people for whom our Lord prayed were brought to knowledge of Christ later, these Christ haters. Christ crucifiers became preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And here Christ is praying for His own; He is the Mediator, and He’s the intercessor. And that’s what we see in these words from the cross, Christ praying for his enemies.

But, I see something else here; I see Christ our example, teaching us that we are to pray for our enemies. You know, the world says: *“Love them that love you and hate them that hate you”* but Christ said: *“I say unto you, love your enemies. Pray for them which despitefully use you.”* Love them, don’t hate them. Pray for them, don’t despise them.

Christ is the example of believers and we are not to seek vengeance. We are to not wish our enemies bad times and unfortunate things; we pray for them. We are to seek their salvation and to seek their good and love them who do not even love us.

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

**Secondly:** From the cross our Lord said: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, today shalt thou be with me in paradise”*

The Master was crucified between two convicted thieves and the Scripture says: *“Both of them railed on him,”* not just one, but both of them railed on Him and had about the same thing to say to Him and about Him that the crowd was saying.

One of them stopped cursing and stopped railing on Christ and turned to the other thief and said: *“Do you not fear God, seeing that you are in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly, for we received the due and just reward for our deeds?”*

And then the Scripture says, he turned to Christ and he said, *“Lord; remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

Someone said on Calvary’s Hill, on Golgotha’s Mountain, there were three men. One died in his sins; that was the thief that cursed and railed and blasphemed and continued to do so until he died.

One died to sin; that was the one who believed on Christ, who by the grace of God looked to Christ and who asked for mercy. And one man, the central figure, the Son of God, died for sin. And then one died in his sins.

But, we see here Christ, the sovereign King, Christ the sovereign King. For when that thief looked to Him and he said *“I’m getting what I deserve.”* He confessed his sins; *“I’m getting what I deserve. I am a sinner; I have broken man’s law and God’s law and this is exactly what I deserve.”*

*“Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”* He sought and sued for mercy and the sovereign king, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave Him that mercy. He said, *“Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise.”*

Our Lord has the keys of heaven. Our Lord has the keys of the kingdom of God and He opened the gate of heaven for a repentant, believing thief, who sought for mercy. Christ opens and no man closes and Christ shuts and no man opens.

We see the sovereign king who has salvation in His hands to give to whom He will. He said: *“I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful and I will be compassionate to whom I will be compassionate.”*

Can we learn something here, Christ the example? Yes; I believe we can learn something here, two things:

First of all: We can learn the need of repentance and faith! This believing thief repented. He confessed his sin and he sought for mercy.

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Secondly: Another example we can learn is this; bowing to the royal claims of King Jesus! The Lord who died on the cross is not a pitiful reformer. He is not a defeated, religious, Messiah. He is not one who has tried to accomplish something and didn't. He is a King who accomplished all His purpose!

This thief recognized Him as a King. He said, "You're not going to stay dead. You are coming into a kingdom. "Remember me when you come into your kingdom."

And this thing of submission to Christ is a submission, not to a reformer, not to a defeated Messiah, but to a Messiah King, a sovereign. We bow to the royal claims of King Jesus!

Who is Jesus Christ? What is Jesus Christ? Is He just a pitiful figure or is he a King, a sovereign? But this thief was able to see the majesty of Christ, even in all of that blood, gore, suffering, and weakness. He saw a King, he saw a King. And he bowed to the royal claims of that King, Christ the sovereign.

So, in these words of Christ: "*Father, forgive them;*" I see Christ the Mediator, and Christ the intercessor. Christ actually praying for the forgiveness and the pardon of those who hearts are filled with hatred for Him, His enemies.

And I see Christ the King. And He turned in grandeur and sovereignty and total control and said to that thief: "*Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.*" He's the King and He's the King of the kingdom.

And His subjects are subject to Him and they are submissive to him and they bow to his royal claims.

**Thirdly:** Our Lord looked down around that cross of people and there was a woman there by the name of Mary who had borne Him as an infant. And over here was His beloved disciple John who leaned on His breast at the Last Supper, the one the Scripture says, "*Whom Christ loved.*"

Christ loved them all but this statement is often made of John, the one whom the Lord loved, the beloved disciple.

He looked at Mary and He said: "*Woman, behold thy Son.*" Then He said to John, "*Behold thy mother*"

That was his third statement from the cross. Preacher, what do you see in that? Well, I see a lot of things. I see Christ's compassion even in the agonies of death, even in the horrible mocking's and suffering's of this experience in redeeming His people.

With heaven turned away from Him and hell besieging and the people of this world filled with hatred for Him and all had forsaken Him and He walked the winepress of God's wrath alone.

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Yet, in all of this, in the very climax of everything before and everything following, meeting together upon His head, on this place of the skull, yet He had time to take care of one who was dear to Him. He had time to show compassion, affection, and tenderness to one who was dear to Him and He provided for her.

But, my friend; this is the thing and people will major on that, the importance of His relationship with Mary and so forth. But here is the thing that is uppermost in this statement; we see Christ the man, the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Now, we have talked about Christ the intercessor and Christ the Mediator and Christ the sovereign King. But Jesus Christ is not only the King; He is a real man. He called himself: "*Son of God*," He called Himself: "*Son of man*."

He was numbered with us. He was identified with us. He was one with us. "*He was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief*." When He stood before Pilate and Pilate spoke to the people he pointed to Christ and he said: "*Behold the man*."

And when Paul wrote to Timothy in **1 Timothy 2:5**, he said: "*There's one mediator between God and men, that's the man Christ Jesus*."

Yes, my friend; look upon Jesus of Nazareth as God, sovereign Lord and King who was with God from the beginning: "*Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God*." But, "*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*." And in all things, in all points, He was identified with us.

He was a man, the two natures in one body, God, as if He were not man and yet totally God, completely God, and man, so identified with us, so completely identified in suffering and sorrow, thirst and hunger, weariness and pain, temptation and trial and all of these things.

He was a man and He was speaking of the woman who on this earth as Jesus of Nazareth was His mother and He was providing.

Now, can we learn something from this? Yes, we can learn a whole lot from this. The thing that the evangelist is presenting is the humanity of Christ and His identification with us. But there is something else that you and I can learn and that is caring for those who are our responsibility to care for.

Do you know that the Scripture says that "*If a man doesn't provide for his own house he is worse than an infidel*?" And we are to care for our mothers and our fathers. We are to care for our brothers and sisters. We are to care for believers, who are brothers and sisters.

"*We are to seek not our own things but the things of others*." We are to look not at our own welfare, to be taken up in a selfish circle of providing for our own needs and our own desires.

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

But our hearts, even when we are our busiest, and when we feel that we have the most important task in the world upon us, weighting down upon our shoulders; we are never to get too busy to care for the means of other people, especially those who are our responsibility:

To care for them, to write to them, to call them, provide for their food and clothing and shelter. Don't get too big and too important that you forget those little and most important things.

Christ on the cross, the King of kings and Lord of lords, redeeming a multitude which no man can number as the stars of the sky, and the sands of the seashore, even deserted by the heavenly Father, bearing the wrath of sin, the wrath of man, the wrath of hell, and yet, within a quiet moment, He says: "*Woman; behold thy Son.*" You think about that!

Well now, the fourth statement from the cross; I read it a moment ago. I'm going to skip over it right now and come back to it.

**Fifthly:** My friend; I see here Christ the sufferer!

He cried and you can imagine there on that cross with the nails in His hands and feet and He had already been beaten, His back lacerated with a cat of nine tails, and the crown of thorns upon His brow.

His body was stretched and you could tell all of His bones. His mouth so dry and His tongue swollen and he cried: "*I thirst.*"

Our Lord suffered as no man ever suffered. If you will read **Isaiah chapter 53** in the Old Testament you will find this scene of Calvary presented as in **Psalm 22**.

But, we have in **Isaiah 53** the sovereign Saviour. **Verse 1** says: "*To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*" It's revealed to those to whom the Lord is pleased to reveal it. All men do not have eyes to see who He is, what He did it, why He did it and where He is now.

All men do not have ears to hear the voice of prophecy and the voice of God and the voice of His Gospel, the voice of His Son. But, He's a sovereign Saviour. "*He will reveal it to whom he will.*" He will open eyes just as He did down here on the earth, physical blindness. He opened their eyes. But He also opens the eyes of the spiritually blind and He delivers the captives.

But now, in **Isaiah 53** you have the sovereign Saviour and you have the silent Saviour; "*He opened not his mouth. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.*" He was dying for His people. He had a purpose to accomplish and a work to perform and redemption to finish and He was a silent Saviour.

You have in **Isaiah 53** the satisfied Saviour: "*He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied.*" And you have in **Isaiah 53** the sufficient Saviour: "*By his stripes we are healed,*" not ought to be healed, or could be healed, or wouldn't be healed, or shouldn't be healed, "*but are healed.*" It's a sufficient Saviour!

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

But, my friend, you have the suffering Saviour. And our Lord's sufferings were not confined only to His body. He gave His soul: *"He made his soul an offering for sin."*

You see, a body alone could not atone for the sins of a soul. Our bodies are but instruments of sin. Our soul is the source of sin. Our Lord told his disciples: *"Don't be afraid of them that kill the body. I shall tell you whom you shall fear; fear him who is able to cast both body and soul into hell."*

What is hell? Well, hell is memory: *"Abraham said, son, remember (to the rich man in hell) remember on the earth you had good things."* Hell is truth realized too late. He said, *"Send Lazarus back to my five brothers that they come not to this awful place."*

There are no unbelievers in hell. Everybody down there knows that Christ is the way of life. Hell is truth realized too late. Hell is unfulfilled lust but hell is soul-suffering. It's separation from God. That's what hell is, separation from God. And Christ suffered. He suffered in body and He suffered in soul.

**Sixthly:** Christ cried: *"It is finished."*

He cried with a loud voice in about the ninth hour: *"It is finished."* Here you have Christ the Redeemer. *"It is finished."* What's finished, His life on earth? Well, that was finished. He said, *"I go to prepare a place for you and if I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come."*

What's finished? His sufferings; yes, they were finished? What's finished? The Jewish ceremonial law; completely finished. The Sabbath Days and the washings, ceremonies, and all of these things fulfilled. It's finished!

What's finished? Here's what's finished, His redemptive work. He said: *"I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do."* He has finished all that the law requires, all that justice requires, all that God requires for a sinner to be saved from his sins and pardoned from his iniquity and made a child of the king.

**"Jesus paid it all  
All the debt I owe  
Sin left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow.**

**Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Til all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved to sin no more."**

**Seventh:** Christ cried: *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"*

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Where is Jesus Christ now? *“He’s at the right hand of the majesty on high.”* He is Christ the conqueror, Christ the victor, Christ who accomplished His purpose going back to the Father who gave Him that work to do from all eternity.

Listen to these words found in **Psalm 24**: *“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”* Jesus Christ accomplished all salvation for us!

But of all these seven sayings there is one central point; someone called it the center point of suffering. Our Lord Jesus Christ right in the middle of all this that happened at Calvary; He lifted His eyes and cried: *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

You know, I feel like that I am on holy ground when I am talking about this particular saying from the cross. I feel like Moses who stood before the bush that burned but was not consumed and God said, *“Take off your shoes; you are on holy ground.”*

I know that Jesus Christ is God. The Scripture says, *“That there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.”* And Jesus Christ is God in human flesh: *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”*

But, Martin Luther was studying this verse one day and his wife said he sat there for hours just staring at this one verse: *“My God; why hast thou forsaken me?”* He wouldn’t eat, and he wouldn’t rest.

Every once in a while he would read that verse aloud: *“My God; why hast thou forsaken me?”* In a few moments he got up from his desk and he pounded the desk and he said: “God forsaking God?” No man can understand that!

And my friend, I’m not trying to understand it. I’m not going to spend my time trying to tell you how that God the Father could turn His back on God the Son. I just know that it happened. Christ said, *“My God; why hast thou forsaken me?”*

I can tell you why. I can give you three words that will tell you why the Father turned His back on the Son, why Christ was forsaken on that cross. And the first word is this, substitution. Now you learn that word, substitution.

Somebody said the Gospel can be summed up in one word; it can be summed up in the word substitution, Christ died for our sins. *“He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed.”* *“He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Christ hath redeemed us from the law being made a curse for us.”*



## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

So, here's the reason that the Father turned his back on Him. He was forsaken because those whom He represented deserved to be forsaken. He was judged and cast out because those whom He represented deserved to be judged and cast out.

He bore the wrath of God and the hell of God because those whom He represented deserved to bear the wrath of God. That's why the Father turned his back on Him; He became sin. Christ became sin!

He took on Himself, in His soul and body, all the sins of all believers, of all nations, and all generations, of all time. What a mass of sin concentrated at one point, at one time, upon one person. Christ was all believers in one person; that is substitution.

And when that was over, when God's wrath had been poured out upon His Son and Christ actually took our hell; hell is separation from God and He was separated. I'm not explaining how; I'm just telling you why.

The second word is reality. My friend; **1 Peter 2:24** says: "*He bore our sins in his body on the tree.*" The sins were real. It wasn't representation like it was in the Old Testament sacrifices; it was reality.

The sin was real and the wrath was real. Hell was real, death was real, and the grave was real because Christ was real. He was a man in the flesh, the Son of man. Do you see that?

What is hell? It's separation from God and Christ Jesus in that hour when He cried: "*My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?*" Jesus Christ our substitute, in reality, was separated from the Father for our sake. That's the reason we will never be separated from the Father because it has already been done.

All right, the last word is satisfaction. "*He put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself.*" Now they are gone. My sins are gone. He actually put them away: "*By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*"

"*The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*" His death is not an offer. His death is a sin-offering; it's a fulfillment: "*He hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*"

That's the reason Paul in **Romans 8** asked these three questions: "*Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*" The charge has been laid on Christ. The debt's been paid. "*Who is he that condemneth, Christ has died?*"

Well, "*Who can separate me from the love of Christ,*" no one, because my surety, my substitute in reality, has satisfied God's justice and God's righteousness and God's law on my behalf?

I'll never cry, "My God; why hast thou forsaken me," because He cried in my place, and He died in my place?

## WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

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MATTHEW 27:46 • HENRY T. MAHAN

That's the Gospel, the best I can preach it!