

Last Words: Sayings from the Cross and from Beyond the Grave (The Word of Anguish) Matthew 27:45-46

INTRODUCTION

We continue our study of **Last Words: Sayings from the Cross and from Beyond the Grave**. Our focus is on His dying words...those 7 sayings from the Cross. So far we've considered the first three sayings from the Cross. Today we turn our focus to the next saying. For this, I invite you to turn in your Bible to **Matthew 27:45-46**. This morning we will consider the fourth **word: The Word of Anguish**. Once again, we turn to Swindoll, who sets the scene marvelously in his book, **The Darkness & the Dawn** He writes the following... (*Read selection from pp. 166-167*).

As we approach the fourth saying (this shout) from the Savior as He hung on the cross, I'm well aware of my own sense of inadequacy to fully comprehend the weightiness of this lament. I'm not alone; the story is told that when **Martin Luther** studied this text one day, he just sat and stared at the words for hours. He said nothing and wrote nothing as he silently pondered this anguished expression. Suddenly he stood up and exclaimed, "*God forsaken by God. How can it be?*" **Charles Spurgeon** also struggled with this cry from the cross when he **wrote**: "*Here you may look as into a vast abyss; and though you strain your eyes and gaze till sight fails you, yet you perceive no bottom; it is measureless, unfathomable, inconceivable. This anguish of the Savior on your behalf and mine is no more to be measured and weighed than the sin which needed it, or the love which endured it. We will adore where we cannot comprehend.*" (Sermon #2133, www.spurgeon.org)

As we consider this 4th statement from the cross, please note with me a few observations regarding this 4th saying from the Cross...

- This is the middle Word from the Cross.
- This Word from the Cross comes after a three-hour period of darkness.
- This Word from the Cross begins a chain reaction of several cataclysmic events.
- This Word from the Cross is in the form of a question.
- This question is expressed in a loud voice.
- This Word from the Cross is directed to "My God," not "Father."
- This saying is preserved in the original language.
- This quotation is from Psalm 22.

Let's go ahead and take a closer look at **Matthew 27:45-46**.

Please note with me...

A. The supernatural _____ (27:45)

There are three periods of darkness recorded in the Bible that I'd like to remind you about. **The first one** takes place at the beginning of creation when God dispelled the darkness with the creation of light. **The second one** takes place in **Exodus 10** when the Egyptians were cast into the kind of darkness that "could be felt" for three long days. This was especially calculated to confront their belief in Ra, the supposed sun god. **The third time of extended darkness** comes right before this fourth saying from the cross. Just as an extraordinary light testified of the birth of Jesus in **Matthew 2:2**, so now an unexplainable darkness notifies us of His death.

Darkness in the Bible symbolizes at least 4 things:

- *Spiritual blindness (Isaiah 9:2)*
- *Sinful deeds (Ephesians 5:11)*
- *The powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12)*
- *Judgment (Revelation 16:10)*

This last one is what's in play in Matthew 27:45.

Darkness is almost always connected with the judgment of God for sin. **Listen carefully. It was midnight at midday because Jesus became legally guilty of our sin and was therefore judged accordingly.** It was during this time that Jesus became our sin payment. The Bible is clear on this:

- **2 Corinthians 5:21:** *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*
- Jesus took the full brunt of God's righteous judgment, paying the price by becoming a curse for us according to **Galatians 3:13:** *"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.'"*
- **Isaiah 53:6:** *"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."*

The darkness then tells us God's wrath was being unleashed. **Sin was really being judged there.** Jesus was not dying as an example; He was not dying as a martyr to a noble cause. He was not dying as a good man who shows us how we ought to take our convictions to death. **He was dying as a sacrifice for sin and the supernatural darkness shows that God was making that clear.** The cross was a place of immense divine judgment, where the sins of the world were poured out vicariously on the sinless, perfect Son. It was therefore appropriate that great supernatural darkness express God's reaction to sin in that act of judgment.

A supernatural darkness...next, please note...

B. The supernatural _____ (27:46)

During this time of desolation on the cross, Jesus did not cease to be the eternal Son of God. Jesus was not separated from the Father in essence; He was separated from the Father in fellowship. As a sinful child does not cease to be the essence of his father, but by his sin loses the intimate fellowship with his father, so Christ did not cease to be God but lost the intimacy of fellowship with His Father which He had eternally known. He had never been anything but loved by His Father. Yet, in **v. 46** we hear Jesus cry out to God: *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* Literally, the text reads: *"Why Me have you forsaken?"* What does that tell us about the cross? If darkness demonstrates wrath, God's separation demonstrates holiness. **Wrath is at work but so is holiness.** Holiness is the issue of separation. The word *"holy"* means separate. On the one hand, God pours out His wrath in judgment on sin. At the same time that God is pouring out His wrath in judgment on sin, **He turns His back protecting His perfect holiness.** He had to turn away from His own Son when He made Him sin for us. He had to abandon Jesus at that point because He is holy, and Jesus has become the guilt offering. And the answer is that for that moment God **treated Jesus as if** He had personally committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe. He was the real substitute for sinners.

CONCLUSION

Remember...even in His dying Jesus Christ teaches us how to live. What lessons can we draw from this fourth word?

1. We tend to _____ our goodness.

2. We definitely _____ God's holiness.

Action Steps –

1. _____ the biblical account again.

2. Allow Jesus to _____ your story.

3. Tell His story to _____.

4. _____ your story.