***4: "My God, My God, Why have You Forsaken Me?"  
  
7LW-002.2***

The fourth word is found in Matthew 27:46. "About the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?' that is," these Aramaic words mean, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Here is the cry of spiritual death.

At high noon, the sky around Calvary assumes an unnatural darkness until midday, until midday becomes midnight. Something ominous is about to happen. The crowd is quieted. It begins to disperse. Suddenly Jesus cries out in dreadful agony in the throes of spiritual death. He has been under this condition for almost 3 hours now, this separation from the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the agony becomes so great that He cries out in His distress. "My God, My God," addressing first the Father, and then the Holy Spirit, "Why hast thou forsaken me?"

The physical darkness symbolizes the black sins of mankind being born at that moment by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus cried out to the Father, and to the Spirit who had forsaken Him as He bore the sins of the world. Fellowship had been broken with the Father, as sin had once separated Adam from God in the Garden of Eden. Christ was now in a condition of spiritual death.

In the past, Jesus addressed His Heavenly Father as Father. This is a term of spiritual fellowship, family relationship. Now, because He is not in fellowship with the Father, He is in spiritual death, He addresses Him as God, revealing that the family relationship has been broken. He hangs on that cross, drenched in the vileness of human sin and in separation from the Father, thus, in spiritual death.

Jesus Christ, under divine judgment of God, has now paid the price of spiritual death for all of us. The crucifixion scene testifies to the suffering of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, for the sins of the world. Several things in that scene remind us of that suffering. First of all, there's a crown of thorns. This is a product of the fact that the earth was cursed because of sin. That's where the thorns came from. Genesis 3:17-18. Then there was a wooden cross (Deuteronomy 21:23, Galatians 3:13). Quoting that passage indicated that anybody who hangs on wood was God's symbol of someone who is under His condemnation. So Christ hanging on that wooden cross was there because of God's condemnation of sin. The shame of Christ's nakedness... they took all His clothes off and they gambled for the good garments that He had among themselves. This is the shame of nakedness which was brought to Adam and Eve. And as Christ hung there naked, it reminded us of the fact that Sin stripped Adam and Eve of their glory covering that they once had, and they stood there without that glory of God around them in their nakedness and they were ashamed. Genesis 3:7, Genesis 3:10-11.

This whole scene on Calvary Hill speaks of bearing the sins of the world in substitutionary redemption. 2 Corinthians 5:21. He who knew no sin took upon sin us his. He gave us His absolute righteousness. Romans 5:8 Christ died for us while we were sinners. 1 Peter 3:18. Jesus Christ became curse for us all.

So what's the significance of the fourth word? My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? It is that Jesus Christ paid fully for the sins of mankind so that propitiating God's divine justice is no longer the issue. Sin is no longer the issue. You don't have to get God's favor by getting rid of your sin, by changing your life, by acting nice. That's not going to take you into heaven. Christ has removed that moral guilt. And He did it for everybody.

The issue now is positive volition, belief to the offer of salvation as a gift from God. This cry of agony was the cry where the final payment was made. Shortly after this, this was near 3 o'clock in the afternoon, He gave up His life and the deed was done.

People don't need to worry about cleaning up their lives. It's not how good you are, it's how good Christ is. What they need to be concerned with is accepting the goodness, the absolute righteousness of God, that they will receive it to their credit, which is what will take them into heaven. Salvation, please remember, is an acceptance. It is not a commitment.

Lordship salvation people have confused this: that salvation is a commitment, a promise to do good, to serve God, how you live. No, it's grace. It's grace all the way. It's the grace of God signified by these agonizing words that have covered all sin.

Isn't that a terrible thing to realize that all these people who are in the torments compartment of Hades are sitting there with their sins all paid for. The grace of God had removed all their moral guilt. They just would not accept the gift of eternal life. Instead, they went to worship Mary. They went to stand before images of saints. They went to do all kinds of religious rituals. They participated in the works of mercy. And all of these things in order to qualify themselves and as the Mormons say, to prove themselves worthy. The moment they proceed to do that, they ensured that the agonizing words of Christ on the cross would be of no benefit to them. Now they stand. They sit there in their flaming agony at this moment and say, how could this have happened? How could this wonderful thing that God has done, signified by that agonizing cry which told us what He was doing for us, and we missed it completely?

That's because all of you sitting here who are believers have such a high IQ? Because you're such quality people" No? ... Everybody's looking at each other and saying, well, maybe of me, but not you. It's because out of this agony He said, you, you, you, you, you, you, you. I want you in. And all of a sudden, your eyes are open and these words now become significant to you.

Please join us this evening as we continue with the fifth word. Thank you, our God, for these magnificent statements of Christ upon the cross. This is indeed the word of words.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1999

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