

Series: “*Preparing for Passion Week: Seeing the Cross from Mark’s Perspective*”

Main Idea: On the cross Jesus was forsaken. Mark’s gospel helps us think about Jesus’ forsakenness from two perspectives in Mark 15:33-41.

- I. We see the pain of being forsaken (33-37).
 - A. There was darkness (33).
 - B. There was His cry (34).
 1. He identified with the psalmist.
 2. He felt complete alienation.
 3. He asked the ‘why question.’
 4. He looked by faith beyond the suffering.
 5. He invites us to experience the fellowship of His suffering.
 - C. There was a misunderstanding (35-36).
 - D. There was a unique death (37).
- II. We see the gain of being forsaken (38-41).
 - A. The curtain tore (38).
 1. When Jesus died He removed the barrier between God and man.
 2. When Jesus died He gained access to God.
 - B. The centurion testified (39).
 - C. The women watched (40-41).
 1. They were witnesses to His death.
 2. They would soon be witnesses to His resurrection.

Make It Personal: He was forsaken so that you might be accepted.

It's hard to go through a painful experience anytime. But especially if you are alone.

In preparation for Good Friday, I want to take you to the scene of the cross again. On the cross, our Beloved Savior endured many horrid types of pain. The blunt spikes that ripped through His hands and feet. The thorns that pierced His brow. The cruel mockery of the crowd.

Yet as terrible as was this pain, there was an even greater pain. The pain of being all alone. You see, though Jesus hung next to two criminals, He truly was alone on the cross. He faced alienation like no other person. We may go through deep valleys in which we FEEL alone, forsaken, and forgotten by God. But Jesus WAS alone, *forsaken on the cross*.

What does it mean to be *forsaken*? Yes, it means to be alone, but it goes much further. To be forsaken implies there was once a relationship, a companionship that is being withheld or has been taken away. Think of the spouse who has been *forsaken* by his or her unfaithful marriage partner.

On the cross Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you *forsaken* me?” What did He mean by that term *forsaken*? What really happened to Jesus as He hung on the cross? The answer to that question has the power to transform our lives, no exaggeration. Not that we can answer that question fully, for we can’t.

Charles Spurgeon said, “I do not think that the records of time, or even of eternity, contain a sentence more full of anguish. Here the wormwood and the gall, and all the other bitterness, are outdone. 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

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous development of this passage, see the series in Mark’s Gospel preached in 2007.

measureless, unfathomable, inconceivable. This anguish of the Saviour on your behalf and mine is no more to be measured and weighed than the sin which needed it, or the love which endureth it. We will adore where we cannot comprehend (51).”

That’s my aim in this message, not to attain *full comprehension*, but to so ponder what Jesus endured on the cross that we *adore Him more fully*.

The Gospel writer, Mark, will be our tutor once again this morning. Using but few words, Mark allows us to see Jesus’ forsakenness from two perspectives in Mark 15:33-41. We see, first, the *pain*, and then the *gain* of being forsaken.

I. We see the pain of being forsaken (33-37).

There are four evidences of this pain in the text.

A. There was darkness (33). “At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.” Darkness. There’s something eerie about darkness. We feel out of control in darkness, vulnerable.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all report the darkness. None tell what caused it. Luke’s account says, “For the sun stopped shining (23:45).”² It could hardly have been an eclipse of the sun since it was the time of the Passover full moon.³

Why this darkness? In other places in the Bible darkness symbolizes divine judgment. Do you remember one of the plagues God sent on the Egyptians in Moses’ day? It was three days of darkness so thick you could feel it. Do you remember what happened right after that darkness? The first Passover lambs were slaughtered.

Let’s not miss the connection. What’s happening at Calvary? The final Passover lamb is being killed on the heels of darkness.⁴

This was exactly what God had predicted. Eight centuries earlier, the prophet Amos recorded in Amos 8:9-10, “In that day, declares the Sovereign LORD, ‘I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and all your singing into weeping. I will make all of you wear sackcloth and shave your heads. I will make that time like mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.’”

You may recall that when Jesus was born a supernatural light pierced the night sky, but when He died a supernatural darkness covered the mid-day sun.

Until now, what we’ve seen in Mark 15 has focused, for the most part, on what Jesus suffered from *human* hands—the pain, the mockery, and so on. Certainly...

1. *What Jesus suffered physically was excruciating.* However...

2. *What Jesus suffered spiritually was beyond comprehension.* You say, “I don’t know what you mean by *spiritually*?” I’m talking about the kind of suffering that the human eye cannot see, the experience of divine judgment for sin.

You say, “I thought Jesus was sinless.” He was and is. Yet on the cross He took upon Himself the sins of others. That’s what the Bible means when it says, “Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3).” And “The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).”

What’s the penalty for sin? “For the wages of sin is *death*” (Rom. 3:23). That’s what happened to Jesus during those 180 minutes of darkness. He experienced spiritual death as a substitute in the place of sinners.

² The Greek verb *ekleipo* means “to cease, depart, or fail,” such as the *eclipse* of the light of the sun.

³ Observation by Wessel, p. 782.

⁴ Observation by Kent Hughes, p. 206.

Listen to how the *Living Bible* paraphrases the first part of 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins...” That’s what happened to Jesus on the cross. Kent Hughes explains, “Wave after wave of the world’s sin was poured over Christ’s sinless soul. Again and again during those three hours his soul recoiled and convulsed as all the lies of civilization, the murders of a thousand ‘Killing Fields,’ the whorings of the world’s armies, and the noxious brew of hatreds, jealousies, and pride were poured on his purity.”⁵

And so Jesus hung there in the darkness, thirty minutes, then an hour, then another thirty minutes, and another hour. For three hours the darkness remains and Jesus says not a word. “Wave upon wave comes to his convulsing soul. He who had never known a millisecond of separation from the Father and the Holy Spirit is alone,” Hughes reflects.⁶

And then, after three hours of eternal suffering, Jesus shattered the silence. Verse 34—“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*’ —[that’s Aramaic] which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” Here is the second evidence of the pain of forsakenness...

B. There was His cry (34). Jesus actually uttered seven sayings from the cross, the first three before the darkness came:

1. Luke 23:34—“Father, forgive them”
2. Luke 23:43—“Today you will be with Me in paradise”
3. John 19:25-27—“Woman, behold your son...Son, behold your mother”

Jesus spoke the final four sayings *after* the darkness.

4. Here and in Matt. 27:46—“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”
5. John 19:28—“I thirst”
6. John 19:30—“It is finished”
7. Luke 23:46—“Into Your hands I commend My Spirit”

Mark records only Jesus’ fourth utterance, perhaps the most tragic words ever spoken. “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Ray Stedman confesses, “I don’t think it is possible for any of us to even remotely understand the agony that wrung this tremendous cry from the lips of Jesus. If you can imagine a beautiful young girl, an innocent virgin, being raped by an ugly, foul, rapacious man, and the horror that she would feel in that moment, you aren’t even in the range of what was going through the soul of Jesus when he was made sin for us. You say, ‘I don’t understand it.’ Well, join the club—I am way beyond my depth in trying to explain anything about these events to you.”⁷

To reiterate, my aim in this sermon is not to attain *full comprehension*—that would be impossible—but to so ponder what Jesus endured on the cross that we *adore Him more fully*.

Listen carefully to Him. Jesus did not pray, “My Father,” as He had in the first saying from the cross, “Father, forgive them...” or as He will in the last saying, “Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit.” He calls aloud, “My God!” Why those words?

“My God, my God” are the first words from a psalm of David, a messianic psalm. Let’s turn to Psalm 22 and make five observations about Jesus’ cry.

⁵ Kent Hughes, p. 207.

⁶ Kent Hughes, p. 207.

⁷ Ray Stedman, *Expository Studies in Mark 8-16: The Ruler Who Serves*, p. 206.

1. *He identified with the psalmist.* Apparently, David wrote this psalm of anguish to express his feelings to God during a time when he experienced an enemy's attack. But keep in mind that Jesus said that the Scriptures (that's the Old Testament to us) *testified about Him* (John 5:39). Here on the cross Jesus quotes David.

The psalm speaks of the *silence of God* in verses 1-2, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, *but you do not answer...*" The psalm highlights the *holiness of God* in verse 3, "You are enthroned as the Holy One." There's why God was silent! The psalm reveals the *Messiah's rejection* by hateful men (6-8, 12-13). The psalm records a vivid description of the *horrors of crucifixion* (14-18).

Yes, there on the cross, Jesus identified with the 22nd Psalm. He fulfilled the 22nd Psalm. It summed up His feelings.

2. *He felt complete alienation.* Barclay observes, "Up to this moment Jesus had gone through every experience of life *except one—he had never known the consequence of sin.* Now if there is one thing sin does, it separates us from God. It puts between us and God a barrier like an unscalable wall. That was the one human experience through which Jesus had never passed, because he was without sin."⁸

"Why have you *forsaken* me?" In those dreadful hours, Jesus was all alone. He who had enjoyed eternal fellowship with His Father now experiences alienation from His beloved Father.

Remember why. "Your eyes are too pure to look upon evil," Habakkuk says of God (Hab. 1:13). God cannot look upon evil.

Herschel Hobbs wrote, "If you can imagine every sin that has ever been or ever will be committed being reduced to one nauseous mass, then you can grasp the horror of that which was nailed to that cross...See them as one bundle of writhing snakes! Smell their putrefying odor! Then we begin to get some fair idea of the revulsion that was in the holy heart of God."⁹

To put it plainly, when Jesus took the sins of rebels like you and me upon Himself, He experienced the just consequence of those sins. Jesus went through the fires of hell for those sins. Literally. During those three hours of darkness, the eternal Son of God tasted an eternity of suffering, the infinite One endured an infinite degree of agony.

As the hymnwriter exclaims...

*Was it for crimes that I have done, He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree!*

*Well might the sun in darkness hide, and shut His glories in,
when Christ, the mighty Maker died, for man the creature's sin.*

3. *He asked the 'why question.'* As far as I can determine, this is possibly the only recorded question Jesus ever asked His Father. Some say we should never ask 'why' when we pray. Our Lord did. We ought to bring all of our questions God, including 'why,' as long it's not a challenge, but a faith-cry.¹⁰

⁸ Barclay, p. 364.

⁹ Hobbs, p. 53.

¹⁰ Strauss, p. 75

4. *He looked by faith beyond the suffering.* You say, “I don’t hear any faith in those words, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”! But think about it. The very fact that He prayed those words is an affirmation of His belief that God is listening.

Furthermore, although the text records Jesus saying only the first verse of Psalm 22, I believe that Jesus has the WHOLE psalm in mind. He, for sure, knows the whole psalm, including how it ends, and He has come to fulfill *all* the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (see Luke 22:44).

You’ll notice that Psalm 22 does not end in dismay, but in hope. Verse 24 declares, “For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.” By faith, the psalmist affirmed that God did hear! And though his pain was great, David ends the psalm by looking beyond the pain to the result of it, stating in verse 27, “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him.”

5. *He invites us to experience the fellowship of His suffering.* On the cross Jesus identified with David. This side of the cross Jesus invites us to identify with Him. “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and *take up his cross* and follow me (Mark 8:34).”

In preparation for this message I wrestled with two things. First, I couldn’t fathom the depth of the pain Jesus experienced on the cross. “What did you endure for me, Lord Jesus?” But words failed me. Then I began to wrestle with something else. Did I really *want* to know? My initial reaction was *No!* I don’t like pain! But after confessing this to Him, a thought began to turn in my mind...

In heaven I will experience glory and joy, *but only in this life can I experience the fellowship of His sufferings.* Think about it. Jesus said that eternal life is *knowing Him* (John 17:3). In order to know Him I must know His suffering. Indeed, my capacity in eternity for being able to appreciate Him and His suffering is being determined now, in *this* life.

It’s the difference between *book knowledge* and *knowledge by experience.* Let me illustrate. A few years ago I read information about the Rocky Mountains and looked at pictures in brochures, and gained some knowledge about the Rocky Mountains, some *book knowledge.* Then a few months later we got in a car and drove to Colorado and I *saw* the Rocky Mountains. A picture is one thing, but *knowledge by experience* is breathtaking.

I can read the Bible and learn about Jesus’ suffering. But He offers me more. He wants me to enter into the *fellowship of His suffering.*

“What’s that?” you ask.

Peter tells us, “But rejoice that *you participate in the sufferings of Christ,* so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed (1 Peter 4:13).” I think this includes suffering for Christ’s sake, as well as suffering for reasons Christ did, by submitting ourselves to the purposes God has for us, pleasant and unpleasant.

Paul talked about it as well, a lot in fact. For instance, he shared in Philippians 3:10-11, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the *fellowship of sharing in his sufferings,* becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”¹¹

¹¹ Other texts include: 2 Corinthians 1:5; 4:10; Galatians 6:17; Colossians 1:24

Through the suffering we experience in this life, particularly the suffering that comes because of our association with Christ, the Lord invites us to experience a bond, a fellowship with Himself. Indeed, the fellowship of His sufferings actually prepares us for an even fuller experience of His glory in the life to come.

Isn't that what Romans 8:17 says? "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed *we share in his sufferings* in order that we may also share in his glory."

We're talking about the *pain of being forsaken*. We've seen two evidences of it thus far: *the darkness* and *the cry*. But there's more.

C. There was a misunderstanding (35-36). Verse 35—"When some of those standing near heard this, they said, 'Listen, he's calling Elijah.'"

Bible commentators suggest the mix-up is due to the similar sound of *Eloi Eloi* and *Elijah*. The people at the cross heard Jesus say *Eloi Eloi* and thought He was calling for help from *Elijah*. That may be the case. However, it strikes me that what we have here is a perfect illustration of 1 Corinthians 2:14, a text which says (my loose paraphrase), "Those who don't have the Holy Spirit hear the Word *and don't get it!*"

Just think...

1. *The people heard what He said.* They heard His cry. In fact, Mark specifically records for us the *Aramaic words* that Jesus uttered. He wants us to know that the Jews at the cross heard the words in their mother tongue. They heard what He said as He cried out to God in the anguish of His forsakenness. But they thought He was calling for Elijah!

Verse 36 tells what happened next. "One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink." John's account indicates Jesus actually verbalized, "I thirst" and then received the sponge drink (John 19:28-30). You can imagine why. He's just gone through the fire. Then...

2. *The people left Him alone.* Verse 36b—"Now leave Him alone," the man who offered the drink said to the rest. "Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down."

And so He continues to hang on the cross, *alone, forsaken*.

Let me suggest an initial word of application. If we really love Christ, *we will hate sin*. Spurgeon said it well (68): "O, if I had a dear brother who had been murdered, what would you think of me if I treasured the knife which had been crimsoned with his blood?—if I made a friend of the murderer, and daily consorted with the assassin, who drove the dagger into my brother's heart? Surely I, too, must be an accomplice in the crime! Sin murdered Christ; will you be a friend to it? Sin pierced the heart of the Incarnate God; can you love it?"

If our sin put Jesus through such agony, how can we excuse it? How can we sit in front of a television, and in the name of entertainment, watch with delight things that caused our Savior so much agony? How can we tolerate things in our lives, knowing what those things forced our Lord to endure? Let us hate sin, all of it. Let us rid ourselves of sin, today. By our own strength? No, we have none to get rid of sin. But He does. We can overcome our sin by the power of His cross.

Verse 37—“With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.”¹² Here’s the final evidence of the pain of His forsakenness. In addition to the darkness, the cry, and the misunderstanding...

D. There was a unique death (37). It was unique in two ways.

1. *He died in agony.* Never has a man experienced such agony! Yet that fact makes the following so spectacular.

2. *He died with a shout of accomplishment.* Typically crucifixion victims hung on crosses for days, getting weaker and weaker, until they were unable to raise their chest to bring in air, and they suffocated. But Jesus did not suffocate. The text says He let out a *loud cry*.

Mark doesn’t tell us what Jesus cried, but John does. John 19:30 indicates that Jesus uttered this cry in His final moments, “When he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘*It is finished*’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

Finished! In the Greek text, it’s one word—*tetelestai* which means “complete.” Jesus did not die as a victim but a victor! He did not moan, “I am finished,” but announced triumphantly, “It is finished!”

What had He finished? He had finished the work His Father had given Him to do. Remember the theme verse of the book, Mark 10:45? “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, *and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” That’s what He finished, the ransom payment necessary to set sinners free!

If you know only about the pain of the cross, you don’t know the whole story! God’s Word presents two perspectives of Jesus’ forsakenness. We’ve seen the pain. Next...

II. We see the gain of being forsaken (38-41).

The gain is demonstrated by three activities that occurred right after Jesus died.

A. The curtain tore (38). “The curtain of the temple [that’s the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies] was torn in two from top to bottom.”¹³

Note the *direction* of the tearing, “from top to bottom,” indicating that the One who rules above, through the death of His Son, ripped apart the barrier that stood between sinful people and His holy presence.

Note also the *timing* of the tearing. What time did Jesus die, and what time did the curtain tear? At 3:00 in the afternoon. That’s the time of the evening sacrifice in the temple. As Jesus hung on the cross mid-afternoon, the priests were busy at work in the temple doing what the priests had done for centuries, when all of a sudden, the great barrier between the holy place and the most holy place ripped right down the middle!

It’s not surprising that in the months following, “a large number of priests became obedient to the faith,” as Acts 6:7 states. J. Vernon McGee suggests that some of those very priests saw the curtain rip the day Jesus died.¹⁴ I don’t doubt that he’s right.

What did that torn curtain indicate? It communicated two powerful realities.

¹² Matthew 27:50 says He “yielded up his spirit.” John’s account states, “He bowed His head and gave up His spirit (19:30).”

¹³ Matthew adds that “the earth shook; and the rocks were split,” and furthermore that “the tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life (27:51-52).”

¹⁴ J. Vernon McGee, p. 193.

1. *When Jesus died He removed the barrier between God and man.* I like how Hughes puts it, “The veil into the Holy of Holies was supernaturally slashed in two as if a great sword had fallen.”¹⁵

2. *When Jesus died He gained access to God.* The writer of Hebrews explains in 10:19-22, “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, *let us draw near to God* with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”

Let the beauty of this word sink in. We have *access!*

Think of an *access road*. If I told you, “That access road will take you to the park,” what would happen if you got on the road? You’d end up in the park!

Jesus provided the *way of access* to heaven. It’s the only access road that will take you there. “I am the way,” Jesus said. “No one comes to the Father except through me,” He announced (John 14:6).

Do you know what’s tragic? It’s when a person knows about the access road but refuses to take it, insisting he’d rather try to make his own access road to God.

Is that what you’ve been doing? You’ve heard that Jesus died for sinners, but you’ve refused to acknowledge that *you* are a helpless and hopeless sinner. You’ve deluded yourself into thinking that you are a *good person*, that surely God will accept you into His heaven, after all you’ve done for Him.

“My God is a loving God. He would never send a sincere person like me to hell!”

If that’s the case, answer this. Why then did Christ die on the cross? If God just accepts the best we can do, why did Christ endure the agony of Golgotha?

Frankly, if there are other access roads, like the one you *think* you are making, then Christ was a fool. He died for naught. That’s what belief in alternate access roads means. When we create them we are saying, “Jesus Christ, you didn’t need to go through the horror of hell on the cross, maybe for others but not for me. You misjudged me, Jesus. I’m a good person. God is going to accept me anyway. That’s why I’ve never admitted my sinfulness and received you as my Savior and Lord. I’m okay on my own. I don’t need You nor Your cross.”

You object, “I would never call Christ a fool!” Okay, not with words, but is that not what your actions are saying loud and clear, my friend? If you are refusing to admit that you are a helpless sinner and in desperate need for Christ to save you, you are saying to Him, by your actions, “You didn’t need to die on the cross, not for me. Your assessment of me was wrong.”

Have you ever heard the saying, “Your actions are speaking so loudly I can’t hear what you are saying”? A person can say all he wants, “I don’t believe Jesus was a fool!” but if that person refuses to receive Jesus as his Savior and Lord, his actions are saying otherwise.

If I’m describing you, I plead with you. *Look at the torn curtain! Look, and believe, and be saved!*

Perhaps you’re still not convinced. “I need more proof,” you say. Here it is. Mark presents a second activity that demonstrates the gain of the cross.

¹⁵ Hughes, p. 209.

B. The centurion testified (39). “And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, ‘Surely this man was the Son of God!’”¹⁶

Notice who is speaking, a *non-Jew, a Roman Gentile*. Jesus’ death removed not only the vertical barrier but a horizontal one. Romans hated Jews. But this Roman, a man who earlier mocked and nailed Jesus to the cross, now changes his assessment. What made the difference? Mark is very specific...

1. *A Gentile man was impressed by how Jesus died.* This centurion had seen plenty of men die, but never one like Jesus. Typically, men cursed him from their crosses, but Jesus asked God to forgive him. And while others died as defeated men, Jesus died as one in control, and actually gave up His spirit the very moment He willed to do so.

But not only was this Gentile man impressed by how Jesus died, Mark points out...

2. *A Gentile man declared who Jesus is.* Some skeptics assert, “Only weak and gullible people believe in God.” That’s not true! Here’s a man’s man, a Roman centurion, making the first declaration of the crucified Jesus’ true identity.

“Surely this man was the Son of God!” he declared.

Friends, there’s the assessment of the man who watched Jesus die. He’s a changed man. I can’t prove he’s a true believer yet, but he’s changed his tune, and his testimony deserves our attention.

Mark finishes the crucifixion scene by putting the spotlight on a third activity in verses 40-41, “Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.”

That’s interesting. There were women at the cross, many of them. What did they do?

C. The women watched (40-41). “*They were watching from a distance.*” Why does Mark tell us that? I can think of two reasons. The fact that they were watching means...

1. *They were witnesses to His death.* Some critics say Jesus didn’t die, but merely *fainted*, and didn’t rise from the dead, but merely resuscitated in the cool air of the tomb. So goes the “swoon theory.” Mark makes it clear there were witnesses who saw Jesus die, *many* of them, women to be precise, a point that shows the high regard the Bible has for women.

There’s another reason Mark wants us to know the women watched Jesus die.

2. *They would soon be witnesses to His resurrection.* Again, critics say that the reason Jesus’ tomb was empty was because the disciples went to the *wrong tomb*. Hardly. The same three women Mark names here at the cross will be at the tomb on resurrection morning (16:1). They saw Him die. They saw the empty tomb and it was the right one.

This morning we’ve just pondered the *pain* and the *gain* of Jesus’ forsakenness. Now what? Believe it, yes. Believe, and receive Christ as your Savior.

But don’t stop there. Don’t leave the cross behind. We who believe in Jesus would do well to meditate regularly on *how He died*.

¹⁶ Luke’s account indicates he also said (Luke 23:47), “Surely this was a righteous man.” Matthew’s account informs us that the centurion and the other soldiers “became very frightened (27:54).”

Hymns can help us. Read them. Sing them. Write them. Keep the cross ever before you. Here's one, penned by Thomas Kelly, an Irish son of a judge in the early 1800s who planned to be a lawyer, but became a minister and wrote over 700 hymns.

*Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long expected prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
By his Son God now has spoken:
'Tis a true and faithful Word.*

*Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting his distress:
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that Justice gave.*

*Ye who think of sin but lightly,
Nor suppose the evil great,
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the Sacrifice appointed!
See Who bears the awful load!
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
Son of Man, and Son of God.*

*Here we have a firm foundation,
Here the refuge of the lost.
Christ the Rock of our salvation,
Christ the Name of which we boast.
Lamb of God for sinners wounded!
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built.¹⁷*

Make It Personal: He was forsaken so that you and I might be accepted!

¹⁷ Thomas Kelly, 1804, www.cyberhymnal.org