

**ST PAUL'S (RONDEBOSCH)
GOOD FRIDAY SERMON
10 APRIL 2020**

READINGS: Matthew 27:45-46

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Let us pray

O Saviour of the world by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us. May the words of my mouth and the mediation of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight O Lord our Strength and our Redeemer.

In Matthew 27 v 45 to 46 we read *“At noon the whole country was in darkness which lasted for three hours. At about 3’o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud shout Eloi Eloi lema sabacthani which means my God my God why have you forsaken me”*.

This is the only statement (word) that is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark all the other words and statements that Jesus uttered while hanging on the cross is either found in the gospel of John or Luke.

These specific words were also uttered by David in Psalm 22 v 1 when David went through personal tragedies in his life.

I want you to imagine the scene Jesus was hanging on the cross for six hours and from twelve noon to three o'clock the sky turned dark and black. It was the darkest day in human history and so was Jesus' heart. The Bible tells us that Jesus cried out with a shrieking shout. His voice wasn't quiet and soft like the other words he had spoken while hanging on the cross. You could barely hear him pray *“Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*

Jesus spoke gently to the thief on the cross *“Today you will be with me in paradise*

Jesus spoke in a subdued tone to his mother and his best friend beneath the cross.

But now Jesus reached to the heavens at the top of his lungs almost a scream **Eloi, Eloi Lema Sabachtani** (The words are Aramic—Jesus' mother tongue)

My strong God my Strong God why have you abandoned me, why have you deserted me, why have you forsaken me?

We have Jesus in the depths of his agonies and sorrow. No other place shows the grief and agony of Christ as Calvary. It was a cry of a man forsaken by God

You must remember Jesus experienced physical weakness and agony. He was beaten and whipped. He had no water and food. Since the previous night. He was nailed to the cross. He was mentally tortured and publically disgraced.

And now he suffered spiritual agony on account of the departure of his loving Father

This was the blackness and darkness of his horror, the depth of his suffering. Jesus was forsaken by his Father in such a manner he had never before. His Father has forsaken him. He has delivered him up unto his enemies and did not appear to help him

When Jesus' soul was first troubled, he heard a voice from heaven to comfort him (John 12:27-28)

When he was in agony in the garden, there appeared an angel from heaven to strengthen him, but now he had neither the one nor the other. God hid his face from him.

How many people didn't feel like this during this time of the Corona Virus Crisis and especially now that we have heard the Lockdown has been extended?

This brings us to the Question; **WHY DID GOD THE FATHER FORSAKE GOD THE SON ON THE CROSS?**

It had something to do with what Jesus was doing on the cross.

My friends what Jesus was doing on the cross was bearing sin, carrying sin, wearing sin. Jesus was taking the sins of the world, mine and yours upon his shoulders.

It was if God took all the sins of his people, all the jealousy, the anger, the lying, all the rebellion and stealing, the envy, the hatred, the oppression, the corruption, the exploitation were dumped on Jesus Christ.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor 5:21)
The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6)

When Jesus was wearing and carrying our sins on the cross, God the Father could not bear to look at the sin or at his gaze. He had shield his eyes. He had turned his back. He had condemned and rejected and cursed the sin.

God was not forsaking his Son as much as he was forsaking the Sin, his Son was carrying. The forsaking of the Son of God is a fearful thing but it is good news for the sinner who repents. It means God's children, you and I will never be forsaken. God will not leave us alone or abandon us.

Jesus Christ went through what he went through on the cross—so that we his own children would never have to go through. Everything that Jesus endured, he endured on behalf of us. Everything Jesus experienced he experienced in place of me and you

If you are struggle and thinking you are the worst sinner and feels that God has turn his face from you and that he will never forgive you, I want to say to you God has not forsaken you

Whatever sin you have committed, you are free from it, because Jesus took your sin and was forsaken on the cross so that you and I can be free. He said what he said on the cross. My God my God why have you forsaken me so that you and I would not have to utter those words of desolation again.

He took upon himself the sins of the world. This pain and desolation he suffered for each of us that we might know what a terrible thing it is for human nature to be without God to be deprived of a Divine consolation

And yes we will sometimes have feelings of abandonment as Jesus did on the cross. To feel the pain and sadness of abandonment by God is normal, It is Ok to feel depressed and abandoned by God

However and this brings me to second question **WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THESE WORDS THAT JESUS UTTERED?**

Listen to what Jesus is saying: Jesus didn't say God, God why have thou forsaken me he said My God My God.

In these moments though he cannot see His Fathers face or feel the sense of his presence He holds on to the assurance that he is MY GOD despite the darkness

and awfulness he has not lost his sense of a God who controls the universe. In his dark hour of his soul his faith hold //cling on the fact that he is MY GOD.

In the depth of his suffering he affirms that God of heaven is his God

On this Good Friday there are many of us feeling hurt, deserted, forsaken, lonely, disappointed, discouraged, angry, abandoned, and hopeless, because of the effects of the Corona Virus pandemic in the world, in our country and in our communities

Maybe:

- A family member/ a loved one has been infected with the virus or someone you know have died.
- Because of this Lockdown period you may lose your job/income.
- You are suffering from a chronic disease or terminal illness and you are scared what will happen to you, should you get sick during this time.
- You feel lonely because you are far away from your family and they cannot come visit you during this Lockdown period.
- You are disappointed and angry because during this sacred and Holy time you cannot attend a church service.
- You are going through a divorce or your partner has left you.
- You experience problems with your teenage children
- or maybe you are a victim of domestic violence during this time.

Whatever you are feeling and however dark your circumstances may look during this time, do what Jesus did, yet even in his agony Jesus was still praying he was still speaking to his Father in personal terms (**My God// My Father**)

CONCLUSION

Please do not lose hope even in this dark and hopeless circumstances in our world in our country we are to cling to God with both hands as Jesus did. Jesus clinked to God with all his might during the darkest hour of life with all his power, with both hands and at the same time shouting his inner feelings to God.

My dear friends we are invited to do the same, to cling to God with both hands and shout our inner feelings to God. **Amen**

