

20251005 The Power of the Cross – Ps Bijoy

Church, I invite your attention to Mark chapter 15, beginning at verse 33.

Let us read Mark 15:33-39

“And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

The Darkness Over the Land (Mark 15:33)

Look with me again at verse 33: “When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.”

The sixth hour is noon. The sun is at its highest. It should have been the brightest time of the day. Instead, the land was covered in darkness for three hours. This was a supernatural act of God.

Why would God cover the land in darkness?

Throughout the Old Testament, darkness often signified judgment. Think back to the ninth plague in Egypt, in Exodus 10. Darkness covered the land of Egypt for three days. That was God’s judgment against Pharaoh. Think also of Amos 8:9, where God says, “On that day, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.” Amos said this would be a sign of God’s judgment upon sin. So here at Calvary, God was sending a message. Darkness fell because judgment was falling. But not on the crowd. Not on Pilate or the soldiers. Not on the chief priests. The judgment of God fell on His own Son.

Isaiah 53:6 says, “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” On the cross, Jesus was bearing the weight of sin, and God’s holy wrath was poured out. That is why creation itself responded with darkness.

It is as if nature was putting on mourning clothes. The sun refused to shine, because the Son of God was being crushed. The earth was groaning, because its Maker was suffering. Here is the sobering truth: the darkness over Calvary was your darkness and mine. It was our sin that caused the judgment. It was our guilt that brought this curse. The wages of sin is death, and Jesus was paying that wage in full.

Cry of Forsakenness (Mark 15:34)

Now look at verse 34: “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

For three hours Jesus had hung in silence. From noon to three, as darkness fell, He endured the weight of judgment. And then at the end of those hours He broke the silence with this cry. Jesus cries out in Aramaic, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” Mark even translates it for us: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

What does this mean?

First, notice He is quoting Scripture. These words come from Psalm 22:1. That psalm begins with deep anguish: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” But it ends with triumph: “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.” By quoting this psalm, Jesus shows us that His suffering was not random. It was the fulfilment of Scripture. But His cry was also real. The eternal Son of God truly felt forsaken. For all eternity He had known nothing but perfect fellowship with His Father. But now, as He bore the sin of the world, He experienced the horror of separation.

Paul explains this in 2 Corinthians 5:21: “God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” On the cross, Jesus was treated as if He were guilty of every sin ever committed by His people. He stood in our place, under our curse.

That is why He no longer says “Father,” but “My God.” The intimacy of sonship was veiled, because He stood as our substitute, bearing our judgment. Think about this, Jesus was forsaken so that you never will be. He was abandoned so that you might be adopted. He entered into the deepest darkness so that you can walk in the light of God’s presence forever.

Christian, do you ever feel abandoned? Do you ever pray and feel like heaven is silent? Do you ever wonder if God has forgotten you? Remember this: Jesus was forsaken in your place, so that you never will be. You may feel forsaken, but you are not. The forsaking has already happened, once for all, at the cross.

Spurgeon once said, “If God has forsaken His own Son for our sake, then He will never forsake those for whom Christ died.” That is our hope.

Veil/Curtain: The Symbol of Separation and God’s Holiness

In the Old Testament, the veil/curtain was not just a decorative piece. It was a powerful symbol of God’s holiness and the separation between Him and sinful humanity.

God provided a tabernacle, a tent of meeting, when He led His people out of Egypt. Within that tabernacle, a veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, where the Ark of the Covenant rested and where God’s presence dwelled.

Exodus 26:31-33 describes it in detail: the veil was made of fine linen, blue, purple, and scarlet yarns, with cherubim skilfully woven into it. It hung on gold hooks and separated the holy from the most holy. No one

could enter the Most Holy Place except the high priest, and even then, only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

This veil was not just fabric, it represented the insurmountable distance between a holy God and sinful people. It said, "God is holy, and you are not. You cannot come into my presence without a way I have provided." The people of God knew that approaching Him improperly could lead to death. The veil reminded them of their own unworthiness and of the provision God had made through sacrifices, priests, and rituals.

Hebrews 10 highlights a striking contrast between the Old Testament system of repeated sacrifices and the perfect, once for all sacrifice of Christ.

Hebrews 10:11-12 says:

"Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God."

For centuries, God's people relied on the blood of bulls and goats. The sacrifices were repeated year after year because they could not remove sin. They were shadows pointing forward to the ultimate reality a human, God man, who could fully and finally bear the weight of sin. Christ's sacrifice is different. He offers Himself, fully human, fully divine. His blood is sufficient for all time, for all sin. Unlike the Old Testament priests who stood daily, Jesus sits at the right hand of God. His work is finished.

And it is this perfect work that the torn veil symbolizes. When that physical curtain in the temple tore from top to bottom, it was a divine declaration: the barrier between God and humanity had been removed. The separation caused by sin was overcome. Access to God was now open. The tearing of the veil was dramatic, cosmic event. Darkness covered the land, the earth shook, and Jesus cried out, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." This was a divine announcement that the way to God had been opened.

Bold Access to God Through Christ

With the veil torn, the contrast complete, we now have confidence to enter God's presence. Hebrews 10:19-22 exhorts us:

"Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, His flesh, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Our confidence is not based on our achievements, our morality, or our rituals. It is based entirely on Christ.

B.B. Warfield puts it this way, "There is nothing in us, or done by us, because of which we are acceptable to God. We must always be accepted for Christ's sake, or we cannot be accepted at all."

John Calvin says, "My only safe haven is in the mercy of God as manifested in Christ, in whom every part of our salvation is complete."

The veil that once blocked us has been torn not by human hands, but by the flesh of Christ. When Jesus died, His body was broken, His blood was shed, and the way to God was opened. We can now enter God's presence boldly, not timidly. We can come with full assurance, knowing that our sins are fully and finally forgiven. The veil has been torn. The barrier has been removed. The way is open.

***Tetelestai* : It is finished.**

Mark 15:37 "And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last." In John it is even clearer, John 19:30 "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." (*Tetelestai*) With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

Tetelestai comes from the verb *teleo*, which is defined as "to end, complete, execute, conclude, discharge (a debt) accomplish,..". While *teleo* is a verb that refers to a task completed in the past, I learned that *tetelestai* is in the perfect tense in Greek, indicating that the action was completed in the past but still has a lasting effect in the present and continues to do so into the future.

So, when Jesus said, "It is finished," on the cross, He wasn't just indicating that His life on earth was over. There is so much more to those words. He was declaring that because He sacrificed His life and shed His blood on the cross, His mission to redeem us from sin, its consequences, and the devil was, is, and will forever be perfectly and completely finished. It was finished that day at Calvary. It is still finished today as you read these words, and it will remain finished forever into eternity. Jesus substituted His life for ours. All the good that belongs to Him became ours, and all the evil that rightfully belonged to us was placed upon Him on the cross.

Conclusion

Church, do you see what happened at Calvary? Darkness fell, because judgment was poured out. The Son cried out, because He bore our forsakenness.

At the cross, we see both the seriousness of sin and the greatness of grace. Sin is so serious that only the death of the Son of God could deal with it. Grace is so great that the Son of God willingly bore it for you.

Therefore, we cannot add to or take away from what Jesus accomplished on the cross. The price has been paid, and the value of His blood is precious. No sin, no matter how great, can prevent anyone from receiving salvation who, through faith, accepts Jesus' sacrifice as payment for their sins.