
SUNDAY

*My God, My God, why have you
forsaken me?*

March 30, 2025

Darkness. Darkness covered
the whole land. Like those
summer thunderstorms where
it goes from day to night in
just a few moments.

As though creation itself was
mourning the reality of what
was happening on the cross.

As though the weather was
demonstrating the reality of
what Jesus was carrying.
Darkness.

It is in this darkness that
Jesus cries out this fourth
word from the cross:

“My God, My God; why have
you forsaken me?”

Have you ever experienced moments of deep darkness like this? Moments where God seems far away, where the trouble and pain seem too close?

Jesus willingly endured the darkness and seeming separation from God. He did this as an incredible act of solidarity with us. As a way to demonstrate how far He would go to be with us, to understand us.

Today let's spend some time
thanking Jesus that, we have
a Savior who knows how we
feel. Who has felt how we
feel. And who is with us in
the darkness.

MONDAY

*My God, My God, why have you
forsaken me?*

March 31, 2025

Why? This is a common question for the people of God. Why does a good, powerful, and loving God allow evil, and pain and suffering?

The word for this seeming problem is *theodicy*. This word comes from the Greek words *theo* (God) and *dikaiosune* (justice).

Why does God allow injustice?

The people of God have wrestled with this question from the beginning. Job struggled to find meaning in his suffering. David cried out to God in the psalms.

Here, in this darkness on the cross, we come face to face with the reality that God does not work the way we think He should. We don't understand. That's why we ask "why?"

William Willmon says that the
real thought behind our
“WHY?” is best translated:

"If God were as caring, compassionate, and considerate (and also as omnipotent, controlling, and powerful) as I would be if I were God, then... I sure wouldn't allow any suffering, injustice, or tragedy to occur on my watch- if I were God."

Our cry of "why, God?"
betrays that we are not like
Him. As Isaiah reminds us,
our ways are not like His
ways.

Today, let us confess our
finiteness. Our limitedness.
Our inability to understand
what God is up to, what God
allows, why He allows it. Let
us confess our tendency to
think that we have a better
idea for God about how to
run our lives and our world.

TUESDAY

*My God, My God, why have you
forsaken me?*

April 1, 2025

As we begin our Tuesday
together, take a moment to
pause and read through
Psalm 22.

Jesus' cry from the cross is from Psalm 22:1. Psalm 22 is a lament psalm.

Biblical lament is best defined as "a prayer in pain that leads to trust."

Lament is what we can do
when we don't understand
what God is up to. Lament is
the biblical practice of
turning to God in our deep
pain about the world as it is.

A simple pattern for lament is:

Turn- *Acknowledge God*

Complain- *Tell God what is bothering you in blunt language*

Ask- *Ask God for what you want to see Him do*

Trust- *Affirm your trust that He is God and is able to change things*

Today, practice the biblical language of lament with something that is on your heart today.

See how it feels to pour out your honest feelings to God about the things that are breaking your heart.

WEDNESDAY

*My God, My God, why have you
forsaken me?*

April 2, 2025

Yesterday, we talked about
the biblical language of
lament.

Some of us struggle with
putting words to our
“negative” emotions.

Maybe we were taught that
to express anger or fear or
doubt or sadness somehow
betrays a lack of faith in God.
A lack of spiritual maturity.
Evidence of weak faith.

Maybe we were told that we
needed to be "tough" or
"walk it off" or "be a man"
and not show our emotions.

The Bible is full of people who tell God everything that's on their hearts. Who pour out anger, despair, even the desire for revenge in their prayers.

(For more "Can we say stuff like THAT to God?!", check out Psalm 137:9!)

People say things that aren't true, that are angry, that are ugly to God in the Bible. They complain, they rage, they desperately beg God for help.

David, especially had a reputation for pouring out his heart to God as he wrote about a $\frac{1}{3}$ of the book of Psalms! And David is called "a man after my own heart" by God- despite his troubling habit of forgetting his filter when he talked to God.

On the cross, Jesus too cried out to God in pain. Jesus IS God, and in His moment of deepest despair, He voiced Psalm 22 which accuses God of forsaking, forgetting, being distant.

Had God actually forsaken Jesus? Of course not- Jesus is God! God can't forsake Himself.

But Jesus gave voice to his feeling of the most distance He had ever felt from the Father. He apparently felt no shame in crying out in His deep despair.

All that to say- do you find yourself afraid to tell God how you really feel? Do you feel like you have to clean up your thoughts before you talk to Him?

Today, consider the invitation from your Father to come to Him, just as you are.

THURSDAY

*My God, My God, why have you
forsaken me?*

April 3, 2025

"Why have you forsaken
me?"

In these words, Jesus speaks
words that countless others
have spoken and felt to the
deepest part of their souls.

The writers of the New Testament aren't particularly concerned with explaining exactly HOW Jesus took our place on the cross- but they seem to be in agreement that He somehow did just that.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul says,

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Peter echoes the same idea
in 1 Peter 2:24:

*“He himself bore our sins” in
his body on the cross, so that
we might die to sins and live
for righteousness; “by his
wounds you have been
healed.”*

And in his last words from the cross, "My God, My God; why have you forsaken me", the church has understood that Jesus was voluntarily going far from the Father so that we would never again be separated from Him.

He took our place in being distant from God. He, like the scapegoat in Old Testament worship rituals, took all our sin and went "far out into the desert" to carry the sins away from the people.

Christ experienced the
seeming abandonment of the
Father so that we would
never again have to be
separated from Him.

*Today, thank Jesus for taking
your place. For taking on
your sin and taking on your
separation from God.*

*Ask God to help you
experience His closeness
today.*

FRIDAY

*My God, My God, why have you
forsaken me?*

April 4, 2025

*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 pole."*

(Galatians 3:13)

As the apostle Paul is explaining to the church in Galatia what Jesus has done for them, He recalls this passage from the Torah- the Law, in Deuteronomy 21:23.

Jesus, in His disgraceful death, became accursed for us. He was accused doubly, one author says- both by the secular Roman authorities AND by His own people, the Jewish authorities.

Fleming Rutledge, in her beautiful reflection on Christ's last words, says,

"Jesus, in his death, takes the part of all those who suffer from the curses of others."

She speaks of how Jesus, in allowing himself this particularly despicable death, acted to identify with humanity. He allowed himself to be identified with the most despicable sinners imaginable.

"The Son of God took our place under the dictatorship of Sin. He was condemned by the Law and subject to Death because only he, the Perfectly Righteous One, could break the hold of these Powers and bring us out of our slavery to sin into the service of his righteousness."

*-The Last Seven Words from the Cross,
Fleming Rutledge*

Jesus willingly chose to be
place under the curse of sin,
willingly put himself in a
place where He would
experience extreme distance
from the Father... for us.

*Today, ask God to help you
truly experience and
understand more of the great
love He has for you that He
would go to such lengths for
YOU.*

SATURDAY

*My God, My God, why have you
forsaken me?*

April 5, 2025

Today, meditate on the
words to this old Episcopal
hymn, "Ah, Holy Jesus, How
Has Thou Offended."

*Ah, holy Jesus,
how has Thou offended,
That man to judge thee hath
in hate pretended?
By foes derided,
by thine own rejected,
O most afflicted.*

*Who was the guilty? Who
brought this upon Thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus,
hath undone Thee
'Twas I, Lord Jesus,
I it was denied Thee:
I crucified Thee.*

*Lo, the Good Shepherd
for the sheep is offered
The slave hath sinned,
and the Son hath suffered;
For our atonement,
while we nothing heeded,
God interceded.*

*For me, kind Jesus,
was Thy incarnation
Thy mortal sorrow,
and Thy life's oblation;
Thy death of anguish
and thy bitter passion,
For my salvation.*

*Hymn 158 (Episcopal Hymnal 1982), "Ah, Holy Jesus, How
Hast Thou Offended," words by Johann Heermann (1585-
1647), translated by Robert Seymour Bridges (1844-1930).*
