

The Super Cross

(Mark 15:33-41)

(preached 2/7/16; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Let us turn to Mark 15:33...

We are going to look at the second part of Mark's account of Jesus' crucifixion...

Mark 15:33 - 41...

33 When the [o]sixth hour came, darkness [p]fell over the whole land until the [q]ninth hour. 34 At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" 35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they began saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah." 36 Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "[r]Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down." 37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. 38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 When the centurion, who was standing [s]right in front of Him, saw [t]the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was [u]the Son of God!"

40 There were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of [v]James the [w]Less and Joses, and Salome. 41 When He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and [x]minister to Him; and there were many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

Let us pray.

It is fitting that God has lead us to this passage in Mark 15 on the same day that they will play Super Bowl 50 in San Fransisco California...

On a day when this nation gathers to watch the biggest event in football, we gather this morning to watch the biggest event in the history of the universe.

The death of Jesus Christ on a cross outside of Jerusalem will never make the national news, but they will talk about the Super Bowl for hours today...

Now, I will watch the Super Bowl.

I like football.

I will pull for the Panthers tonight...

God has given us sports as a grace to be enjoyed as long as we keep them in balance in our life...

However, sports often hold the throne in the lives of many people...

As we think about the Super Bowl, it is a strange thing....

But the actual game is often overlooked...

Hours will be spent talking about the game before it is played...

Then much attention will be focused on the commercials during the game..

Then all eyes will be on the halftime show of the game.

Then after the game, a few more hours will be spent talking about the game.

That is why the Super Bowl is often way more than just the game on the field..

And this year is the 50th Anniversary of it, so there is a lot of talk about it...

The same can be said for the events around the cross...

Often times, the thief getting saved steals the spotlight of what occurred as Jesus hung on a cross...

Sometimes the earthquakes and the darkness and the dead bodies that rose from the grave as Jesus died on the cross get more attention than the Savior himself.

Now, let me say this...

There was a lot going on at the cross...

Many things were happening there..

But if you leave here this morning without understanding the fact that Jesus hung on that cross as the substitute for sinners...

It is the same as watching the Super Bowl without paying attention to wins the game...

The Super Bowl will have a winner tonight...

That is why they play the game...

But the cross had a winner as well...

A much more important winner than a team of players...

The cross is a demonstration of the victory over sin that Jesus won for sinners who repent and trust in Him...

So, let's spend this morning looking at The Super Cross...

And to do that we are going to see 5 truths that occurred as Jesus hung on a cross outside of Jerusalem on a Friday in April around the year 30 AD.

- I. The Cross Calls for God's Wrath (33-34)
- II. The Cross Calls for Men's Mockery (35-36)
- III. The Cross Calls for the Savior's Death (37-38)
- IV. The Cross Calls for a Sinner's Salvation (39)
- V. The Cross Calls for a Believer's Amazement (40-41)

Let's take a closer look at the Super Cross by going back to Mark 15:33...

I. The Cross Calls for God's Wrath (33-34)

33 When the [o]sixth hour came, darkness [p]fell over the whole land until the [q]ninth hour.

This simply means that it was dark in the area around Jerusalem from 12 noon until 3 PM...

The Jews began keeping track of their hours at 6 in the morning...

The first hour was 7 am and so on....

We learned last week that Jesus' crucifixion began at the the 3rd hour....

This would have 3 hours after 6 am or 9 am...

And so when we get to Mark 15:33, Jesus has been on the cross for 3 hours...

That is what made crucifixions so painful...

Death did not come immediately...

It often took hours before the criminal was dead...

But at 12 noon, which is time when the sun is directly overhead, it went dark...

Some say this was an eclipse...

I don't think that is what we see here...

I think this is a supernatural act of God's judgment
...

This isn't Satan making it dark...

This is God bringing on darkness...

People often think of God as a God of light, and He
is....

But God uses darkness as judgment, and look let's
be clear here...

The darkness is not a judgment on the people for
hanging Jesus on the cross...

The darkness is God's judgment of sin that is falling
upon His Son here...

People often say that the darkness is God turning
his back on his Son...

God's face is on His Son here in judgment...

The penalty for sin is the judgment of God....

Do you know how hell is often described in the
Bible...

As a place of outer darkness....

Yet, God is not absent in the darkness, his judgment
in is the darkness....

And it fell on Jesus in the cross for 3 hours from 12
noon to 3 pm....

God's Son took on God's judgment for sin...

He was treated as if he were guilty of sin on our
behalf...

I should have hung on a cross in the darkness of
God's judgment for the rest of my life...

Yet, Jesus hung there as my substitute, so that I
didn't have to...

My sin should have caused me to experience the
darkness of God's judgment for an eternity....

That is the high price of sinning against a Holy God
who made you in his image..

And that is the price that everyone will pay who
rejects Jesus Christ....

A lake of fire in outer darkness that torments
forever and ever...

And so the darkness of God's judgment fell over Jesus for 3 hours...

God did not turn his face from Jesus on the cross....

He delivered the fury of his wrath...

But at 3, the darkness stopped according to verse 34...

34 At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

When the darkness ended, Jesus tired out to God asking why he had been forsaken...

What is exactly going here has been debated for centuries...

Let me give you one explanation that you may have heard about these verses...

Some say that Jesus became sin at this point as he experienced separation from God the Father and God the Spirit...

Though many teach that, I respectfully disagree with that view...

Jesus never became sin...

He is holy and has been holy for all eternity....

Also, Jesus has never been separated from the Godhead...

God is one God in 3 persons....

The trinity is mystery in many ways, but one thing we affirm about the trinity is that there has been or will be separation among the Father, the Son and the Spirit..

They are 3 in 1 for all eternity..

And there was no separation here...

What we see here is Jesus being treated as if He were guilty of all the sins of the people who would come to believe in Him....

What we see here on the cross is Jesus being treated as if he deserved the wrath that God was pouring out on Him...

Now, this is hard to understand and I have racked my brain to give you a better understanding of this..

But for a while, I worked with and for my dad i the summers...

He was the manager of a small printing company owned by someone else..

And at times, he had to act like a boss and be tough with people...

I forget what I did, but he called me and raked me over the coals for it...

I felt just like an employee for that meeting, and not like his son...

IT was painful to experience and he cut me no slack because I was his son...

Yet through it all, I was still his son.

That never changed...

When you read this cry of Jesus, this isn't a cry of becoming sin and being cast out of the trinity due to unholiness....

Jesus remained God on the cross and was as holy as ever...

His righteousness even in death was never tarnished...

So, why did he cry this?

I would simply say this...

After the darkness ended, Jesus in his humanity probably expected God to show up and minister to Him...

That is what the angels had done in his temptation,
...

In his humanity, I see Jesus expecting a little comfort after the wrath of God has been poured on Him...

Yet, God not answering his cries is proof that the judgment is not over...

I know of no worse feeling in the world than to be in a situation where you need help but no one is around..

You call out the first time and then you get louder and louder but nothing changes...

In my opinion, that is what we see here...

The worst agony and punishment in the world is to cry for God and get silence in return...

Jesus is needing God's comfort but is not getting it..

He feels forsaken by the Father...

He is being treated as if he were a sinner who has passed the point of repentance....

He can cry out to God but no one hears...

This is a preview of what hell will be like....

Cries of people wanting relief and comfort from the God they rejected, but they will only get silence in return....

This is what it feels to be forsaken....

And to be left alone in your time of need..

Jesus was treated like that in our place...

True believers will never cry out to God and not get response...

True believers will never be left alone in our time of need...

Because Jesus was forsaken in our place...

First and foremost, the cross call for God's wrath to be poured out on Christ, and you can see here in these first 2 verses that Jesus took the wrath of God as our Substitute...

The next thing to take note of is this...

II. The Cross Calls for Men's Mockery (35-36)

In verses 35-36, the mockery that we saw last week even continues among some people who were standing around the cross..

As Jesus cried out in Aramic, "Eloi, Eloi..." which is simply a cry to God....

Some off the bystanders seeking to make more fun of Christ took it as a cry to Elijah...

Jews knew that the prophet Elijah would accompany their Messiah....

Since Elijah never died but was simply taken to heaven in a chariot, Jews often called on him to come rescue them in times of trouble...

As one more way to mock and make fun of Christ, they joke amongst themselves...

"He must be calling on Elijah to come and save him..."

They even took their mockery to the extreme and sent some to grab a sponge filled with wine...

Thinking a little bit of hydration may keep him alive a little longer, they gave it to Jesus as a way of saying...

“Here’s a little drink to keep you alive long enough for Elijah to show up and save you.”

It is blasphemy an insult and mockery to the very end...

They mocked Jesus in Galilee, they mocked Jesus in Jerusalem, and now they are mocking him on the cross...

And guess what?

Men and women mock the cross today.

Jesus may be long gone from hanging on the cross, but the insults of him continue on even today...

The cross is the best news in the history of the world, but it brings out the worst insults from many in the world.

Let’s move from the fun and mocking to the final moments of Jesus’ life...

III. The Cross Calls for the Savior's Death **(37-38)**

I mentioned the cruelty of crucifixion last week, and how people who were crucified literally died from strangling themselves...

As a person hung there, they would have to lift themselves up in order to take a breath....

Once a person hung for there for so long, they would eventually be too weak to host themselves i the air and they would actually died from asphyxiation.

They would actually cut off their own air supply by being too weak to take a breath....

As we see Jesus' final moments on the cross, one thing is clear...

Jesus has plenty of breath even to the very end...

At 3 o'clock, which is after 6 hours on the cross, he cried out to God...

It takes a deep breath to cry out, so it is clear that Jesus was still breathing even at the very end of his life...

And then on top of that, we see in verse 37 that Jesus cried out just before he took his final breath...

He is even able to speak at this point because we know from the other gospel writers that he said...

“It is finished” before he breathed last...

So if he didn't die form asphyxiation like the normal victims of crucifixion...

What was the cause of Jesus' death?

Quite simply, he gave it up...

Here is what he said in John 10...

17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

And this is how John actually wrote about the end of Jesus' life...

John 19...

30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

The death of Jesus was a result of Him laying his life down for the sheep...

And the the breathed his last, the whole world would never be the same...

We see a major change in the world that immediately followed the death of Jesus...

The veil in the temple was torn in two pieces from top to bottom....

I don't have time to describe this incredible truth this morning..

But look at the powerpoint that is up here...

We will start with a big overview of the temple in Jesus' day...

The big building in the center of the complex is the actual temple...

Now, let's narrow down to the temple...

Here is a cut away of the temple....

You see that there was this room in the temple called the holy place, which would be here...

And then at the end of the holy place would be the holy of holies....

Before the glory of the Lord left the temple in 590 or so BC, the holy of holies was the place where the priests would go into once a year and put blood on the mercy seat to make atonement for the sins of the people...

Though God's glory had long been gone from the Holy of Holies, the Jews still hung a curtain there and allowed no one to enter it...

Though we can't be sure, the curtain was most likely 60 feet high and 20 feet wide and the thickness of a human hand..

And here is a picture of what it looks liked in Jesus day with the curtain hanging in front of the Holy of Holies...

When Jesus died, his blood secured atonement for the sins of those who would believe in Him...

They no longer needed a priest to go in and offer the blood of bulls and goats to God...

Jesus was now the priest..

They no longer needed a system of sacrifices to find forgiveness...

Jesus was the once for all sacrifice...

On that day, the blood of lambs would have been flowing in the temple...

The place was packed with people have their lambs slaughtered to eat the Passover the night...

But while they were in the temple killing lambs that only covered their sins for a while...

Jesus was on the cross securing forgiveness of sins forever to all who would turn to him in faith and repentance...

And the veil being torn was simply an act of God to show that Jesus threw up the doors of heaven to anyone who would trust in the death of His Son...

The veil ripped because victory over sin was now available through the death of the true lamb of God...

The cross provides forgiveness because a Savior provided his life and blood....

The cross calls for a Savior's death, but next let us see this incredible truth...

IV. The Cross Calls for a Sinner's Salvation (39)

As Jesus breathes his last breath, the second result of that is the salvation of a Roman soldier...

Verse 39 says that a Roman centurion was standing right in front of Jesus when he took his last breath...

And because of the way that he breathed his last breath, the centurion confessed that Jesus was the Son of God..

That seems strange...

How can the way that Jesus took his last breath lead a man to be saved?

I think it goes back to the method of killing by crucifixion...

The Romans were pros at it...

The had killed thousands of people by crucifixion...

And I assuming that this soldier has seen numerous people die on a cross...

It was agonizing to watch I am sure as people mustered all their strength to the one more breath, but then eventually ran out of strength to life themselves for one more breath and strangled themselves...

Yet, here is Jesus in front of this soldier after 6 hours on the cross...

And this soldier is watching a man who should have been out of energy hours ago maintain his strength and breath to the very end...

I think he saw a man with incredible power and incredible grace to the very end of his life...

I think he saw Jesus breath his last, and simply said to himself...

Nobody can do that...

That is unlike anything I have ever seen in my life...

And because of that, he confessed Jesus as the Son of God, and I am convinced that his was the first salvation after Jesus' death on the cross...

God uses all sorts of things to call people to salvation...

Sometimes, people see Jesus' love in the Scriptures and their heart is changed...

Sometimes, people see Jesus' majesty in the Scriptures and their hearts are changed...

And sometimes people simply see Jesus' power and their hearts are changed..

This centurion simply watched Jesus breath one last time, and god changed his eternity with that simple display of power and endurance...

What keeps your from seeing and confessing that Jesus is the Son of God?

What more evidence do you need to see your sin and to turn form it and turn to Christ?

Jesus is the Son of God sent to earth to pay the penalty for sin...

I have no reason to lie to you today...

I don't want your money...

I don't want your time...

I stand up here and bear witness to the fact that the Son of God has come into the world to save sinners based upon the authority of the Word of God..

I have no reason to lie, and you have no reason not to repent and turn to Christ..

Today is the today to see the Savior on the cross who hung there in your place and come running to Him in faith and repentance...

One final thing to see in the cross today...

V. The Cross Calls for a Believer's Amazement (40-41)

In verses 40-41, we meet a few women who are standing at a distance from the cross...

Now, we know from the other gospels that they started out near the cross...

In fact, they were close enough that Jesus spoke to this mother and others who were standing there as the crucifixion began...

However, when we get to the end of Jesus' life, we find that these women are at a distance...

Why is that?

There have been a number of explanations of it...

Some say they were fearful to be so close, so fear drove them away...

I don't think that's it...

They were brave enough to come...

I mean where are the disciples?

The men that Jesus had spent 3 years with are not even mentioned in the context of the cross, except for the apostle John..

These women are not a distance because of fear...

Some say that they are at a distance because they are abandoning Jesus...

I don't think that is true either...

They have been with him for three years...

They remained with him after the arrest and now at his execution...

So, why are they at a distance...

I would suggest to you that they are simply amazed by what they are seeing...

You ever had to take a few steps back from a scene to take it all in?

I think that is where we find these faithful women...

They knew that Jesus had predicted his own death; they had heard him predict his own resurrection...

But the sight of it actually happening was enough to take their breath and such them back from the cross a short distance...

They had cared for this man and ministered to him for 3 years according to verse 41....

And now they are watching him die...

I tend to think they are simply filled with wonder and amazement at the sight of such love....

The sight of the cross will do that to you..

You can live for years hearing about the cross and hearing about Jesus dying on for sin...

But when you realize that Jesus hung there taking the punishment you deserve, it can take your breath and fill your eyes with tears...

I think these sweet ladies have simply taken a step back to take it the entire scene....

It reminds me of the lyrics of one of my favorite hymns when I see the picture of these women standing some distance from the cross...

“I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene;

And wonder how he could love me a sinner
condemned unclean;
How marvelous; How Wonderful;
And my song shall ever be,
How Marvelous, How Wonderful;
Is my Savior's love for me.”

Maybe these faithful followers of the Lord are
simply experiencing what so many of us experience
every time we consider the cross...

Maybe they are overwhelmed by the sight of the
incredible love that kept Jesus up there...

Conclusion

Tonight, around 170 million people will tune in to watch the Super Bowl....

But in a few weeks, only a quarter of those people or maybe less than a quarter of those people will be able to tell you who won....

It is incredible how such big events seem to make such small impressions upon people...

Quick, tell me who played in last year's Super Bowl...

Some of you can, but most of you can't...

Because once the event is over, its over and our minds rarely go back to it...

Sadly, the same is true for the cross of Jesus Christ...

Very few people even know the story of what happened on that cross outside of Jerusalem....

And even fewer respond as they should to the truth of it...

But here's the interesting thing that will take people by shock....

One day, it won't matter what you think about
Super Bowl 50....

But it will matter what you think about the cross of
Jesus Christ....

My prayer for you is that you have seen the
amazing love of Jesus this morning, and your heart
confesses with the Roman Soldier....

Surely, this man is the Son of God...

Let us pray.