

The Seven Words of the Cross

The Fourth Word From the Cross

“My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?”

Matthew 27:45-50 NKJV

Jesus Dies on the Cross

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

⁴⁷ Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, “This Man is calling for Elijah!”

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

⁴⁹ The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.”

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

Primary Text

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Reverse Order for Interpretive Emphasis

“You have forsaken Me — My God, My God.”

This structure draws attention to the shocking reality that **the Son is experiencing abandonment** while still clinging to the Father.

Expanded Reverse for Clarity

“You have forsaken Me — yet You are still My God.”

Even in abandonment, **faith is not abandoned**.

Full Interpretive Reverse

“Though I now bear the abandonment that sin deserves, You are still My God, and this suffering fulfills Your redemptive plan.”

Observational Emphasis in the Reverse Structure

“Forsaken”

This word reveals the **judicial abandonment** Christ experienced as the sin-bearer.

The Greek word (**Forsaken**) *egkataleipō* means:

- to abandon
- to leave helpless
- to withdraw presence

Christ experienced the **penalty of sin’s separation**.

Isaiah 59:2 (NKJV)

² But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,
So that He will not hear.

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”
“**You**”

The suffering of Christ is **not random**. It is the result of the Father’s redemptive plan.

Isaiah 53:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ **Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.**

The cross was not an accident. It was **divine purpose**.

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”
“**My God**”

Notice Jesus does not say “**Father.**”

Earlier He prayed:

Luke 23:34 NKJV

³⁴ **Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots.**

But here He says:

“**My God.**”

This reflects the **judicial nature of the moment**. Christ stands before God as **the sin-bearer**, not merely the beloved Son. Yet even in abandonment, He still says: “**My God.**” Faith remains.

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”
“**My God, My God**”

The repetition expresses:

- deep anguish
- prophetic fulfillment
- covenantal relationship

It also directly quotes:

Psalms 22:1 NKJV

¹ **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?***

By quoting this verse, Jesus points to the **entire Psalm**, which ends in victory and worldwide worship of God.

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”
“**My God, My God**”

Expanded Reverse - Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

You can present the verse in progressive layers for preaching emphasis:

Layer 1

“You have forsaken Me.”

The weight of sin falls on Christ.

Layer 2

“You have forsaken Me — yet You are still My God.”

Faith remains in the darkness.

Layer 3

“You have forsaken Me because I now bear the sin of the world.”

Substitution is taking place.

Layer 4

“You have forsaken Me so that sinners may never be forsaken.”

Redemption is secured.

The Gospel in Reverse Form

Christ was forsaken so that believers may be **accepted**.

Christ bore judgment so that believers may receive **mercy**.

Christ entered darkness so that believers may walk in **light**.

Christ endured separation so that believers may have **eternal fellowship with God**.

Powerful Closing Statement for the Sermon

At the cross:

The Father treated Jesus as if He had lived **our sinful life** so that He could treat us as if we had lived **Christ’s righteous life**.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ **For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Mark 15:34 NKJV

³⁴ **And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

Theological Introduction

Among the **Seven Words From the Cross**, this is **the most mysterious, the most profound**, and perhaps the **most unsettling** statement ever uttered in human history.

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

This cry from the cross is not merely a moment of suffering—it is the center of the atonement. At this moment, the sinless Son of God experiences the judicial abandonment of the Father as He bears the full weight of humanity’s sin. This is not the cry of despair—it is **the cry of substitution**. At the cross we see the fulfillment of what the prophets foretold:

Isaiah 53:6 (NKJV)

⁶ **All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

The Seven Words of the Cross (3)

The cross reveals the great exchange:

- Our sin placed upon Christ
- Christ's righteousness given to believers

Theologians often refer to this moment as the doctrine of penal substitution. Christ is not merely suffering physically; He is suffering judicially. The penalty for sin is being executed upon Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

At this moment:

- The sinless One becomes the sin-bearer
- The beloved Son experiences separation
- The Lamb of God absorbs divine wrath

This is the cost of redemption.

Modern-Day Introduction

Many people today struggle with the question:

“Where is God when suffering happens?”

We live in a culture that assumes suffering means God has abandoned us.

People say:

- “God has forgotten me.”
- “God has left me.”
- “God must not care.”

Yet the cross shows us something astonishing: The only person ever truly forsaken by God was Jesus Christ. And He was forsaken so that believers **never would be. REPEAT**

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Let your conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

The abandonment Christ experienced secured the **eternal acceptance** of those who trust in Him. What Jesus endured for three hours on the cross spared believers from experiencing it for eternity.

The Meaning of the Cry

1. It Was a Cry of Real Suffering

Jesus experienced the deepest suffering imaginable.

Not merely:

- Physical pain
- Emotional agony
- Public humiliation

But **spiritual abandonment**.

From noon until 3 PM, darkness covered the land (**Matthew 27:45**). **This darkness symbolized divine judgment.** During these hours, Christ bore the full penalty of sin.

Galatians 3:13 NKJV

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”).

The cross was not only **Roman execution**. It was **divine judgment**.

2. It Was a Fulfillment of Prophecy

Jesus is quoting directly from:

Psalm 22:1 (NKJV)

¹ **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

Psalm 22 is one of the clearest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. Remarkably, it describes crucifixion **centuries before crucifixion existed**.

Psalm 22 includes:

- Mocking by enemies (**Psalm 22:7–8**)
- Pierced hands and feet (**Psalm 22:16**)
- Soldiers casting lots for garments (**Psalm 22:18**)

By quoting the opening verse, Jesus points listeners to the **entire Psalm**, revealing that everything happening was foretold by God. The cross was not an accident. It was **God’s redemptive plan unfolding**.

Acts 2:23 (NKJV)

²³ **Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.**

3. It Was the Moment Christ Became the Sin-Bearer

This is the heart of the Gospel. Jesus experienced separation from the Father **because He carried our sin**. God is perfectly holy.

Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ **You are of purer eyes than to behold evil. And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?**

When the sin of humanity was placed upon Christ, He bore the **judicial consequences of sin**. This does not mean the Trinity was broken. But the **fellowship between Father and Son was eclipsed** as Christ bore judgment. This was the cup Jesus prayed about in Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ **He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”**

The cup was the **cup of divine wrath**.

Scriptural Illustrations

1. The Scapegoat (Leviticus 16)

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest placed the sins of Israel upon a goat and sent it into the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:22 NKJV

²² **The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.**

The Seven Words of the Cross (3)

The goat symbolically **carried away the sins of the people**. Jesus fulfilled this perfectly. He became the **ultimate scapegoat**, carrying the sins of the world away through His sacrifice.

2. Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22)

Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac. But at the last moment God provided a substitute.

Genesis 22:13

“Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket.”

Isaac was spared because another took his place. At Calvary, however, there was **no substitute for Jesus**. He *was* the substitute—for us.

3. The Passover Lamb (Exodus 12)

When judgment came upon Egypt, God provided a means of protection. The Israelites were instructed to apply the blood of a lamb to their doorposts.

Exodus 12:13 NKJV

¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

The lamb died so the firstborn could live. Jesus is the fulfillment of that lamb.

John 1:29 NKJV

The Lamb of God

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Modern-Day Illustrations

1. The Courtroom Substitute

Imagine standing in court guilty of a serious crime. The judge pronounces the sentence. But then someone steps forward and says: “I will take the punishment for him.” That person serves the sentence while the guilty person walks free. That is what happened at the cross. **Christ took the judgment we deserved.**

2. The Soldier Covering a Grenade

In warfare there have been soldiers who threw themselves onto a grenade to save their fellow soldiers. The explosion killed them but spared everyone else. The soldier absorbed the full impact. **Jesus absorbed the full impact of God’s wrath against sin.**

3. A Father Paying His Child’s Debt

Imagine a child who foolishly accumulates a debt he can never repay. The father steps in and pays the full amount. The debt disappears—not because it was ignored—but because **it was paid**. At the cross, the debt of sin was paid in full. **The Power of the Address: “My God”** Even in abandonment, Jesus says: **“My God.”** Not: “God, why have You forsaken Me?” But: **“My God.”** This reveals something profound. Even in suffering, Christ maintained **perfect trust** in the Father. This is the language of faith in the darkest hour.

What This Means for Believers

The Seven Words of the Cross (3)

1. Because Christ Was Forsaken, We Are Accepted

Romans 8:1 NKJV

Free from Indwelling Sin

¹ **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

Believers will never face the abandonment Christ endured.

2. Because Christ Bore Wrath, We Receive Grace

Romans 5:9 NKJV

⁹ **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**

The wrath that should fall on sinners fell on Christ.

3. Because Christ Entered Darkness, We Walk in Light

John 8:12 NKJV

¹² **Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."**

The Glory of the Cross This cry was not defeat. It was the **turning point of redemption**. Soon Jesus would declare:

John 19:30 NKJV

³⁰ **So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.**

The price was paid. The work was complete. The debt was satisfied.

Closing Challenge

The question of the cross is not simply: **"Why was Jesus forsaken?"** The real question is: **"What will you do with the One who was forsaken for you?"**

Because the cross declares: The seriousness of sin. The holiness of God. The depth of Christ's love.

Romans 5:8 NKJV

⁸ **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**