

WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

Mark 15:33-39

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- When have you felt forsaken by God or by others? What emotions did you encounter? What were the effects of this feeling on your faith?
- Have you experienced a season of darkness, pain, or difficulty in your life? Did anything or anyone bring you comfort? Were there any unsolicited scripture passages or hymns that came to mind?

In *Thank God It's Friday: Encountering the Seven Last Words from the Cross*, preacher and theologian William Willimon claims that Jesus Christ's fourth word from the cross: "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" sets the context for and holds together all of the other words he spoke from the cross. What is it about this particular word from the cross that we find so powerful, that helps us ponder the mystery of the crucifixion with such significance? Dwelling with Christ's dying prayer leads us toward the heart of God and causes us to reconsider what we *think* we know about how God should act.

Listen: [Why Have You Forsaken Me?](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In segment 1, hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee discuss Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22:1 from the cross, recognizing that he's able to recollect this prayer because he knew it by heart. What is your experience with memorizing scripture? Have you ever experienced the recollection of scripture that reflects your faith, speaks fittingly to your situation, or gives you words when your own words fail you? Which passages have you experienced this with, whether in pain or joy?
- Willimon calls this word from the cross a "deep, dark conversation deep in the heart of the Trinity" (*Thank God It's Friday*, p. 59, Books). What does this word from the cross reveal to you about God? What does it reveal to you about your prayers and how to pray?
- In segment 3, Dave and Scott discuss the heart of the gospel expressed in this word from the cross. Jesus took your place; he was forsaken by God and because of this you will *never* be forsaken. What other scripture passages remind you of the promise that because of Christ's work, God will never leave you or forsake you?
- At the close of the program, Dave and Scott bring up the Messianic secret, the fact that Jesus kept telling everyone who identified him as the Messiah to keep it a secret. They suggest that the best reason to explain the need for secrecy was that people did not yet understand what kind of Messiah he was supposed to be. With that in mind, consider this thought from Willimon's reflection on the fourth word from the cross:

"So what if the God who Is is the God who in a stunningly bloody redefinition of love, 'did not exploit his godliness but emptied himself, becoming a slave; he humbled himself and became obedient even to death, even to death on a cross' (Phil. 2:6-8 AP)? We wanted him to do

something good for us, something great, and he just hangs there , impotent, mocked by the world, naked, exposed, now crying out in agony to the God who was supposed to save, saving by not saving, delivering by not delivering, embracing through forsaking, coming close by being so very different, true power in complete weakness, quoting a childlike prayer that everyone already knew” (from “The Fourth Word” in Thank God It’s Friday, p. 63, Books).

What feelings, emotions, or thoughts does this stir in you?

Related Passages

- **Matthew 27:45-54**
- **Psalm 22**
- **2 Corinthians 5:18-21**

Conclusion

Spend some time reflecting on your knowledge of scripture and make an honest assessment about how familiar you are with it. Consider challenging yourself to memorize a passage of scripture, so that you can readily recall it from memory in your dark times, like Jesus did. Choose a passage you find meaningful, maybe one that reminds you of God’s presence and that you will never be forsaken. Or simply begin with Psalm 22. For additional accountability, ask another person or small group to do this with you.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/why-have-you-forsaken-me>

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