

Forsaken

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1. **Introduction:** The Irony of Isolation: For example, the profound loneliness experienced by those who are bedridden in hospitals, the elderly who are shut-in at home, and others with a shortage of visitors, mirrors the agony of being forsaken. When the phone calls cease and the world forgets the addresses of the confined, they feel more than just physical pain; they experience the crushing weight of isolation and being overlooked. I use these examples because I have spent time this week visiting people in the hospitals and I also recollect the time I spent in our residential facility Brookdale here on Foothill. One can sense the loneliness prevalent in the people who find themselves in these situations. This deep pain, this sense of genuine abandonment, is one that only the Savior, who cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" can fully understand, comfort, and sanctify. Because Christ went through the ultimate form of forsakenness, He makes lonely suffering

meaningful. Because Jesus felt ultimate abandonment, your feeling of being forsaken becomes a sacred way to connect with Him. Our loneliness, when brought to Christ, is not eliminated, but it is transformed from a source of despair into a pathway for deeper communion and grace.

In short, Christ's suffering makes our suffering, even our loneliness, something that can be used for a higher purpose and can draw us closer to God.

Today we need to look at a staggering contrast, an irony central to our faith. —an irony so overpowering it sits at the very heart of the Christian faith. It is the contrast between Christ's ministry to the world and his moment of absolute, crushing solitude.

For three years, Jesus healed every disease, fed every hungry crowd, raised the dead, and offered hope to every outcast. He was the center of every beneficial act. Yet, when the Roman soldiers and the temple guards closed in, the scene changes instantly.

Listen to the stunning finality of our text, **Mark 14:50**: “*And they all forsook him, and fled.*”

"Forsake" is not a gentle word. It means to abandon completely to desert in a moment of crisis, to withdraw all help and comfort when it is most needed. The one person who had never forsaken anyone was now utterly forsaken by everyone. Why? Because the time of popularity and benefit was over. The time of cost and sacrifice had arrived.

The "tragedy" of the cross began not with the nails, but with the painful, increasing realization that in the most critical moment of human history, Christ had to stand alone. His abandonment came in four devastating, progressive layers.

I. The Four Layers of Abandonment

1. Forsaken by His Followers

The first layer is the broadest and perhaps the most immediately shameful. It was the crowd of those who had followed Him for what they could get—free meals, miraculous cures, exciting rallies.

Look at King David. When his own son, Absalom, rebelled, David was betrayed by his trusted counselor, Ahithophel. David knew the agony of the familiar friend, the one who "did eat of my bread," who "hath lifted up his heel against me," (Psalm 41:9, a verse Jesus himself quotes

regarding Judas). David suffered the betrayal of a trusted inner circle advisor. Continuing ...

Mark tells us” They all” fled. This is a warning to us: Many will follow Christ when the sun is shining and the benefits are flowing, but when the shadows fall, when it costs reputation or safety, they disappear. These were the fair-weather fans. They were superficial in their commitment, following for the blessings but not for the Lord himself. Their quick departure reminds us that true faith is not a crowd-based enthusiasm; it is a cross-based commitment.

2. Forsaken by His Friends

The next layer is far more painful: the betrayal of intimacy. These were not casual followers; these were the Twelve—the men He had poured His life into; the ones He called friends.

Think of Peter. Peter had just vowed, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you" (Mark 14:31). A few hours later, he stood by a fire, and when challenged, he cursed and swore, "I do not know this man you're talking about!" (Mark 14:71).

Instead of panicking and failing, Christ's closest friends should have displayed resolute faithfulness and active devotion. Having witnessed His miracles and heard His constant warnings about persecution, they should have been prepared to stand by Him in solidarity, even at the risk of their own lives.

The failure of His closest friends shows us that even the best intentions can crumble under pressure. But it also shows us that Christ understands the agony of being betrayed by the one you trusted most. He knows what it is to be abandoned not by strangers, but by those in your inner circle.

3. Forsaken by His Family

Though not directly mentioned in Mark 14:50, the atmosphere of isolation at the trial suggests this third layer. His family—mother,

brothers, and sisters—were, at this point, mostly absent or simply unable to intervene against the forces organized against him.

In one sense, this emphasizes His perfect humanity: In His humanity, He opened Himself to the need for human support and comfort, and they failed Him. He walked the path to the cross completely unsupported by the natural ties of family and friends. He took on an isolation so deep that it cut Him off from every human connection.

Think of Joseph: Joseph was most severely forsaken by his own eleven brothers (his immediate family), who were motivated by envy and jealousy over their father's favor.

- How was Joseph forsaken? His brothers first threw him into a pit and then sold him into slavery to passing Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:23–28).
- They then lied to their father, Jacob, making him believe Joseph had been killed by a wild animal, essentially erasing him from the family for decades.

4. Forsaken by His Father

This is the ultimate, unconceivable layer of solitude, spoken from the cross in **Mark 15:34**: “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*”

This is not simply a man feeling sad or alone. This is the Son of God experiencing true separation from the source of all life and comfort. For the first and only time in all eternity, the fellowship of the Trinity was interrupted.

Why? Because Christ, on the cross, was not simply a martyr; He was a substitute. He was taking the sin of the world—your sin and mine—onto Himself. And when the pure, holy nature of God looked upon that sin, He had to turn away. The wages of sin is death, which is ultimately separation from God. Christ was forsaken by the Father so

that you and I would never have to be. He died alone so that we could be united with God forever.

III. The Purpose of the Pain

So, why did the Savior have to die alone?

His solitude was the **necessary mechanism of our salvation**.

1. **He Became the Perfect Substitute:** He had to stand where we deserved to stand—outside the grace of God. Had anyone stood with Him, had a legion of angels intervened, the sacrifice would have been incomplete. He had to drink the cup of God's wrath down to the very last drop, all by Himself.
2. **He Sanctified Loneliness:** Because Christ was utterly forsaken, He can fully empathize with your deepest feelings of isolation. When you feel lonely, when you feel misunderstood, when friends or family let you down, you can say, "My Savior has been

here." He tasted the ultimate abandonment so that He could be the ultimate companion.

This is the glorious exchange: He was cut off so we could be connected.

IV. Let me now conclude with this

The text Mark 14:50 is a challenge to us today. It is a moment of truth for every believer.

The crowds fled because they were following for the wrong reasons. The friends failed because their commitment wasn't deep enough. Christ stood firm because His commitment was absolute.

Tonight, ask yourself: Are you a follower, a friend, or a faithful disciple? If the pressure comes, will you be among those who forsake and flee, or will you be among the few who remain faithful?

The good news is this: The One who was forsaken for you will never forsake you. His final promise is: "I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). He tasted separation so that we could be assured of His presence forever.

Let us stand in that truth and choose today to be the faithful ones who stand with Him. Let's pray.