

Sermon

Let's Listen at the Foot of The Cross

07/23/23

Good morning church,

There are handouts in the back that includes the verses I'll cover today

- ***Please raise your hand and our ushers will bring you one.***

What a wonderful day...

- ***To open God's word together***
- ***And bring out its truth***

I really appreciate the opportunities Fred gives us to preach

- ***So we can share what God's has laid on our hearts,***
- ***It is a privilege we take very seriously***

Today's message is a story you've probably heard before...

- But maybe not this way

But whether you've heard it or not...

- I pray it will encourage you
- And draw you closer to Jesus

Today we're going to talk about the cross

- To us - Who are believers
 - The cross is the source of eternal life
- Because that is where Jesus
 - The Lamb of God
 - Took our sin
 - And redeemed our souls
 - With His own life

But for many...

- The cross has become a commonplace symbol
 - Something they wear on a chain
 - Or, have on a bumper sticker
 - Or, a T-shirt
- Even in today's fallen society...
 - The symbol of the cross
 - Is not hard to find

But sadly, our society

- And sometimes even in the American church
- Has become far too comfortable with the symbol
- And complacent
 - To what it really means

I suspect, if you were to ask people on the street what the cross means to them...

- A very small percentage would say
 - It's where Jesus took our sins away
- But, more likely, most people would simply say it is,
 - A symbol of someone's faith
 - Or even an outdated religious relic
- Because...
 - Many people have no idea
 - What the cross really means
- Or, the profound impact it has had on humanity

But for us...true followers of Jesus

- The cross is our source of deliverance
 - And redemption
 - And freedom from condemnation
- It is the rugged symbol
 - Of the true love of God
- That is forever impressed in our hearts
- Because of what happened,
 - On that day

So lets talk about what happened...

- On that day

On that day...

- The day Jewish leadership
 - Thought they had eliminated a troublesome adversary

On that day...

- The day the wicked Pharisees thought they had finally brought a madman's ministry
 - To an abrupt end

On that day...

- The day when satan thought he had finally
 - Destroyed the Son of God
 - And could claim his victory

But...that's not what happened...

- Is it?

Instead...

On that day..

- Jesus...
 - The Son of God
 - Became the "**...Lamb of God...**"
 - And through His death
 - Defeated our death
 - And destroyed our sin

On that day...

- Jesus trampled satan into the ground

On that day...

- The Creator of the world
- Became the Savior of the world

And, on that day

- God, in flesh
- Took the cross of man
- And made it the symbol of our salvation

So this morning ...

- We're going to talk about what happened
 - On that day...
- By listening to the words
 - Spoken by our crucified King

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Let us pray

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Several months ago Ms. Lela Byrum gave me a book

- And said,
 - "*God told me to give this to you*"
- Now...
 - When Lela,
 - A true warrior for Jesus,
 - Tells you something like that,
 - It gets your attention

The book Lela gave me was Edwin Lutzer's "Cries From The Cross"

- It's a fairly short book
- But in its few pages is a profound story

- A story many of us have heard before
 - But it never hurts to hear it again
- Or...
 - Maybe you've never heard it
 - And need to hear it now

So, as I dug back through familiar scripture

- The Lord laid this sermon on my heart
- A sermon about the words Jesus spoke
- On that day

These were not the words Jesus spoke in the synagogue

- Or in a mountain side sermon
- Or while feeding thousands
- Or while walking on water
- Or while praying in the garden
- No...
- These are the words
 - He spoke
 - While nailed to a cross

Words spoken through horrific pain

- Spoken after hours of inhuman torture
- Spoken after great loss of blood
- Spoken despite raging dehydration
- Spoken while His friends deserted Him
- Spoken in His loneliness
- Spoken at the end of His short earthly life
- Spoken with His dying breath
- Spoken while nailed to a tree
 - He created
- Spoken while the tree He created
 - Was placed in ground
 - He created
- Spoken while being crucified
 - By people
 - He created

But they are more than just words

- They are words that would forever
 - Turn the world upside down
- Because they were spoken
 - While Jesus absorbed trillions upon trillions of sins
 - That were not His own
- Words that were spoken
 - For you and for me

These are words of love

- The likes of which have never been uttered before or since
- The words of a King
- They are the very words of God

These words are found in seven short statements

- Spoken during the span of only a few hours
- Words that have reverberated
 - Across the epochs of human history
- Words that can transform the spiritual consciousness of man
- Words that can change the direction of your eternity

These are the words of Jesus

- Spoken from the cross
- The words of our Savior
- The words of our Lord
- The words of our King of kings

So for the next few minutes

- Let's stand beside the apostle John and Mary
 - At the foot of the cross
 - As we look upon our dying Savior
 - And listen to the words of our Lord
- And as we do...
 - Let's allow His words to captivate our hearts
 - Refresh our souls
 - And bring us to our knees
- And maybe...
 - Take us
 - To a place of spiritual awareness
 - We've never been before

So to begin,

- Please turn in your Bibles to Luke, chapter 23.
- Beginning in verse 34

I'll be reading from the New-KJV

First words – (Luke 23:34)

"Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

The Son of God came to dwell with us for one primary reason.

- To offer God's grace for the redemption of sin
- Through His own blood sacrifice
- So that all the world could be saved

For centuries the people of Israel

- Had sacrificed tens-of-thousand of lambs
- To cover their own sin
- And as a picture of the coming Messiah

But the Israelites became self-righteous and hyper-religious

- To the point they missed the fact God had selected them
 - To carry His message to the world
 - And be a light to the Gentiles
- Instead, they hoarded His message
 - And hid it in their religious arrogance

So when the Messiah finally came to earth

- In the disguise of a homeless Carpenter
- Centuries of Messianic prophecy fell on deaf ears
- Because Israel didn't have enough faith
 - To recognize who He is

So they rebelled

- They resisted His message
- They taunted Him
- And criticized Him
- And sought to kill Him
 - The only way they could
- By bringing false charges against Him
- Until the Roman government
 - Agreed to crucify an innocent man
 - Rather than risk an Israelite revolt

So, the Carpenter would be slain

- For something He didn't do

But He didn't fight back

- He didn't present a legal defense
- He didn't offer excuses
 - For what He had said or done
- Instead, He willingly gave His life
 - Without hesitation
 - In order to glorify God
 - And bring salvation to the world

Throughout the prior night and into that morning

- Jesus had been tried, convicted and sentenced
- Then He was beaten, whipped
- Scourged, mocked and spat upon
- Then He was nailed to a cross
 - A punishment
 - Reserved for the lowest class of criminal

And as He hung on the cross

- In horrific pain and suffering
- None of us can truly imagine

He cried out to our Father

- **"... forgive them,**
- **"...for they do not know what they do..."**

Jesus, tortured and bloodied

- Asked God to grant mercy
 - To the most evil men in history
- To forgive the Jewish leadership who mocked Him
- To forgive the masses of people who cursed Him
- To forgive the Roman soldiers who probably could care less
 - If another Jew had died
- To forgive His disciples
 - Who with the exception of one
 - Had run for their lives
- And...in a timeless cry of grace...
 - To forgive us

This statement of love

- Is proof His sacrifice will forgive any sinner
 - Of any sin
- Even those who killed Him
- Even those whose sin put Him on the cross...
 - And that includes me and you

So I ask you...

If you have not done so

- Please ask Jesus to forgive you today

Second words—(Luke 23:43)

"And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Crucifixion was probably the most inhumane method of execution ever devised

- But it was common in the ancient world,
- In fact...
 - It's believed the Roman Empire sometimes
 - Crucified over 30,000 people a year
 - And as many as 2,000 people on a single day

But on that day,

- Only two other men were crucified with Jesus
- And as best we can tell
- Both were common criminals who deserved punishment

One of the men looked at Jesus with hatred

- And saw Him as a way to escape death
- So he could live to rob and steal another day

But the other man looked at Jesus with love

- And watched what Jesus did
- He listened to what His accusers said
- And somehow
 - He knew Jesus was God

In their short conversation one man committed more sin

- And died a sinners death

But the other, confessed his own sin

- And displayed his faith
- By placing his eternity in the hands
 - Of a homeless Carpenter

Two men were crucified with Jesus on that day

- One accepted
- And one rejected

One would spend an eternity in hell

- And one would spend eternity with Jesus.

Two men were crucified with Jesus on that day

- Both heard the same message
- But only one believed

Yet, the same situation repeats itself today

- In the life of every person
 - Some accept
 - Some reject
- But there is no third option

Two men were crucified with Jesus on that day

- They died for their own sin
- But our sin was there too...
 - But our sin hung on Jesus

So I ask you...

What decision will you make today

- Will you accept
- Or reject

It's too late for one of those men

- But it's not too late for you...

- Please accept Jesus today
 - While you still can

Third words — (John 19:26-27)

"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."

Always the true Shepherd...

- Jesus was near death
- But the welfare of His flock was always on His mind.

Sadly, all but one apostle had deserted Him

- They hid
 - For fear of the Romans
 - Because they lacked the faith to stand by Jesus
- All but one...
 - The young apostle John
- The only one who saw Jesus die
- In fact, John was only apostle who saw Jesus
 - Alive
 - Dead
 - And resurrected
- John was also the only one
 - To whom Jesus would reveal the future
 - A future time recorded in Revelation 5:6
 - When John will recognize Jesus
 - As the **"...Lamb**
 - Who **"...had been slain..."**
 - (Revelation 5:6)

Why?

Because John had the courage to stay near his Lord

- So Jesus gave John an important task
- Not a command to heal the sick or raise the dead
- But a request to take care of the Lord's earthly Mother
 - As if John were her own son

So I ask you...

What has Jesus asked you to do?

- Did you do it?
- Or did you run?
 - And hide?
- Or...are you too far from the cross
 - To even hear, when He calls?

Fourth words — (Matthew 27:46)

"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?"

Prophecy was fulfilled on that day!

- In Psalm 22, verse 1
 - King David prophesied the words
 - That would be spoken by the coming Messiah
 - On the cross
- Words that would enable grace
- Words that reflect the unique union
 - Of a Triune God

The Psalmists' words were now being repeated by Jesus

- Words prophesied long ago
- Words the self-righteous Jews should have recognized
 - Because they had heard them before
- Words that should have rekindled
 - Religious memories
 - And drew them to their Messiah

- But they didn't
 - And Jesus was left to die
 - Despite the prophecy being fulfilled
 - Right before the self-righteous eyes
 - Of blinded fools

But Oh what they missed

- Jesus didn't die for His sin
- Because He had none

On the cross He wore our sin

- And in His death
- He gave us life

But as difficult as this was for Jesus to endure the pain...

- It was just as difficult for the Father
- And the Holy Spirit

Why?

- Because...
- Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit are One God
- Who had one plan
- A plan to bring redemption to the world
 - Through the ultimate sacrifice
 - Of the Lamb

Yet – on *that day*

- When a trillion-trillion sins hung on our Savior
- Jesus confirmed the unity of God
 - By calling out,
 - **"My"**
 - **"God,**
 - **"My"**
 - **"God".**
- Thereby acknowledging they were still One
 - And as the Son suffered,
 - The Father suffered
 - And the Spirit suffered
 - As He forsook the sin
 - He had placed on the Son
- So they suffered as One
 - Because they are One
 - Because they are God

But most important is the fact...

- Jesus endured this forsakeness
- For you and me.

So I ask you...

- What have you forsaken for Him?
- Have you confessed the sin He took to the cross?
- And have you asked Him to be your Savior?

Fifth words — (John 19:28)

"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"

How ironic – That the Living Water

- Would thirst...

Jesus, the One who said to the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14

- ***"...Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him***
- ***"...will never thirst.***
- ***"...But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."***

But what is this water?

- It is the fountain of saving grace,
- As Jesus explained to the wicked Pharisees in John 7:37-38
- ***"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said,***

- **"...out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."**

Jesus, the One who promised us living water

- The One who offered to quench our spiritual thirst
- Was now thirsty Himself
 - More thirsty than any of us have ever been
- But His evil executioners should have known that too
 - Because as the Psalmist prophesied so long ago in Psalm 69:21
 - **"They also gave me gall for my food,**
 - **And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."**

Jesus, who is God

- Came as a man
- To help us relate to Him

And as a man, Jesus laughed like us

- And lived like us,
 - (But without sin)
- He also hurt like us
 - And hungered like us
- Now, on the cross,
 - In a condition of severe dehydration
- He thirsts like us
- And in doing so
 - He reminds us that we will also thirst in this life
- And when we do,
 - We should thirst for Him and cry out as Psalm 42:2
 - **"...As the deer pants for the water brooks,**
 - **So pants my soul for You, O God.**
 - **My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.**
 - Why? Because as Psalm 63:1 proclaims,
 - **"...O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You;**
 - **My soul thirsts for You;**
 - **My flesh longs for You**
 - **In a dry and thirsty land**
 - **Where there is no water."**

As our world falls deeper into sin

- They seek answers in lies and fables
- And they thirst for relief
- But refreshment cannot be found
 - Where they look
 - Because they look...
 - **"...In a dry and thirsty land..."**

So I ask you...

Do you have the Living Water

- That's found in only one place
- In Jesus...
- The Lamb of God
- Who thirsted for you

But do you thirst for Him?

Come and let Him quench your thirst today

Sixth words —(John 19:30)

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

And as prophecy said

- The executioners gave Jesus a drink

Through lips

- Cracked by the bruises of fists
- And hours of dehydration
- He drank the bitter drink

And then He declared

- **"It is finished!"**

But what does **"...finished..."** really mean?

- Well, before time began
- God knew He would create man
 - He also knew man would fail
 - To be obedient
- So, in His infinite mercy
 - God already had a plan
 - To offer mankind His grace
 - For forgiveness

Long before that day on the cross

- God already knew that day would come
- The crucifixion of Jesus was not Plan-B
 - And it devised was not a quick reaction when man sinned
- It was God's plan all along
 - As the final sacrifice that applied His grace.
 - Not a temporary sacrifice of an imperfect
 - Lamb of man
 - But a permanent sacrifice of the perfect and Holy
 - Lamb of God

"It is finished!" announces the completion of Their plan

- Jesus came
 - He lived as a perfect example
 - Of obedience

- And now He died...
 - For the sin of mankind
- And in doing so He paid our debt
 - For all eternity

But...amazingly - we will hear this cry again

- At the end-of-time
- In Revelation 21:6
- When Jesus will proclaim the completion of His eternal plan,
 - **"...And He said to me,**
 - **"...*"It is done!***
 - **"...I am the Alpha and the Omega,**
 - **"...the Beginning and the End.**
 - **"...I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."**

Yet...from their tragic origin...

- These words are so encouraging
- **"...It is finished..."**
 - This is not a cry of defeat
- Nor, the relief that a dreaded task is over

No!

"It is finished!..."

- Is a proclamation of ultimate victory
- The announcement that the greatest battle is won!
- The roar of the Lion of Judah
- It is the power of God
 - As He defeats every evil thing

That's because

- When Jesus declared His task was finally **"...finished..."**
- He also declared that our task had finally started
 - Because our sin is what He **"...finished..."**
 - So He could now
 - Make us new!

You see, our salvation

- Made possible through His sacrifice
 - On that day
- Now allows us to say,
 - "It is beginning!!!
 - Because of Jesus
 - *I am made new and born again!"*

So I ask you...

- Have you been born again?
- Have you been made new by accepting Jesus?

- Has He "...finished..." destroying your sin?

If not, please accept Him today.

Seventh words—(Luke 23:46)

"And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last."

And with those words

- that day was nearly done
- And Jesus died...

From the glory of heaven

- To the humility of the manger
- To the earth shaking victory of the cross
- Jesus came to bring salvation to mankind
- Jesus came for one reason...
 - For that day

His every breath was holy

- And His last words on the cross
 - We're breathed out for us
- As He returned His Spirit to heaven
 - Into the hands of our Father
- He had finished one task
 - But would now start another...

Jesus' horrible death

- Led to His glorious resurrection
- When He not only destroyed sin
 - But also conquered death

And He did this

- So that our last breath
 - On earth
- Will be followed by
 - Our first breath in heaven

So I ask you now...

- Have you accepted Him
- As your Savior?
- Or, are you headed to hell?

These are the words of Jesus...

Spoken on the the cross

- As He gave His life
- To bring us life

The cross is not just a pendant around your neck

- Nor should it be a symbol we have become too accustomed to

The cross is the altar

- On which the Lamb of God
- Shed His holy blood for us

If we think about the cross this way

- And understand what it really means,
- We will never look at the cross quite the same way again

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Let us pray

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With your heads bowed and in the quietness of your heart

- I want you to consider something...

In Matthew 27, verses 39-43 we are told

"...And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

These are the words of the most religious people in Jesus' day

- The Chief Priests
- And Pharisees
- And Scribes
- The leaders of Israel's religion

People who sought salvation by religion and good works

And this is what they said

- To God
- As He hung on the cross

- For them

Probably no more pious or pitiful words

- We're ever spoken
- By more pathetic people
- Who were blinded by their own egos
 - And self-righteousness

People who had spent their entire lives in church

- And studying God's word
- And searching His prophecies
 - For their coming King
- And yet...
 - When He stood right in their face
 - And fulfilled prophecy
 - And healed the sick
 - And raised the dead
 - They did not recognize who He is...
 - Because of their religious arrogance

But today...He's standing right in front of you

- And offering to cover your sin
- In the blood of the cross

His offering of forgiveness cannot be earned

- Because it is a gift
- A gift wrapped in death on the cross

But what will you say to Him?

- Will you mock Him in rejection
 - Do you feel you're probably good enough?
 - Are you banking on religion for salvation?
- Or will you fall prostrate before an All Holy God?
- And repent of your sin
- And ask Him to be your Savior?

Please remember, a time will come

- When God's patience will have run thin
- And His grace will be offered no more
- And you will find yourself with no hope
- Lost and sentenced to hell
- If you die without accepting Jesus

But you can fix that today by simply asking Jesus to save your soul

It's not hard -

- He's already done the hard part

- And sacrificed Himself for you

All you have to do is accept

- Who He is
- And what He has done

So why not accept Him now?

- Why put it off for another day?
- Why make the same mistake
 - The Chief priests made?

Bow broken before the Lord with all your heart,

- Surrender to Him,
- Confess that you're a sinner,
- Admit that you cannot overcome your sin on your own,
- ...
- Humbly ask the Lord to give you His grace,
- And forgive your sin,
- And save your soul through your faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,
- ...
- And ask Jesus to be your Lord

This this is not simply believing something in your head,

- Or reciting a certain prayer,
- Or being baptized,
- Or joining a church,

Salvation comes from the heart,

- Through faith in Christ Jesus, the Son of God,
- The One who went to the cross for you.
- So that you can be with Him for eternity

Let's get those things right with the Lord today

Come now and talk to us,

If you're on live stream please give us a call and ask to speak to one of our pastors

Father.....(closing prayer)