

Harris Creek Baptist Church
Jonathan Pokluda
Good Friday
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Shadows of a Savior

You guys have a seat. I saw a picture the other day of our family and I'll show it to you. There it is [*Image appears of a silhouette of a family of five in Mickey Mouse ears*]. You can tell a lot from that picture, honestly. You could tell we're a family of five and you can probably even guess where we're at: Disney. Yet it's just the shadows. It's not even the people. It's not even what the picture is of. It is really just the shadows. This is a word that the Scripture repeats: "shadows." There are these shadows; there are clues in the scriptures. As I think about it, there's this event that's coming to Waco that really has the world's attention. It's not just Waco. It's traveling through—this is one of the places—but it's this solar eclipse. If you think about what a solar eclipse is, it's really just a giant shadow where the moon blocks out the sun so we have moments of darkness. It's because of the sun—because of something stepping in the way—that we see these shadows. The shadows are evidence that the object is there.

This is what the Scripture says in Colossians 2:16. It says, **"Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration, or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."** All throughout the Old Testament, you have these shadows of things to come, and that's what I'm going to show you today—that they are the evidence of the object.

We love a good mystery. We love a good "whodunnit." We love putting the clues together to try to figure out the result. In the Bible, in the Scriptures, these clues are called "shadows." I'm going to show you again in Hebrews 10:1: **"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason, it could never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If they could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."** Today we talk about the crucifixion. We have the audacity to call this Friday "good" because it is the day that our sins were paid for. Good Friday is a time of reflection. I've heard it said that Good Friday should feel like a funeral—that it is a time to reflect on the life and sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ.

As we talk about shadows, we're going to look at: "the shadows of a sacrifice," "shadows of a substitute," and "shadows of a Savior." You got a card when you came in. At any moment during this service, I would love for you to write down your sins. It doesn't need to be an exhaustive list. It can be the biggest one right now, or the biggest one you've ever committed. It can be that thing that's burdening you right now that you're working on or that struggle that you would love to take before the Lord. It can be that thing that you reflect on often as you drive down the road, and you're thinking, "Man, I really wish I wouldn't have done that. I don't ever want to deal with that." Whatever it is, it's just for you. It's not for anyone else. You don't need to put your name on the card, but I would love at some point for all of us to write that down. You can do that anytime you want.

I want to start by talking about

1. *Shadows of a sacrifice.*

Right at the beginning of the story, God created Adam and Eve. He created them in a paradise, if you will. He placed them in the garden of Eden and He had a relationship with them—fellowship with them—so that they could talk to the Creator. The heavens, the earth—they helped them fellowship with God themselves. He gives them one rule and they break that rule. They sin. Sin rushes into the world like a tsunami. In the Scripture, they instantly try to cover up. This is what sin does; you want to cover up your sin. Hebrews 9:22 says, **“The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.”** Adam and Eve covered up with fig leaves, but then you see in the Scripture that God said, “No, it's not fig leaves. An animal must die.” They're covered up with the skin of an animal. Something had to die because of their sins. There are two things we learned right up the gate in the first book of the Scripture: whenever we sin, we want to hide it, and whenever we sin, there's death. We experience death.

As you continue in the Scriptures, talking about the “shadows of sacrifice,” you get to the story of Abraham. Abraham has a son named Isaac and God says the most unthinkable thing to him: “You have to lead your son up a mountain to be sacrificed.” We can't even fathom what that would be like, but God can. As Abraham leads Isaac up the mountain and he lifts his knife over him to offer his own son as a sacrifice, it says in Genesis 22:13, **“Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place ‘The Lord Will Provide.’ And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.’”** This is presumably the same mountain range of Golgotha, where, 2000 years later, Christ would be crucified.

As we continue in the Scripture, we're going to get to everyone's favorite book: Leviticus. Truly one of my favorite chapters of the entire Bible is Leviticus 16. It's known as “the Day of Atonement.” This is when the Israelites would make sacrifices for all of the sins that have gone unconfessed, all of the great sins and the grand sins. There was this display of blood and gore where Aaron, the high priest, would take a bull and sacrifice the bull for his own sins. Then, he would have to select two goats. This is what it says in Leviticus 16:5. **“From the Israelite community, he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat.”** This is where we get the word “scapegoat”—from this text right here; true story.

Then in verse 15, he says, **“He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been.”** Verse 20: **“When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most**

Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.”

Year after year for over a thousand years—every single year, they come together. The high priest selects a bull for his sins and two goats. They cast lots to figure out which goat will be slaughtered. One’s blood is sprinkled at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and one goat will have the sins of the people confessed on his head and be released into the wilderness—over and over and over. They did this as a shadow pointing to when God's Son would come here and say, “Once and for all.” The High Priest Himself was a sacrifice so that there would be no more blood of bulls, no more blood of goats, no more blood of rams. Our sins could be forgiven once and for all.

When He died on the cross, the veil was torn. Now, it's not just the high priest that can enter into the Most Holy Place, but all of his followers, at any moment, can talk to God. At any time we want, wherever we are, we can have a conversation with the Creator of the heavens and the earth. This was commanded to be done by God so there would be fulfillment by Christ, our ultimate sacrifice led to the slaughter Himself. His blood protected us from the wrath of God. He was presented before the people like the scapegoat; led outside the camp by a Gentile authority like the scapegoat. He absorbed the wrath of God.

What's going on the week of the crucifixion? “Holy Week,” we call it. I want to talk about

2. Shadows of a substitute.

That's my second point. You guys know what a substitute is. When you have a substitute teacher, it's someone teaching in place of your teacher. Someone is doing that job instead of them. What's happening this week is that it's Passover week. We know that from the Scripture, Matthew 26:2: **“The Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”** These are the words of Jesus.

The crucifixion would have been an unbelievable inconvenience to the Jews this week. This was bigger than Christmas for them. They are off of work; they are celebrating; they are going through all of the festivals and the feasts. When Jesus is meeting with His disciples—we call it “the Last Supper”—it's the Passover meal. That's this week; that's what's happening around these events. You wonder—how did they miss it? What is Passover? Passover is when they're celebrating the events of Exodus. You can find it in Exodus 12. This is when God says, “Hey, I want my people freed from slavery.” He raises up Moses to go to Pharaoh and say, “Hey, let my people go.” Pharaoh says no, so God sends plagues. The last plague is that the firstborn son of the Egyptians, or really everyone in the land, would die again. “We see this shadow; that son must die unless you take the blood of a spotless lamb.” You sacrifice a spotless lamb, and you take that blood, and you mark your doorpost.

They would go over [*JP walks over to a wooden plank*]-this is an actual doorpost from-no, I'm kidding, it's not [*congregation laughs*]. You mark it up top like this [*paints red on the top of the plank*] and to the side [*paints red on the left side of the plank*] to the other side [*paints red on the right side of the plank so that it resembles a cross*]. This was 1500 years before the cross has been invented. God says, "If you want to be spared, find a spotless lamb and mark on your door. Mark the sign of the cross." Nobody even knows what a cross is. The spirit of death, when it covers over the community, will spare your family's life. It's a shadow. How'd they miss it? How do we? We've been shoving our faces with Peeps and Cadbury Eggs for years and years. There are all of these clues in the Scripture pointing to the events that are to come. This is a substitutionary atonement. The lamb dies so that you don't have to; just like the goat dies so that you don't have to; just like, in the Garden of Eden, an animal died so that Adam and Eve didn't have to. But by the blood of a lamb, the spirit of death would pass over the Israelites.

What's crazy is they would have selected this lamb on the 10th day of Nisan. That's what we know as "the triumphal entry." The day that they would select the lamb is the day that Jesus rode into the town. He rode in riding on a-anybody know what? Yeah, you probably know that because that's what it says in Zechariah 9:9, written hundreds of years before it happened. **"Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."** Anybody know what day they would have killed that lamb? Good Friday. The same day that Jesus dies on Golgotha, you could hear the bleating of a sheep in the distance being slaughtered for Passover. How did they miss it? Let's talk about

3. *Shadows of a Savior.*

We need a Savior because your sins are against a holy God. Who the crime is committed against really matters. You trespass on my property; I may call the police. You trespass on the lawn of the White House; there's a good chance your life ends. Your sins, all of them, every one of them, have been against a holy, sovereign, almighty God. How are you going to go free? I could step up and say, "No, God, spare them. I want to die for their sins." But I've got my own sins. Who's going to die for mine? The only way that there could be a sacrifice for your sins-there would have to be two criteria met. One is that the sacrifice would have to be perfect, having no sins for themselves to atone for. They would have to be clean, but also, because your sins are against an eternal God, that sacrifice would have to be eternal. You would have to find an eternal, spotless, or innocent sacrifice. There's only been one. There's only been one.

How do we know he was innocent? He was tried six times before He was crucified. There was a trial before Annas in John 18, before Caiaphas in Mark 14, before the Sanhedrin in Luke 22, before Pilate in John 18, tried again before Herod in Luke 23. Herod says, "Do a miracle. I want to see a magic trick; do something." He gets frustrated and sends him back to Pilate where he's tried again in Matthew 27. In six trials throughout the evening, throughout the night, Jesus's innocence is displayed.

I want you to close your eyes and I'm going to read this; it's not going to be on the screen. I just want you to see the events. Close your eyes and I'm going to read to you Matthew 27.

Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ ‘You have said so,’ Jesus replied. When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, ‘Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: ‘Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.’

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ asked the governor. ‘Barabbas,’ they answered. ‘What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ Pilate asked. They all answered, ‘Crucify him!’ ‘Why? What crime has he committed?’ asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, ‘Crucify him!’

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood,’ he said. ‘It is your responsibility!’ All the people answered, ‘His blood is on us and on our children!’ Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

You can open your eyes. Who is Barabbas? He was a murderer who raised up a threat, a small army, in an effort to overthrow the government. Those who would've done the crucifixion hated this man. He was their archenemy. They would've taken great delight in killing him publicly and slowly. “Barabbas” is his name. It's his last name; it's really a title of sorts. “Bar-Abbas.” You have in the Scripture names like “Simon Bar-Jonah”; this means “Simon, son of Jonah.” It's like the name “Macfarlane,” “son of Farlane.” It's like the name “Osama bin Laden”; “Osama, son of Laden.” “Bar” means “son of.” His name is “Bar-Abbas”: “Son of the father.” That's his name. Do you know his first name? I just read it to you right there in verse 16. It's been in your Bible this whole time. I'm not sure if you've noticed this shadow. **“At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus,”** ‘son of the Father.’

Two Jesuses. It's why Pilate continues to say “the one called the Christ,” or “this Jesus.” Which Jesus do you want? It's right there, right in front of you. Two goats. Two goats. One to be slaughtered, one to be released—one to be killed, one to be freed—one to be crucified, and one to walk away. Barabbas must have been really confused. “Wait, what? Hold on. Wait, hold on. Wait, am I, wait, who? Oh, they say, like I may go? I'm out of here.”

You are Barabbas. You are the one standing there before judgment, deserving life. That's what he was going to get: life—or better said, death, in a moment. Yet he walks out free, clean, nothing on his record—he goes away in a crazy turn of events that he would have never anticipated.

A just God has to provide a penalty for sin. A loving God pays that penalty. Every sin requires a payment. Our God says, “Paid.” He's provided a way for us to have a relationship with Him. He is the High Priest. This is what it says in Hebrews 9:12: **“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”**

He carried the cross. The word “excruciating” literally translates as “by the cross.” That's where we get that word. For a long time in history, when someone would be crucified, they would die almost instantly by suffocation or asphyxiation. But the Romans, being experts at torture, learned that if they drove a six-inch nail through your heel, you could push up in pain and live longer. This is how Jesus suffered.

In fact, this is what my friend Ian Simkins wrote today. “Excruciating. The word literally means ‘from the cross.’ It was a symbol of shame and disgrace reserved for only the most despised criminals. Before victims were led to the cross, they would first have been flogged by a whip made of nine straps with metal balls to tenderize, and hooks of bone, metal, or glass to rip apart. This scourging was so severe that the victim would often go into shock from loss of blood, never even making it to their crucifixion at all. Jesus, after a series of false trials, had a crudely fashioned crown of thorns forcibly shunted down into his scalp after his flogging and was then given a cross to carry on his exposed back to his execution. The 650-yard road he walked, lined with people ready to mock, insult, and spit on him as he limped toward Golgotha. Unable to make the journey, Jesus collapsed under the weight. Helped up by Simon upon arriving, his beard was plucked, the ultimate act of shame in the first century. Then Jesus had iron nails, six inches in length, driven into some of the most sensitive nerve centers in the human body. None of this was done in private either. Crowds would gather to gawk, mock, and hurl insults of their own. And yet Jesus said nothing in return—a stunning picture of the gospel.” He loved, forgave, and cared for those who did this to him. It's our role in a picture of the gospel. And none of that was the worst part.

It's that all of our sins were placed on Him. That was so much heavier than the cross—so much more painful than the whips. And for the first time, He cries out of the silence; it says in Matthew 27:46: **“About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’).”** This a really strange thing to read with an understanding of any kind of the Trinity, that He would turn to the Father and say, “My God, why have you forsaken me?” What's happening is He's quoting Scripture: Psalm 22. This would be like that familiar song that you hear that you want to finish the lyrics to; you hear the first two lines and everybody moves to singing along.

This is what it says in Psalm 22. Look at this shadow. Look at the shadow. In verse one: **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?”** And listen to this; verse 14 of the same psalm, written over a thousand years prior to this happening. This is what it says: **I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.”**

How did they miss it? How do we? He said “Tetelestai”: “it is finished.” “It has been paid in full. Your sins are forgiven.” Sin requires a covering. It requires a sacrifice. You sin and you must die unless you have a substitutionary atonement. Someone who will die in your place. Someone innocent who never committed a crime. Someone eternal who can make an eternal payment for your sins. We were dead in our sin and we need a Savior to set us free. Jesus Christ is the only one who can do that.

What I want you to do now is we're going to sing two songs. If you haven't written down your sin, find a private place; get there and do it right now. At some point before you leave this place—you can do it during the songs or you can do it when you walk out through these doors right here—I want you to put those sins where they belong: in the grave. I want you to put them in the grave, right there in the casket so that they can be buried with Jesus. We know what we celebrate Sunday, but today we look at the payment. Today we look at what it costs. Today we look at the one who carried our sins. You know what to do. I'll give you a minute to do that right now as I pray over you.

Father, I pray that you would bring to mind what they need to write down. To the person looking to their right or their left or over their shoulder, give them the courage to put it all down. Things never said out loud. May it make it on the paper. Help us to reflect on what you've done for us today. You suffered and you paid it all. In Jesus' name.