

The Calvary Miracles

Matthew 27:27-54

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I'd invite you to take your Bibles and open them with me to Matthew chapter 27. Matthew chapter 27. We're going to read down to verse 54. The title of my message is The Calvary Miracles. The Calvary Miracles. Beginning in verse 27. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. They stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and a reed in his hand. And they bowed their knees before him, mocking him, said, Hail, King of the Jews. And they sped upon him and they took a reed and they smote him on the head. And after that, they mocked him and they took a robe off of him. And they put on him a remnant, his own remnant. And they led him away to crucify him.

Think about that. The Son of God, the creator of the universe. John's gospel said he came unto his own and his own received him not. Here the creature is spitting on the creator. They're crucifying the Son of God. One of the most cruel, humiliating ways to die ever devised by man was crucifixion. It says in verse 32 that as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. And they compelled him to bear his cross. And when they had come to the place called Golgotha, that is to say the place of the skull, also known as Calvary. They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall. When they had tasted, when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink it. And so they crucified him and parted his garments, casting lots that they might fulfill that which was spoken by the prophet. They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they did cast lots. That is a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. And sitting down, they watched him there. And they sat up over his head an accusation, written, this is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

Then there were two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand and the other on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, thou that destroys the temple and build it in three days, save thyself if thou be the Son of God come down from the cross. And likewise, the chief priests mocking him, Matthew 27:41, and the scribes and the elders said, he saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him come down now 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. And so the thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth.

Now from the sixth hour being 12 noon, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, 3 p.m. in the afternoon, Jesus was on the cross from 9 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon. And that last three hours, from noon to 3, there was darkness over the whole earth. And that last hour, the ninth hour, Matthew 27:46, Jesus cried with a loud voice, and he said, Eli, Eli, Lamech, Sabatini. That is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood there, when they heard that, they said, he's calling for Elijah. And straightway they ran, and they took a sponge, and they filled it with vinegar. They

put it on a reed, and they gave it to him to drink. And the rest said, let us see whether Elijah will come and save him. Now Jesus, when he again cried with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost, Matthew 27:50.

And behold, the veil of the temple was ripped in two from the top to the bottom. The earth did quake, and the rocks did rent. And the graves were opened, and its many bodies of the saints which slept arose. And they came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city. And appeared to many, now, when the centurion that was with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done. They feared greatly, he feared greatly, and said, truly, this was the Son of God.

I want to point out five miracles that we don't normally think of, or talk about, or look at, in the story of Christ's death on the cross. The first is the darkness. Back up with me to verse 45. The sixth hour, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. As Jesus hung on the cross, it is as though God the Father brought this curtain of darkness in, so that they could not see him as he bared the sins of the world. You know, when God gave the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, there was an earthquake, there was lightning, there was thunder, there was darkness. Now, when God gave his Son to pay for the law, to die for our sins, to pay the penalty of the law's demands. So, again, God shrouded this in darkness.

Now, some have tried to explain it away and say, well, it was probably an eclipse of the sun, but truth is that the Passover, which is when this took place, always happens with a full moon. And you're not going to have an eclipse of the sun by the moon when there's a full moon. We also know that an eclipse usually lasts just for a few minutes. This lasted three hours. So, again, this is a mysterious miracle of darkness. And my guess is, I don't know, we'll find out when we get to heaven, that it was a universal darkness. The entire earth was shrouded in darkness as Jesus, the Son of God, died for the sins of the world.

The second interesting, mysterious miracle is in Matthew 27:20, or Matthew 27:51, excuse me. It says, and behold, the veil of the temple was ripped in two from the top to the bottom. The veil of the temple was that big, thick curtain, about 18 inches thick, that separated in the inner sanctuary the holy place from the holy of holies. Behind the veil was the Ark of the Covenant where the angels were, the cherubs were, the mercy seat, and the representative presence of God dwelt. And only once a year could the high priest with atoning blood go in and make atonement for the people. So, it was a very holy place.

But what the significance, I believe, and of all the mysterious miracles, this is the clearest that we can understand, is that God the Father ripped that veil from top to bottom to symbolize something. What was he symbolizing? That the way to God is now open and available to all. That we don't need a priest to lead us into the presence of God. That Jesus Christ, our great high priest, died for us. So that we could come with boldness into his presence and have access with God. Not just a earthly priest representing us once a year. But a priest who's seated at the right hand of God the Father. Whoever lives to make intercession for us.

And that veil being torn also symbolizes that the old covenant came to a conclusion. And this is the establishing of the new covenant in Christ's blood. Better promises. Better blood. Better sanctuary. And the new covenant means we can all have access. So when we celebrate Good Friday and we think of Jesus dying on the cross, we need to remember that Jesus made the way for us to come to God. Jesus said, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. No one comes to the Father except by me. And so the veil was torn. And you can imagine the horror that the priest who were doing their duties in the sanctuary must have thought. When they were looking there at the ark of the covenant and the cherubims and the presence of the Lord and the mercy seat whereby we meet with God. And that Jesus' very own blood and reality was being sprinkled there for the sins of the world. They must have been in awe.

Now so we have the darkness. We have the miracle of the torn veil. And then thirdly we have the miracle of the earthquake at the end of verse 51. And I believe that this happened right after the veil was torn. And the earth did quake and the rocks rent. So there was a massive earthquake. Now we in Southern California know about earthquakes, right? I don't think they got any warning on their cell phones. I don't know how good those do. But again, I believe that this was a miracle of God. That all creation was demonstrating the groaning that Paul talks about in Romans. Where Paul says, All creation groans and travails waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. When Jesus died on the cross, he died not only for our sins, not only to redeem us, but also to redeem the earth. To bring the earth back to a place of perfection. And when he comes back in his second coming and he establishes his theocratic reign on earth for a thousand years, the earth will be restored. And then we'll have the new heaven and the new earth. So the earth is groaning and travailing during this time of this earthquake.

Then it says the third or the fourth miracle that I wanted to point out. And this is perhaps the most mysterious is in Matthew 27:52 and Matthew 27:53. It says the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints. And this would probably be the Old Testament saints. It says the firstborn who died and the dead who died and came out of the graves after his resurrection. Went into the holy city and appeared unto many. It doesn't tell us their names. It doesn't tell us who they appeared to. It doesn't tell us what they said. Can you imagine the conversations that they must have had? Who knows how long they've been dead? This is one of the greatest mysteries to me and it's in the scriptures. When Jesus died on the cross that many of the graves of the saints, only the saints, were actually opened and they came out of the grave.

Now, how does this differ from the future resurrection when we will be raised with new and glorious bodies? It differs that this was a resuscitation, not a true resurrection. They were resuscitated, came back to life like Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead or Jairus' daughter, the widow son of Nain. They have to die again. They came out of the graves, I believe, in their mortal bodies. So this is not what's known as the future resurrection, which the death and resurrection of Christ secured for us. This is a resuscitation, so they would have to die again. But there was such power in the death of Christ that to demonstrate that and to display that, God opened these graves and showed us that through Christ's work on the cross, through his

death and resurrection, that one day we will rise again from the dead. Amen? Amen.

You know, the Bible teaches that if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, if you die, you go immediately to be with the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. But your body will be resurrected. When the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we forever be with the Lord. So our bodies will be resurrected, reunited with our soul and spirit, and we will have glorified, eternal bodies. It will be you, new, and improved. And the older I get, the more I groan for that body. Actually, every morning when I get out of bed, I do something very biblical. I groan for glory. And thank God for the power of the resurrection. That Jesus died for me. He rose for me. And just to see these saints walking around the city, how mind-blowing and mysterious this is, that these graves were opened in the city of Jerusalem.

And then the last mystery, which sometimes gets overlooked, is in Matthew 27:54. Now when the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly. This was a godly fear. And they said, truly, this was the Son of God. And the mystery of God saving the centurion or centurions as he opened their heart, opened their eyes to the reality of who Jesus was. No doubt when they saw how he died. No doubt when they heard his words from the cross. No doubt when they saw the earth grow dark. When they saw the veil of the temple had been torn in two. When they saw the earthquake. When they saw the graves opening. They said, truly, this man was the Son of God. I believe that this brought them salvation. They turned to Jesus and put their faith and trust in him.

So the mysteries of these miracles, which I believe was worked by God or wrought by God, when Jesus died that Friday afternoon upon the cross. But I want to close with three facts about the cross. If you're taking notes. The first is Jesus died voluntarily. Jesus died voluntarily. Look at verse 50 with me. It says, he yielded up the what? The spirit. Jesus yielded up the spirit. He said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. Jesus said, no man takes my life from me. I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it up again. So Jesus came to die voluntarily. He didn't come against his will. He didn't have to be coerced or pressured. God the Father sent the Son. But God the Son voluntarily came. And the key word behind this thought is love. That he came out of love for us. No man, he says, takes my life from me. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it up again.

The second word that describes the cross is vicarious. So he was voluntary when he died on the cross. And it was a vicarious death on the cross. He gave his life. He gave his life for us. Look at verse 46. When Jesus died upon the cross, it says there that he cried, Eli, Eli, lam and sabatani, that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? This is a direct quote from Psalm 22:1. When Jesus died on the cross, he experienced a moment of separation from God the Father. I can't explain this. I don't understand this. There are some that will argue with this thought. He just felt forsaken. I believe he was forsaken. That he was forsaken so that I would never be forsaken. That he bore my sin so that I could be forgiven. I don't understand how or fathom or comprehend this. It has to be involved in the answer somehow in the idea of the incarnation, that he was both God and man. That he voluntarily laid aside the splendor and

majesty of his deity. He didn't lay aside his deity. He was truly God. But he was fully man. So he cried, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? In the Psalm, it actually goes on to say in the next verse that God is holy, which could be the answer to why he was being forsaken. Because the holy God could not look upon sin. And at this moment, Jesus Christ actually became sin for us. He bore our sin. He took our sin. He became sin for us. He didn't become a sinner. He was a sinless son of God. But he bore fully our sin. And he paid its penalty. When he died, it was vicarious. He died in my place. Remember when Abraham offered his son Isaac on Mount Moriah, Genesis 22? And God stopped him. And he took Isaac off the altar. And there in the bush was a ram. And he took the ram and he placed it on the altar as a substitute for his son. Well, God had no substitute. His son was the substitute. So Jesus actually became our ram, our substitute. He died in our place. Read Isaiah 53. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. And by his stripes, we are healed. In the New Testament book of 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 24, it says, He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree. Jesus bore our sins. I believe that Jesus' death on the cross was substitutionary. He died in our place. He took our sin.

Now, the third word fact describing the cross is victorious. He gave his life to rescue us. He gave his life for our sins to rescue us. Look at verse 50 in our text. He cried again with a loud voice. Now, we haven't covered the utterances of Christ this Good Friday service. But we know that when Jesus hung on the cross, he uttered seven statements. He uttered seven times words. This is when Jesus, no doubt, cried with a loud voice after saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabbatani, my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? He cried this statement. It is what? Finished. One word in the Greek, by the way, tetelestai. Tetelestai. You know what it means? Paid in full. So, we owed a debt we couldn't pay. He paid a debt he didn't owe. He paid in full for my sin. The key word here is redemption. So, Jesus died to redeem us. In Revelation 4:9, John sees the church, I believe, in heaven victorious. And it says in Revelation 4:9, it says, they sang a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, to open the seals thereof. For thou hast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Out of every kindred, out of every nation, out of every tongue, you have redeemed us. So, we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. I love that old hymn, and I love singing the hymns this morning with you. Redeemed how I love to proclaim it. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Redeemed by his infinite mercy. His child and forever I am. Amen. So, we have been redeemed. So, in love, Jesus gave himself on the cross. In love, Jesus gave himself to bear our sins. He is the substitution for our sins. And in love, he came to redeem us.

Now, redemption is that where he purchased us with his blood. And he took us out of the slave market of sin, and he sets us free. It was pictured when the children of Israel came out of the exodus in Egypt. They were slaves. And then they were set free. So, we were all slaves to sin. And then the Passover lamb, the blood applied to the homes. And they were set free to come out of Egypt. So, Jesus died as our Passover lamb. And his blood was shed so that he might redeem us by his blood. So, we're redeemed not with corruptible things, like silver and gold, received by tradition from our fathers. But with the precious blood of Christ. Without what? Without blemish. Without spot. Amen. Let's pray.