

Cries From The Cross

John 19:17-30

Pastor John Miller

Now, beginning in John 19:17, it says, "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. 19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. 21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written."

Death by crucifixion is a very, very cruel, harsh, wicked, violent way to die. It was so violent and so horrible that no Roman citizen was allowed to be put to death or executed by crucifixion. Cicero said that it was the most cruel and horrifying way to die. Tacitus, the Roman historian, said that it was a despicable death. It was a form of capital punishment that the Assyrians actually devised. It was used by the Phoenicians and then used by the Persians, but it was also practiced and then picked up by the Romans.

During the time of Christ one of the ways that they would execute criminals and make a spectacle of them was by crucifixion. Crucifixion was a horrible way to die. They would actually have you carry the crosspiece. You would carry it through the streets, and they would make a mockery of you. They would be carrying the sign, we see that they put over Jesus' head, saying your name and your crimes that you committed. Then, they would get to the place of execution and would actually nail your feet to the cross. To the crossbeams they would stretch out your hands and drive nails through your hands or through the wrists. Sometimes they would tie them with ropes. Initially, there was no footrest and no rest for the body. The Romans, showing a little bit of mercy, put a footrest in and a place for them to rest on because you would die of exposure to the sun, of thirst, of asphyxiation. You couldn't breathe, and you'd have to push yourself up there to breathe. Some would sit on the cross for many, many hours before they would die.

We're going to see as they would run the spear into the side of Christ, rather than leaving Him there on the Sabbath day, that Jesus was on the cross for several hours. The thieves', that were with Him, legs were broken. Jesus was thrust with the spear and out came the blood and water. They determined that He had already died, and His legs were indeed not broken.

Jesus suffered on a Roman cross. Here, in very simple statement, John does not focus on the physical sufferings of the cross but rather focuses on the words that He uttered when He hung upon the cross. I want you to note, going back to verses 17-18, "And he bearing his cross," Jesus carried His cross. The stories in the other synoptic gospels make it clear that halfway to Calvary, or Golgotha, that Jesus was falling under the weight of the cross and they compelled, as the Roman law would allow them to do, one Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross for

Jesus.

In verse 17, He's on the way of what we now know to be the Via Dolorosa, the way of the cross. They come to a place that is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha. John doesn't mention but in Latin it's also known as Calvary. Golgotha and Calvary, one is Aramaic or Hebrew and the other is Latin, both mean the cross. We don't know for sure where this location is. There's Gordon's Calvary with the Garden Tomb and other places, and they have the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and so forth where they believe Jesus was crucified and buried, but we don't know where Jesus approximately today was crucified nor where He was buried; but they came to this "place of the skull." Why it was called Golgotha or Calvary, we don't know. Some feel that the shape of the hill that He was on was in the shape of a skull. Some say it was a place of execution so there were actually skulls lying around the area there. "...they crucified him," that's the statement, very simple and quick to the point. In verse 18, "Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."

What I want to focus on, there are only four of them, are the words that Jesus spoke while He hung on the cross. Jesus hung on the cross from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon. In the first three hours, from nine to noon, Jesus uttered certain statements. From noon until three in the afternoon was when there was the darkness, the earthquake, the rocks were rent, the earth shook, and then Jesus dismissed His Spirit. The first cry in the text that we see here, it wasn't the first cry that He uttered, was what I want to call, verse 18, the cry of salvation. The background is given to us in verse 18, "...and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." We know that when Jesus was crucified, He was not the only One crucified at that time on Calvary. Next to Him, on one side and on the other, were two thieves and robbers, criminals. They were being executed as well.

We know the story from the other synoptics that both of the thieves were at first reviling and cursing Him, and then one of the thieves, the repentant thief, this is one of the most beautiful stories in all the Bible, turned to his friend and said, "Don't you fear God? We're here for our crimes we've done and we're justly paying for what we've done, but this Man has done nothing amiss." My theory is that for those first three hours or so that this man on the cross was listening to the words of Jesus. One of the words He uttered probably prior to this was early on the cross He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." There's little doubt in my mind that those words pierced his heart like an arrow and he began to have hope stir in his heart thinking, Well, maybe He is the Son of God. Maybe He is the Savior. Maybe He can forgive me. He's actually on the cross dying for his crimes, guilty sinner that he was, but hope began to well within his heart.

Think about in proximity how close he was to the Son of God dying for his very sins. So, two thieves equally close, and then the one thief actually turned to the Lord and said, "Lord, remember me when You enter into Your Kingdom." What did Jesus say to him? He actually said, "Truly, I tell you," it's not recorded in John's gospel, but if you get the full account, harmonize the gospels, "Truly, I tell you that today you will be with Me in paradise." Isn't that an amazing story? That Jesus would turn to this repentant thief on the cross and would offer him

salvation and assurance that, "Today you will be with Me in paradise." This is truly an amazing situation.

Let me give you some reasons it was amazing. First of all, it was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. In case you didn't know it, in Isaiah 53:12, it says, "...he was numbered with the transgressors," actually, Isaiah, way before Jesus was crucified, prophesied, and all through our text tonight we actually have a ton of fulfilled prophecies that in the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah actually spoke of Messiah being crucified in Isaiah 53, but that He would actually be crucified between thieves or "numbered with the transgressors." We also see God's providence in that these thieves were both there—both had opportunity—one, no doubt, died in unrepentance; the other one repented, was saved, and went with Christ to paradise. The picture and the reminder is that Jesus came to save sinners. Isn't it amazing that the very last thing He did before He died was reach out and save this poor, lost sinner? How amazing is that, and it brought an amazing salvation. It was amazing because this man was guilty of crimes. He was a sinner.

There's a lot of doctrine built into this story because it shows us that we're saved by God's grace not by our good works. What if Jesus would have turned to this thief at this moment and said, "Uh, you're not going to go to heaven, you're a bad person. You're dying for crimes that you've committed, and you're a wicked person," or what if He would have said, "But you haven't been baptized," or "But you haven't been confirmed," or "You haven't taken communion," or "But you're not one of My disciples." Christ died for sinners. Guess what? That includes me and you. Sometimes people come to the Lord's table, like we are tonight, and they feel like, I'm not good enough. I'm too wicked of a person. I'm too much of a sinner. Take communion tonight. Guess what? Jesus died for sinners. Amen? That's what the blood and the bread is a symbol of—His body broken for you and His blood shed. Without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sins. But with that precious blood of Christ, Peter says, that our sins can indeed be forgiven. It was an amazing salvation.

It was also amazing not because of just who he was, but because of what he did. He realized at this time in his life that he needed a Savior. He needed more than just being saved. Earlier they were saying, "If You're the Messiah, if You're the Savior, save Yourself and us, too. If You're the miracle worker that they say You are, then take us down from this cross and save us," but he kind of got through that and realized, No, I need salvation from my sins, not just physical rescue, but I need to be saved from my sins, and He recognized that Jesus was indeed the Savior. At that very moment, he realized and said, "Lord, remember me when You enter into Your Kingdom." This guy had his theology correct. He's a thief, he's dying for crimes, he's on a cross, and he turns and says, "You're Lord and You have a Kingdom, and I want You to remember me. I know You can save me," and he called on the Lord. The Bible says, "...that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you happen to be here tonight and you're not saved, you can do the same thing—calling on the name of the Lord and being saved. The thief committed himself to Jesus personally.

When I look at the thief's salvation on this cross, I want to note six things. First, it was holy by

God's grace. It was totally, completely holy by God's grace. He didn't deserve it, but guess what? That's the only way God saves sinners. God doesn't save sinners by the law. God doesn't save sinners by rites or rituals. He saves us by His grace. I know you've heard it a million times, but grace is unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor. If you did anything to save yourself, then it's not totally grace. You say, "Well, don't I have to repent? Don't I have to believe?" Yes, but that's not a work. You're not meriting anything. You're just changing your mind, turning to Jesus, and trusting Him to save you. Salvation is of the Lord. We can't take any credit for it. It's by grace. Paul says in Ephesians, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Secondly, the thief's salvation was secure in that Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Jesus didn't say, "If you're lucky, maybe. You better cross your fingers, hang onto your rabbit's foot, and hope and pray to God that you get to go to heaven." I believe that if you are a Christian, you can rest assured that you will go to heaven when you die; and that if Jesus comes back for the church, you're going to go up in the rapture. Sometimes people think you gotta be a part of the Deeper Life Club to get raptured. "Well, the rapture is only for super saints, people who are really deep into Jesus, really on fire," and I'm not, by any means, trying to encourage you to be a carnal Christian. You're either a Christian or you're not a Christian. I see so many Christians that feel like, "I don't know if I'll get raptured because I'm not really spiritual enough." If you're a Christian, you'll go up in the rapture. You're a part of the body of Christ. The thief was saved by grace, he was secure in God's grace, his salvation was personal, "Today you will be with Me in paradise," and it was a present possession, "Today," not some distant future date.

Fifthly, it's centered in Christ. Jesus said, "Today you will be with Me." The reason this thief was saved was because he trusted in Jesus Christ, not in his own goodness or righteousness, and it was a glorious salvation in that He said, "Today you're going to be with Me in paradise." I love that. I got all that in the white spaces there in verse 18. If you put together the synoptic gospels, you can draw that from the story of the thief on the cross.

The statement on the sign over the cross where Jesus hung was actually: This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. What they put on the cross is true, and how bizarre that is. God, even in His death, was protecting His identity and His testimony of who He was. The Jews got all up in arms and upset and said, "No, no, no. Change that to He said, 'I am the King of the Jews,' not He is the King of the Jews." Pilate finally had enough of these Jews and being pushed around by them and said, "What I have written I have written." That's a little too little too late. Would to God he would have stood up sooner, but he didn't. The superscription over His head was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The Jews spoke Hebrew, some have Aramaic here, then the Greeks, which was the universal language that was in the Roman empire, and the philosophers spoke Latin. Some say Hebrew speaks of religion, the Greek speaks of philosophy, and the Latin conveys the concept of law. Again, John's gospel is universal gospel, so Jesus came to die for the sins of the whole world, "For God so loved the world," so everyone could read it, and it was in a busy place outside the city walls of Jerusalem where everyone could see that.

Verse 23, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part," it would indicate that there were four soldiers, and they took His headdress, His sandals, His belt or His girdle, then took His outward coat or tunic, and then the inner tunic, which was one piece. They didn't want to tear and ruin it, so they cast lots to see who could get that piece of clothing. Evidently, the Roman soldiers would be able to take the clothes from the criminals that they executed. Verse 24, "They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith," notice verse 24, "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did," they did that, again, here's another prophecy. Again, we're seeing that God's Word is given by inspiration. It's inspired by God, so He can speak prophetically that they would cast lots for His tunic or His vesture, and it's prophesied (write it down) in Psalm 22:18. That's a Messianic Psalm where a thousand years before Jesus was ever on the scene, the psalmist wrote about them casting lots for His vesture. It's a reminder that the Bible is God's Word. The psalmist spoke in detail, and it was fulfilled.

Many years ago there was a book written by a critic of the Bible called The Passover Plot. In this book, the critic basically said that Jesus wasn't really the Messiah, He was just a Man like anyone else and actually manipulated and orchestrated His own death. But when you read the Scriptures, it's so clear that there's a lot of things in the account that Jesus never could've orchestrated or controlled—that of the Roman soldiers throwing dice for His own garment. Certainly, He couldn't have orchestrated the idea that His legs would not be broken, He would be pierced, and that He would be buried in Joseph's tomb. All of those issues were impossible for Him to orchestrate, so it's a theory that's used by unbelievers to try to explain away the Person and the work of Jesus Christ but was a fulfillment of prophecy. God is in control.

In verses 25-27 we have the background for the second cry that Jesus uttered on the cross. The first, He uttered to the thief, "Today you will be with Me in paradise," it's the cry of salvation. In verses 25-27, we have the background for it and the statement He made concerning His mother, verse 25, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother," and any of you mothers that read this, try to imagine what it would be like to stand at the foot of the cross and watch your son being crucified, "and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

There were four women, verse 25, that were there at the cross. By this time John, even though all the disciples had been scattered, was at the cross as well. These women are to be commended, and you women should take a little pride in this, that all the disciples, strong brave men, are hiding behind locked doors fearing for their lives, but the women in love are at the foot of the cross watching Jesus being crucified. Now, I said there are four women, Mary the mother of our Lord...the Mary referenced here is the second only in the gospel of John, and it's kind of interesting the only other reference in John's gospel to Mary was in John 2. Do you remember the story? It was the story of the wedding feast at Cana when they ran out of wine. It was a joyous occasion of life, people are getting married, and Mary goes to Jesus and said, "You

know, they're out of wine." "What have I to do with thee? Mine hour has not yet come," and then He actually turned the water into wine. It was a time of joyous occasion.

Now, the only other reference to Mary in the gospel of John is here in John 19:25 when we see His mother there at the foot of the cross. It opens with Mary in John 2 at a time of joy and celebration; it ends with Mary in John 19 at a time of sorrow and grief. Remember when Mary and Joseph took the Baby Jesus in Luke's gospel into the temple and Simeon, the old man, saw the Baby Jesus and scooped Him out of Mary's arms and held the Baby and began to prophesy. He actually said to Mary, "A sword shall pierce through your own soul." That was a prophecy fulfilled in this verse. As Mary stood there watching her Son die, she knew that He was born of a virgin. She knew He was the Son of God. She knew He was the Messiah, the Savior of the world and her own Lord, and she stood there watching her Son crucified on that cruel cross. How tragic that must have been for her.

The next woman was Mary, His mother's sister. You don't want to miss that. That is the woman Salome, Mark 15:40, who was actually Mary's sister and was John and James' mother. She was also the wife of Zebedee, who had a fishing business with James and John. John, the writer of the gospel, had his mother there who was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus; so John and Mary were first cousins, which is fascinating.

The third woman was the wife of Cleophas, and the fourth was Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene had been forgiven and saved. She had the demons cast out of her, and she's there at the foot of the cross. They are motivated by love. Now, Jesus looks down from the cross, verse 26, and sees His mother. I imagine it must have pained His heart to see her in this anguish of heart as she watched Him crucified. So, "...the disciple standing by, whom he loved," that is a reference to John the apostle. Jesus is on the cross. He looks down from the cross, sees His mother Mary and the apostle John. "...he saith unto his mother," He didn't say, "Mother," He said, "Woman," which is a term of endearment, but He doesn't address her as mother. He said, "behold thy son!" He's not talking about Himself, He's talking about John the apostle. "Then saith he to the disciple," that is, John, "Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her," that is, Mary, "unto his own home." This is the cry and the word of affection.

Now, think about this. Jesus is being executed. He's hanging on a cross, and what does He do? He's concerned for His mother. He's thinking of others. Most of the utterances that Jesus made on the cross were not about Himself, not about His pain. He did say, "I thirst." He did say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me," but most of His utterances were forgiving others, helping others, and speaking to others. He speaks to John and says, "Behold thy mother!" and to His mother, "Behold thy son!" and John took her from that day into his house. Can you imagine what an awesome blessing that would have been? The hours they talked late into the night, John the apostle talking to Mary, as they talked about Jesus the Son of God. What a blessing that was.

This word of affection also brought an end to a human relationship. He turned His mother over

to the care of John. Now, the question is: Why didn't His own siblings, His own brothers and sisters, which the Scriptures indicate He had, take care of His mother? We don't really know. One of the guesses is because they were still unbelievers. Do you know at this point Jesus had brothers and sisters, and if you didn't know that, the Bible talks about them. After Jesus was born Mary and Joseph consummated their marriage and had other children. Jesus was a big half-brother, but they were unbelievers. They weren't Christians. They didn't believe in Christ, so Jesus, perhaps, didn't want to commend her to them or their care.

Well, what about Joseph? Why doesn't Joseph take care of her? The obvious conclusion is that Joseph was dead and not around to be able to take care of His mother. I do think it's interesting that Jesus, even as He was dying on the cross, kept the fifth commandment, Exodus 20:12, which says, "Honour thy father and thy mother," so He wanted to make sure that His mother would be taken care of. In 1 Timothy 5:8, Paul told Timothy, "But if any provide not for his own," family, their own household, that "he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," so He was taking care of His mother even in death.

The third word, and the background for it, is in verses 28-29, the cry of suffering. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled," now, most likely, between verses 27 and 28 were the beginning of the three hours of darkness. I think it was a universal darkness. It was at this time that Jesus cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and because the sins of the world were placed upon Christ, God the Father turned His back temporarily upon His only begotten Son. So, "Jesus knowing that...the scripture might be fulfilled, saith," here it is, "I thirst." That's the shortest statement Jesus uttered on the cross. It's actually one word in the Greek. He just cried out, "Thirst."

Verse 29, "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth." Earlier in the crucifixion they put to His lips wine mingled with gall which was a sedative to try to deaden the pain, and Jesus rejected it. At this point they give Him sour wine, and Jesus drank it from the hyssop. The hyssop was actually used by the priest to dip the blood and to sprinkle it on the people during the Passover. It's a plant, and they used it also to put the blood on the doorposts or the lintels of their houses in the Passover Feast in the exodus from Egypt. Jesus basically cries here in His suffering, and this is the only word that would relate to His physical suffering, "I thirst." Jesus is hanging on a cross in the heat of the day. God shelters Him with shade, the darkness, but He cries out, "I thirst." It speaks of His human suffering. He was God, but He was also a Man. He actually physically suffered.

Whenever I take communion, one of the things that speaks to me the most is to think that Jesus actually physically suffered and died for me. He felt pain and was crucified for me. It was also a picture of Him being an obedient servant—giving His life in obedience to the Father's plan—and also purchasing a great salvation. But His cry, "I thirst," was in order that we might not thirst, that we might drink of the salvation, the living water, that He offered in John 4 to the woman at the well and John 7, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Jesus was thirsty and

drank so that we could have our thirst quenched when we get to heaven. Actually, we're going to get it Sunday morning, Revelation 7:16 says, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," and in Revelation 22:17, the last invitation, "...let him take the water of life freely." Jesus died so that we might be satisfied.

Lastly, in verse 30, the last cry in this text is the cry of victory. This is the greatest cry He uttered on the cross. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head," the words "bowed his head" in the Greek is interesting. It actually means that He just laid His head back like He was going to sleep on a pillow, but He laid His head back upon the cross. Earlier Jesus had said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to," the very same Greek phrase, "lay his head." How amazing was that that God would come from heaven and have no place to lay His head except for on a cross. He was suspended between earth and heaven, and it was a reminder there that God the Father had to turn His back and mankind had crucified the Son of God. Someone said, "He hung upon a cross of wood, but He made the hill on which it stood." The only place that Jesus found to lay His head was on a cross where He died for man's sins. "...and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Jesus did three things in verse 30. By the way, the other gospels tell us He said it with a loud voice, so it was a victor's cry. He said, "Tetelestai, It is finished," or paid in full, "and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Now, this word that Jesus uttered, as I said in the Greek, is the word tetelestai. It literally means to bring to an end, to finish, or complete. It was used as a very common word first of all by servants. Whenever they would do a job and finished the job they would actually say, "Tetelestai," it's done. Then, it was used by a priest when he would examine a lamb for the Passover and would discover the lamb was without blemish and spot. He would actually say over that lamb, "Tetelestai," it's finished. It's ready. It's perfect. It's complete. Then, it was used by artists when they were painting a picture or a potter throwing a pot on the wheel. They would finish the last touches of their work of art and actually utter the word, "Tetelestai," it's finished. It's complete. If you've ever done art or you paint at all, you know that sometimes the very last few touches are the most crucial. You don't want to botch or mess it up so you put the brushes very carefully, put your last little touches on it, and sooner or later you have to put your brushes down, take your hands off, leave it alone, and just say, "It is finished," tetelestai, it's done.

Jesus uttered this common word, and then it was used by merchants. I love this. After a debt was paid in full, they would stamp the receipt with the words in red on the receipt, "Tetelestai," paid in full. Don't you like receipts like that? I don't like to get receipts that say, "Balance Due \$6,000." I like that bright red "Paid in Full" stamped on that piece of paper, "Oh great!" Jesus uttered this word, "Tetelestai," "and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." There's so much that can be said about this, and I've actually preached a seven-week series on each one of these utterances. It implies what Jesus came to do is finished, and what did He come to do? To give His life as a ransom for many. He came to die on the cross, and it's finished. You say, "Well, He hasn't risen from the dead yet," but He knew that it was complete. He knew that it was done. He knew that it was fulfilled—It is done. It is finished.

We, as Christians, speak of what we call the finished work of Christ. When we trust Jesus to save us, we're resting in—listen to me very carefully—the finished work of Jesus Christ. All other religions say, "Do;" Christianity says, "Done," nothing more to do, the price has already been paid. All you need to do is appropriate it by faith or trust in Jesus who died on the cross for your sins. What you're doing when you become a Christian is entering in by faith to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. That's why, once you're saved, you don't have to try to perform to be saved or try to earn your salvation, it's already finished. It's already done, so all you have to do is thank Him. When you hold the cup tonight and the bread, just give Him thanks for the work that He's already done and finished on the cross. It is finished. It is complete. It is done.

There's a great book, if you ever want to read it, called *The Cross of Christ*, written by John R.W. Stott. I only recommend it because I've read it a few times and it is amazing. I've never forgotten these three ways he summarized the work of the cross in that book. The first is salvation, God rescued sinners; the second is revelation, God revealed Himself; and the third is conquest, God in Christ defeated the devil. The cross is the greatest subject of the Bible. It is the central theme of the Bible. The Bible is all about God's redemption in Christ, so all Old Testament history leads up to the cross, all New Testament history points back to the cross, and it's the central theme of all of God's revelation, the cross of Jesus Christ. That's why Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory," boast, "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

There's nothing more important in the life of the Christian than understanding the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross. He died to save and rescue us. It's a redemption on the cross, and He died to reveal Himself. It's called the theater of the cross—God revealed His love and His grace and His mercy and His holiness and His righteousness and His justice. All of the attributes of God are seen in the theater of the cross and then the conquest of the cross—that Jesus defeated the devil and rose victoriously from the grave. Amen? That's the work of the cross. So, God forbid that we should glory except in one thing, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the cross the world is dead to us and we're dead to the world, and we want to live in the power of the cross. We come to the cross to be forgiven, and we stay at the cross to learn to be forgiving toward others. If God has forgiven you, how can you not forgive others. Amen? Let's pray.