

Shouts from the Savior

Mark 15:33-41

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[Read these passages with lights off]

Zephaniah 1:14-15: *“The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of **darkness** and gloom, a day of clouds and thick **darkness**.”*

Amos 5:20: *“Is not the day of the LORD **darkness**, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?”*

Psalms 105:28: *“He sent **darkness**, and made the land **dark**...”*

Isaiah 50:3: *“I clothe the heavens with **blackness** and make sackcloth their covering.”*

Exodus 10:21-22: *“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be **darkness** over the land of Egypt, a **darkness to be felt**.’ So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was **pitch darkness** in all the land of Egypt three days.”*

Amos 8:9-10: *“‘And on that day,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘I will make the **sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight**...I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.’”*

Mark 15:33-41: *“And when the sixth hour had come, there was **darkness** over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ And some of the bystanders hearing it said, ‘Behold, he is calling Elijah.’ And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’ There were also women looking on*

from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.”

Mark mentions two supernatural signs that are connected to the crucifixion and Matthew adds two more.

1. Deep Darkness. Mark 15:33: *“And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.”* From noon to 3:00 in the afternoon it became pitch black. At high noon, at a time when it was least expected, the lights went out. Or as Spurgeon put it, *“It was midnight at midday.”* While some try explain this away as just an eclipse, this is not possible because we know that the moon was full at Passover. On top of that, I’m not aware of any eclipse that brings total darkness for three hours! It was if God the Father placed His hands over the sun and said, *“Sun, you shall not shine on my Son while He becomes the sin substitute.”*

As we just heard in the passages I read, darkness is often a symbol of divine judgment. According to Exodus 10:21-23, there were three days of darkness *“that could be felt”* in Egypt before the first Passover lamb was slain, and now there are three hours of darkness before the Lamb of God dies for the sins of the world. The ninth plague of darkness precedes the killing of the firstborn and now deep darkness proclaims the death of God’s first-born Son.

Check this out. At the birth of Jesus a supernatural star ascended to light the way for the Magi and at His death supernatural darkness descended in the middle of the day. His birth announcement was a display of brightness at midnight and the notification of His death was deep darkness at mid-day.

2. Temple Curtain Torn. The second supernatural sign is found in verse 38: *“And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.”* The word *“torn”* means, *“to divide with violence, to rend or split.”*

There was a place in the temple called the Holy of Holies where a thick curtain separated this inner sanctuary from the outer area. At one time the Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies. This curtain (or veil) was some 60 feet high and about four inches thick. It was said that it took 300 priests just to install it. Only one person, the high priest, was allowed to even go into this area of the

temple, and then only one time a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). He actually went in twice that day – once to offer atonement through the blood of animals for his own sins and then again on behalf of the people.

The whole structure emphasized the remoteness and holiness of God and the impossibility of sinners having access to Him. Here's what God said to Moses in Leviticus 16:2: ***“Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die.”***

When Jesus died, this big barrier was torn in two, from top to bottom, signifying that it was God Himself who tore it in half. And it was torn totally in two, meaning it was not done halfway. Now, instead of just one person having access to God once a year, the way to God stands wide open to everyone, Jew and Gentile, in every place, on every day of the year. Hebrews 10:19-22: ***“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”***

Let's dive a bit deeper. The cry of God's people for centuries is summarized in Isaiah 64:1: ***“Oh that you would rend [tear] the heavens and come down!”*** For those of us utilizing the Edgewood Bible Reading Plan, we read about Jesus' baptism in Mark 1:10 on Friday: ***“And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being **torn open** and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.”*** This is the same verb used for the tearing of the temple curtain! When Jesus died, the curtain of separation was torn in two, and we now have unfettered access to the Almighty at all times in every place because of the completed work of Christ on the cross.

Let's stop and worship Him right now...

Didn't Pastor Ed do a great job preaching last weekend? We watched the sermon in our van when we were driving back from Virginia. I love that we have a free mobile app, and that our sermons are posted on the website and on Facebook. Props to Pastor Chad, Jim Sheese, Marie Guyton and the entire tech team for making this happen each week. I'm also grateful to John Gunther for producing the On Mission broadcasts for Moody Radio.

I was so excited about beginning our “Pip Trip” that I took a wrong turn when driving through Bloomington! As we were recalibrating our maps, Beth received a text from our neighbors Gary and Pat, asking if we meant to leave our garage door open! They kindly closed it for us. If they had not been good neighbors we would have given unfettered access to our house for the week we were gone. People could have come and gone and taken anything they wanted. I was embarrassed and thankful that our sweet neighbors bailed us out.

When Christ died on the cross, the door was opened to all, giving free access to the Almighty to everyone who accepts His free gift. Jesus put it like this in John 10:9: ***“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.”*** This door will not shut...for those who are saved in time.

Let’s briefly reflect on the two additional supernatural signs recorded by Matthew.

3. An Eerie Earthquake. Right after Jesus took His last breath, we read in Matthew 27:51 that ***“the earth shook, and the rocks were split.”*** Warren Wiersbe suggests the earthquake is a reminder of what happened at Mount Sinai when the ground shook before God gave the Law to Moses. The earthquake at Calvary signifies that the demands of the Law have been fully met and the curse of the Law forever abolished.

4. The Righteous are Raised. Most of us haven’t heard many sermons on the fourth supernatural sign found in Matthew 27:52-53: ***“The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”*** This “Night of the Living Dead” is prophetic in that it shows how the death of Christ guarantees our own resurrection into eternal life.

In his brief book called, *The Passion of Jesus Christ*, John Piper spells out 50 reasons the Savior suffered as sacrifice for our sins. There’s a free PDF on the Sermon Extras tab if you’d like to read it. I pulled out 10 of them for us.

1. **To absorb the wrath of God** (Galatians 3:13).
2. **To show the wealth of God’s love and grace** (Romans 5:8).
3. **For the forgiveness of our sins** (Ephesians 1:7).
4. **To take away our condemnation** (Romans 8:1).
5. **To give eternal life to all who believe** (John 3:16).
6. **To free us from the slavery of sin** (Romans 6:14).

7. **To create a band of crucified followers** (Matthew 10:38).
8. **To gain His joy and ours** (Hebrews 12:2).
9. **So that He would be crowned with glory and honor** (Hebrews 2:9).
10. **To show that the worst evil is meant by God for good** (Genesis 50:20).

Shouts from the Savior

While the Bible records seven shouts from the Savior when He was on the cross, Mark mentions just the middle one found in verse 34: ***“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”*** After three hours of deep darkness, Jesus shouts out this cry of abandonment. The word **“cried”** means, *“to cry out in exclamation”* and the word **“loud”** is *megas*, which means, *“great.”* We get “megaphone” from this Greek word. As far as I know, this is the only prayer that Jesus ever addressed to God in which He did not call Him “Father” or “Abba.” And yet He says, **“My God,”** which shows relationship.

Jesus is quoting directly from Psalm 22:1: ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*** This is yet another fulfilled prophecy. The word **“forsaken”** is quite strong and refers *“to being deserted, left behind, left in the lurch, reproached or abandoned.”* God the Father turned His back because in His absolute holiness He could not look at the accumulated ugliness of all the world’s sins that were piled on His Son. Habakkuk 1:13 states it this way: ***“You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.”***

The holiness of God recoils from even the smallest sin. When God the Father looked down and saw His Son on the cross, He didn’t see His Son; He saw the sin that He was bearing. And in that awful moment, Elohim looked away because He was repulsed by the raw sewage of sin splattered all over His Son.

This was more than just that Jesus *felt* forsaken; He *was* literally and actually abandoned by the Almighty. This cry, shouted out to the Heavens, is met with a holy silence.

The prophet Nahum asks a question that finds its answer on Calvary’s cross in Nahum 1:6: ***“Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by Him.”*** Jesus took the indignation, anger and wrath of God for us. He received what rightly belonged to us so that we can receive that which we don’t

deserve – forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He took our rottenness and exchanged it for His righteousness.

Here are the three cries from the cross that come before this shout of separation.

- Luke 23:34 gives us the first words of grace from Golgotha: ***“And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”***
- According to Luke 23:42-43, one of the criminals crucified next to Him cried out: ***“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’”*** This criminal was immediately converted. Being saved has nothing to do with joining a church or even following a set of religious rules. The sinner was saved by God’s amazing grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- The harsh brutality of the crucifixion is softened by His words of comfort in the third cry from the cross. Like the first two, this shout is totally unexpected as recorded in John 19:26-27: ***“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.”***

And here are the three shouts that come rapidly after Jesus asks why He is being forsaken.

- John 19:28-29: ***“After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.”***
- In John 19:30, we read, ***“When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’”*** This means the price has been paid, our debt has been cancelled, and divine holiness has been fully satisfied. The devil is defeated and our salvation has been secured!
- The final shout is recorded in Luke 23:46: ***“Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last.”*** After enduring the physical trauma, the

emotional ridicule, and the spiritual isolation of becoming the sin sacrifice, Jesus was able to cry out with a strong voice. This closing cry is a quotation from Psalm 31:5: *“Into your hands I commit my spirit.”*

Responses

There were at least four groups gathered around the cross that afternoon. Each group exhibited a different response.

1. Anger. There were a number of people who expressed their anger at Christ. Luke 23:35 tells us that, *“the rulers scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!’”* They “scoffed,” which literally means that they “turned up their noses at him.” According to Luke 23:39, one of the criminals on the cross next to Jesus *“railed at him.”* While it’s difficult to say with certainty, it appears from Mark 15:36-37 that some are scoffing at the Savior when they say, *“Behold He is calling Elijah...let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.”* They may have been more earnest than angry because according to the last two verses of the Old Testament as found in Malachi 4:5-6, Elijah is to return *“before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.”*

2. Apathy. Another group was drawn to the execution but they were indifferent to what was going on; at least when they first came on the scene. The Bible says that as this group watched, they began to drift away, one by one. Luke 23:48: *“And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts.”* When someone beat their chest, it was a sign of guilt and remorse. Their apathy had been replaced with feelings of guilt. As they watched what Jesus went through, maybe they began to realize their role in putting Him on the cross. They came to witness a show, but they left with feelings of woe.

3. Attraction. There weren’t many in this group. One was a thief who was nailed to the cross next to Jesus and the other was the captain of the soldiers. He witnessed the scourging, the mocking, the spitting, the crucifixion, the darkness, and the earthquake. He saw both the anger and the apathy, and yet somehow he was attracted to the man in the middle. He heard everything that Jesus said, shuddered at His last cry, and watched Him die. He was deeply impressed. He had never seen anything like this before!

He was a career military man and served as a Centurion, which meant that he had 100 soldiers under him. He was like a Navy Seal or an Army Ranger in that his training was highly specialized and often dangerous. Part of his responsibilities involved being an executioner. He was rough and tough, coarse and vulgar and no doubt numb to the pain he inflicted on others. He took pride in carrying out the direct orders of Pilate the governor.

He and his team were on crucifixion duty many times. On this particular day their task was to crucify three criminals but first they were charged with flogging a man that had riled up the religious leaders. The Centurion and his squad knew how to do this in a way that brought the criminal as close to death as possible. After beating him to a pulp, his soldiers mocked him, threw a purple robe over the open wounds on his back, jammed a crown of thorns onto his head, smacked him with a staff, slapped him hard and often as they spit into his face. When they finally arrived at the execution site after a tortuous walk, they threw Jesus to the ground and nailed his wrists and feet to an old rugged cross.

They hung him up to die about 9:00 in the morning. The Centurion started to notice some things about the man on the cross in the middle. Instead of complaining and cursing like most did when crucified, Jesus seemed peaceful, almost like He wanted to be there. And then rocks rumbled and the earth heaved so much that he fell face first into the dirt.

When the Centurion saw all this and how Jesus died, he knew he needed grace to cover his guilt and forgiveness for all his failures. That brings us to Mark 15:39: ***“And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’”*** Notice where he *stood* – he is facing Jesus. And that what he *saw* – he was struck by how Jesus died, not with a whimper but as a victorious warrior. And finally what he *said* – he made a bold profession of faith by declaring that Jesus was the Son of God.

4. Adoration. There were some others that congregated around the cross. The apostle John is the only named disciple who was there. Mary, the mother of Jesus was there. Perhaps Simon of Cyrene was standing there. But it’s a group of three women who capture Mark’s attention in verse 40: ***“There were also women looking on [to gaze with interest and make careful observation] from a distance [they were near the cross earlier in the day according to John 19:25-27], among whom were Mary Magdalene [Jesus had cast seven demons out of her], and Mary***

the mother of James the younger and of Joses [that's all we know about her], *and Salome* [she was the mother of James and John].

Verse 41 gives us more detail about these faithful followers: ***“When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.”*** The word ***“followed”*** is in the imperfect tense, meaning that they were *“in the habit of doing so.”* The word for ***“ministered”*** also means, *“to serve.”* We know from Luke 8:23 that they ***“provided for them out of their means.”*** Their generosity allowed the team of disciples to travel. *By living on mission through their giving, they were able to help the disciples in their going.*

I love how generous the people of Edgewood are! Pastor Tim shared with me that his Sunday morning Growth Group gave over \$700 to provide meals to the kids at Youth Hope, one of our Go Team partners. I look forward to watching God move within us to give generously to our facility project this year.

Let's go back to the amazing impact of these worshipping women

- The three women mentioned by name are the last at the cross on Friday and the first at the empty tomb on Sunday.
- In Mark's gospel, the faith of women is often contrasted with the failures of men.
- Women are equal to men, but not identical. We each have different roles and responsibilities but we all have equal worth.

I read a very helpful post on Friday called, “Biblical Womanhood.” Here are a few highlights:

- Every woman is made in the image of God. Women do not have to marry to *fully* image God nor do they have to have children to *ultimately* image God.
- Every Christian woman, even one with kids, has a spiritual gift given to her to exercise for the benefit the entire body of Christ, not just the nuclear family.
- Every woman is called to glorify God in all she does, whether at home or at work, at church or at play.

What group are you in today?

- Are you an *angry scoffer*? Have you been launching a volley of attacks at the Savior? Do you have something against Him?
- Or, are you an *apathetic spectator*? Are you just kind of hanging around? Does this whole Christianity thing bore you? When you feel some guilt, will you just walk away or will you give your sins to the Savior?
- Are you an *attracted seeker*? Do you find yourself drawn to Him?
- Or, are you in the camp of those who *adore the Savior*? Thank you for serving Christ and His kingdom as you gather, grow, give and go with the gospel.

There's something about the Crucifixion of Christ that made everyone either step toward the cross or move away from it. It compelled some and repelled others. The scoffers and spectators walked away and those who were attracted and adored Christ took a step closer.

What about you? Are you going to *believe* or are you going to *leave*?

It's not enough to just focus on some facts or just feel some feelings. You must also make a decision and engage your will. It's your choice. He's waiting for you. What are you going to do? Don't leave; it's time to believe and receive.

We began the sermon with the lights off. I vividly remember an experience I had when I was about 8 years old. My bedroom was down in the basement, which was really cool because I got to be away from my sisters and have some privacy. The only thing that was tough about this was that it was really dark at night. I was normally pretty adept at finding my way around in the dark and used to like the challenge of finding the bathroom in the middle of the night by just feeling my way past the water heater, my dad's workbench, the furnace and the woodpile.

One night I woke up and got out of bed in order to use the bathroom. Without realizing it, I had gotten out of the wrong side of the bed. Instead of finding the door, I was on the other end of my room, frantically searching for a way out. I started to panic. I couldn't figure out who moved the door on me – it must have been one of my sisters! The more I searched the more upset I became. I was completely in the dark. Literally. Finally I couldn't take it anymore. I started screaming at the top of my lungs for my mom and dad. Eventually they came running down the stairs, opened my door and turned the light on. I felt like a fool but will never forget how glad I was to see them!

Do you know anyone who's living in the dark? They might not find a way out unless you help them. Do you have a family member, neighbor, co-worker or classmate who has not yet put their faith in the light of the world? We have an opportunity Easter weekend to invite someone to join us for one of our five services.

Here's one approach that may work for you...

[Video: April Fools Easter Invite](#)

If you want to avoid any confusion about April Fools Day, we also have two Saturday night services on March 31 at 5 and 7! Our Easter Sunday services are at 8, 9:30 and 11.

We'll be building the *Case for Easter* by focusing on the evidence for the empty tomb. The facts found in compiling the case will help fortify your faith. Perhaps you know of someone who has some doubts about Christianity. Maybe someone you know is skeptical. Make the "Easter Ask" and invite them to join you. BTW, Sheila and her team will be taking a similar approach as children will be given evidence bags as they examine the evidence found through a scribe, a soldier and the empty tomb as they walk through the streets of Jerusalem.

We've gone all out this year to make it easy to make the "Easter Ask." Here are some tools that you can use...

- Yard Signs
- Bulletin Inserts
- Facebook Ads. If you're on Facebook and this promotion comes up in your feed, would you simply "share" it on your wall?
- Business Card Invites. These will be available on tables as you leave today.

I grabbed a bunch of these small invites this week and put them in my wallet. When Beth and I went through a drive through one morning we were greeted by a very bubbly voice through the speaker. When we drove to the window a smiley woman greeted us. We complimented her on her joy and then I quoted Psalm 118:24, "***This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.***" She lit up and started talking about her faith. Because I had these invites in my wallet I was able to give her one. When she saw the name of the church she said, "*I've been wanting to come to Edgewood! I've heard your church is on fire!*" I've been

able to give out a number of invites this week...simply because I have a bunch in my wallet.

This is our Go Time, team! Many people want to come to church on Easter...they just don't know where to go. Let's make the "Easter Ask" – we don't want to be foolish while so many are stumbling around in the dark.