



Sermon – April 21, 2019
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So 2,000 years ago there's a huge animosity from the Jewish leadership to Jesus. They hate Him. They hate Him for one reason because early on He made the statement, right, in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "If your righteousness does not exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you can't get into heaven." He stung them because they base all they were on that. And so you fast forward to Friday 2,000 years ago, boy everything's going great for them. They've got Him. They got Him that night in Gethsemane. One of His own guys. He can't be worth much, one of His own guys betrayed Him. So they take Him, while they gather the Sanhedrin, they drop Him in a dungeon. They're in Caiaphas' house and they bring Him up and they ask Him questions, and they finally, he says, "I am the Messiah." They just beat Him. They wait until the morning; they take Him to Pilate. Pilate doesn't want to fool with Him. Sends Him to Herod. Herod mocks Him. Sends Him back to Pilate. Pilate finally says, "Alright put Him on the cross." So Pilate has Him scourged. He has Him beaten. So they take Jesus to the cross. Now you were crucified outside of town. Golgotha's actually a little hill that looks like a skull. You weren't crucified on the hill. You were crucified down below it. It was just an average road going out of town. People passed by there constantly. It was no big deal. Normally, as a matter of fact, there would be somebody being up there crucified. They kept the main part of the cross in the ground and then you carried, and in Jesus' case, Simon of Cyrene carried the cross bar, and then they would nail you to the cross bar, put you up there, nail your wrists to the cross bar, put it up there, nail your feet down. And people went back and forth; it was no big deal because most people, if they were in any kind of good shape, lived several days on the cross. So people walked back and forth. It was no big deal. But on this day, there's a huge crowd, there's really never been, but there is today. Because the Jews who had, five days earlier, put the coats and the palm branches out are now calling His name to be cursed. And so they're standing there. The, Ananias and Caiaphas have got a big crowd, and they're jeering Jesus. And they're enjoying the moment because they finally, they're going to watch this guy die. So they nail Him to the cross bar. Nails are in the wrists, not in the hands, in the palms. They put Him up. They nail His feet. And now it's 9 o'clock in the morning. First thing Jesus says, which is the only reason you're where you are. In heaven, the Bible's very clear, that the angels have no idea what's going on. They, unlike us on this planet, adore God the Son. They adore Him. And so they've watched the betrayal in Gethsemane. They've watched His blood begin to leave. They've watched them beat Him. They've watched Pilate beat Him. They've watched the crown of thorns shoved down on Him. And now they've seen Him nailed. And

they're looking at the Father going, "Surely You're going to let us go." Because I guarantee you, they are emotional beings just like we are and every single one of them's got a drawn sword. I've talked about it before in the Old Testament, one angel killed the entire Brazos Valley in one night. They are not little feminine things; they are ferocious beings. And their swords are drawn and they're looking at the father saying, "You just give the word." And if Jesus had stuttered, if the first thing he had said, "Father don't forgive." This whole planet would have been decimated before He could change the sentence. They're ready to go. And the only reason you and I sit here today is because the very first thing Jesus Christ uttered from the cross was, "Father, forgive them. They have no idea what they're doing." And He held them back.

Not long after that, Jesus looks down and His mother's there with John. She birthed Him. She nursed Him. She weaned Him. She taught Him. She loved Him. Sometime after the age of 12, after Jesus is the age of 12, she's a single mom. Joseph dies, never reappears in the narrative. And then at age 30, Jesus comes, who should be in charge of the home, and says, "I've got to go." She loves him. And so she's sitting there watching Him die and she's crushed. So what you would expect is Jesus to offer a great moment of compassion. Which He ultimately does, but it doesn't appear that way at first because it's very precise. In the Greek He says, *guné*. There's a Greek word, *météer*, that He uses with John. But He says, "Woman here's your son. Son here's your mother." And the Bible says John took her home from that day forward. Now why would He do that? Because in effect, He disowned His mother who loved Him, who gave life to Him, who caressed Him, who blessed Him. Why in the world would He just literally, what did it say, "Mom here's your son, son here's your mom. But he doesn't do it. He says, "Woman, here's your son." He disowned her on the cross. Second thing He said. Why? Because even Mary had to understand, nobody comes to the Father except totally through the cross and she's no different than anybody else. She's not the mother of God. She's not a perpetual virgin. She's not sinless. And she did not ascend into heaven bodily. She's just like the rest of us. And what Jesus wanted was for her to be with Him in all eternity. And the only way He could do that was to let her understand, "I know you're My mom, but you still need this cross like everybody else does." So in the ultimate act of compassion, He disowned her.

Then you've got the two thieves with Him, right. Man they're just letting Him have it. They're all over Him. You know when I get to heaven, there are a lot of guys I want to meet and ask. This guy's at the top of my list. He's one of my top 3. Because they're both cursing Him and laughing at Him saying, "Yeah! He saved others. Can't save Himself." And finally, at some point, one of these guys looks over and the other guy's starting to mocking thing again, and he looks over and he says, "Hey, hey, hey! Back up. We deserve what we're getting. But He does not." How did he know that? And then he looks at Jesus and says, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." How does he know that He doesn't deserve to die? And how in the world does he know that Jesus has a kingdom? This guy spent his night, I mean his life in jail. He's been nothing but a criminal. He's been nothing but a mess. Here he is and I do not have any idea, but somehow he's dying next to Christ and he sees something about Him and he says, "He doesn't deserve it. And He's obviously got a kingdom and I want to be a part." I really do, when I get to heaven, want to sit down with him and say, "What in the world did you see that not a single other person saw?" That's staggering. It's the great proof though. If you were the only person in the universe, Christ would have died for you. Because when He died, there's only one person that believed in Him.

Then He says, "I thirst." The cross was physically difficult. The nails were placed in a position where it would hit the nerves here and the nerves in the feet. And you would sit here like this and if you sagged down on the feet with your arms up trying to get some rest. You took short shallow breaths. When you felt like you couldn't do it anymore, you would push up with your feet and pull up with your arms and you could get a breath here. But it would send excruciating pain to your feet. Your arms, in time, would become spasms and you would drop back down. And there was this constant up and down process. And as long as they could keep them hydrated, they could go for days. It was physically difficult. But that's where we miss it. All my life growing up when I went to church, that's what I heard. How horrible it was for Jesus physically. Let me tell you something. That's not why He prayed what He prayed at Gethsemane. Three times He told the Father, "Let this cup pass from me." It's not because of the physical. He was strong and in good shape and there were a lot of men that endured this with nothing. They endured it for days. He lasts six hours. We make such a big deal about the physical. But it's not the physical, it's the change in the next statement from His lips. "Father forgive them." And now it's dark and you hear Him utter this. "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" There's a change now. This is what He feared. This is what He struggled with. This is what will break His heart. This is what will bother Him. Genesis, Bible says the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, said, "Let Us make man in Our image." One God, three persons. For the first time, that Trinity is split. The Father has turned His back on the Son because of this. Listen to this. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

[²¹The One who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf, that we might become God's righteousness in Him.](#)

I don't think we're ever going to understand the depth of that until we die and go to Heaven. We know what it is to go from shame to righteousness. But to go from righteousness to shame is something I can't even fathom. And He took on the entire world. Not just those of us sitting in this room. Not just those in other churches in the community. He took the entire world's sin. And it was poured on His back. He had to drink it. That's why His metaphor in the Garden of Gethsemane was, "Father let this cup pass from Me." He had to drink our sin. He had to drink the shame and the embarrassment and the humiliation and every bit of violation of the character of His Father that anybody in the world's done. He drank every single bit of it in six hours on the cross. That is staggering. And as a result of that, God the Father turned His back. And so God the Son said, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? I haven't done anything wrong. All these have. Not me." That's what He feared. That's why He prayed in Gethsemane. It wasn't the physical aspect. It was the fact that He and the Father would lose their relationship and there would be a brokenness and a loss and a death.

Then He says, one word in the Greek, *tetelestai*, it is finished. That was key. It's why when they offered Him something to drink He didn't take it. Because He knew He had to be conscious and sure of when He had taken the entire cup in. And now at three o'clock, He's drunk the entire cup and so He says, "It's finished." And then we come back, "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit." Romans didn't kill Him. The Jews didn't kill Him. My violation of the Creator's character killed Him. And when He paid for it, He went back home. Now three o'clock, so they wrap Him, head, body, put the spices in, they've got to move quickly. Got to get Him in the

ground before six o'clock. And so they finally get Him in the ground in a tomb, this was right near Golgotha, they put Him in there, roll a huge stone over it, lock Him down, He's there. Now on this night, Heaven is excited. Because He told the thief on the cross, "Today you'll be with Me in paradise." He took the thief home. Heaven's excited because the King's back. And with Him, a guy who's got to be stunned. He spent his whole life being an idiot and now He's walking around Heaven going, "How did I get here?" He's fine. Heaven's great. But Hell is dying. They thought, and they were right, don't ever let anybody tell you Satan won, that Jesus on the cross. He knew if he could keep Jesus off the cross, that the lake of fire, the Bible says in Matthew 25, prepared for the Devil and his angels, that he would be removed from that and we would go there, but he would not. And everything would be OK. And so they hope, if they can just keep Jesus off the cross, that's why they fought Him in Gethsemane, that's why they mock Him on the cross. If they can just, even if five until three, get Him off, we go, they stay here. But He made three o'clock. And He went home. And they lost everything. In the back of their mind, they're probably hoping, "Maybe Sunday He won't come out." But they're crushed. The Jewish leadership, they're pumped. They got rid of that guy. He's dead. Nobody comes out of the grave after they're dead. Yeah, Lazarus was probably a trick, a magic trick. Nobody comes out. He's dead. He's gone. They're having a great weekend. The disciples, they're gone. They're home. One of them's dead. And all the others are terrified. They're hiding in their closets because they know the Jews will come after them next. But what really kills them is the three years. They've left businesses and they've told friends, "We found the Messiah. He's great. We've got Him." And now He's dead and now I've got to go back and not only face the Jews, but face their families and their friends and say, "We were wrong."

So Saturday comes, same deal for everybody. Sunday morning. Tomb. You've got two Roman guards there because the Jews said, "You know, the disciples may come and steal His body." They talked about that. It's amazing to me the Jews, who hated Jesus, believed in Him more than the disciples who loved Jesus. Because not a single disciple is here on Sunday. So they have a few Roman guards there who are kind of like Navy Seals. And they hate the Jews. I mean the Romans, after 70 A.D. after they crush Jerusalem and chase the Jews all the way to Masada just to kill another 900 Jews. They absolutely hate the Jews. So these two guys are sitting there hoping that some Jews come and try to steal the body because they can beat them up. This is a great day for these guys. They're sitting there on the next shift going, "I hope they come." They hear a little noise behind them. Turn around. Two angels. "How ya doin'?" Poof. They're out. They roll the tomb back, the stone back. Out He comes. Word gets out. The disciples figure it out little by little. When they finally settle in, they're pumped. The Jews, they try to discredit it with a lie. The demons, they're crushed. Heaven is thrilled because the resurrection is the proof that He died for our sin and God can get back anybody who missed the Father by putting his faith in the Son on the cross and requesting that forgiveness. That's all.

How do you know it's true? How do you really know that? I know, number one, because the Holy Spirit convicted me about that. But I love what Chuck Colson wrote. I want you to listen to this. He said, "I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me." If you don't know who Chuck Colson is, was on the kitchen cabinet for Nixon, one of the hatchet men, he was part of Watergate, part of the cover up. And so he went to jail. Found Christ in jail. Now listen to this.

Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world – they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. And you're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.”

He's right. The ultimate argument that the reason we're in here and what we think is true is because 12 apostles, Paul is now the 12th, spent their life being tortured, beaten, and killed for a truth that no one would die for if it weren't true. Our Lord is alive. And that is why we're here.

Let's pray.

Father I ask You real simply, You know, I don't, those in this room that have not done what the thief on the cross did, they have not put their faith in You and they have not requested forgiveness. So I'm asking You today, for those here, let them at this moment know who they are and surrender to that call. Father for those here that know that, that You have not been that important in their life, remind them today what they have because of what You did. And Father thank You that when we sit in this room, even as the world makes fun of us, we have the truth, You're coming back and we praise You and honor You for that. In Jesus Christ name.