

The Place Called Calvary

Sermon Delivered on March 24th, 2024
AM Service

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Text:

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to **the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him**, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34: Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do**. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. 35: And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. 36: And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, 37: And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. 38: And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS**. 39: And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40: But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41: And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42: And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43: And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise**.

Introduction

For those of us who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, this is a very special time of the year. In my humble opinion more special than Christmas time. Because **the Lord's incarnation would be meaningless without His crucifixion and resurrection**. It was Gordon B. Hinckley who said, *"There would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter. The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection."* Next Sunday, we will celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, but before we approach that glorious event, I want to take you to the place, which is called Calvary, the place where they crucified the Lord of glory.

There are many special and significant places in my life. The place **where I was born**, the place **where I went in Elementary and High School**, the place **where I first heard the gospel**, the place **where I came to know Jesus Christ as my Saviour**, the place **where I first met my wife**, the place **where our children were born**, and this place **where we gather to worship God**. These are special and significant places in my life, but all these pales in comparison to that place which is called Calvary. That's where I want to take you this morning—to Calvary.

In the whole Bible, there is only one verse you will find the word Calvary. And it's in our text, [Luke 23:33](#), where we read, *"And when they were come to the place, which is called*

Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.”

Here, Luke says the place where our Lord was crucified is called **Calvary** which is a Latin equivalent of the Hebrew word **Golgotha**. The name Calvary means ‘**The Skull**’ ([Matt 27:33](#); [Mark 15:22](#); [John 19:17](#)). Some say that the location was called “**The Place of the Skull**” because the hill was **shaped like a human skull**. But then others say it’s because this was **the place of public execution and skulls were left lying around** after people had been executed.

The most important event in human history took place at Calvary. It is **the center of human history**. Here two eternities meet. B.C. and A.D. The Old Testament look forward to that place, while the New Testament look back to that place. It was Calvin Evans who said, “*Calvary is where east meets west, where time meets eternity, where light meets darkness, where tragedy meets triumph, where God’s love meets man’s lawlessness. Calvary is our passport to Heaven, our hope of Heaven, the moral magnet of the Universe, the scene of suffering, the mount of mercy. It’s where redemption is complete and where the atonement is accomplished.*”

Alexander Maclaren said, “*We believe that the history of the world is but the history of His [Christ] influence and that the center of the whole universe is the cross of Calvary.*”

One preacher said, “*At this place we see man at his worst, but we see God at His best. At this place God took God in one hand and took man in the other hand and became our Mediator and thereby fulfilled [Psalm 85](#) when it says, “*Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*”” ([Psalm 85:10](#))*

*In a life bound for heartache and defeat
I will praise Him forever and ever
For the cross made the difference for me.*

-Gloria Gaither & William J. Gaither

To which, I say AMEN! **Calvary made a difference in my life**. If you are saved, I know you can echo with what I just said. This morning, we will look back to the place where they crucified our Lord. In the words of the song writer and preacher Isaac Watts, we will “*survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died.*” And as we do that, **I pray that you and I will fall in love with Him all over again**. And if you are lost, I want you to learn today that the cross of Calvary can make all the difference in your life as well.

There are three things I want us to remember about Calvary as we look back to this place, namely, it’s a Place of **Pain**, secondly, it’s a Place of **Pardon**, and thirdly, it’s a Place of **Promise**. Calvary is a Place of Pain, a Place of Pardon, and a Place of Promise.

I - A Place of Pain

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, **there they crucified him**, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Calvary is a place of suffering and shame. Over time, the term **Calvary has become a description of crucifixion**. In the ancient world, crucifixion was viewed as **the worst and most cruel form of execution** that can be given to a non-Roman citizen. Both Jews and Gentiles regarded it as the worst way to die. The first century Jewish historian, **Josephus** described crucifixion as *“the most wretched of deaths,”* and then again, **Paulus**, a Roman Jurist, called it the *“most severe punishment”*.

Crucifixion was designed to make the victim suffer as long as possible. It’s specifically designed to be long, severe, and excruciating, not like electric chair or gas chamber, which are quick and clean and where the victim dies quickly. But crucifixion is a form of execution which is designed to torture and make the victim suffer as long as possible. And this is the way Jesus was executed—pitiless and cruel Roman crucifixion. Our Lord didn’t just die a normal death. He suffered a violent and cruel death.

But not only was crucifixion designed to make the victim suffer as long as possible, but **it was also designed to shame the victim**. This form of execution is not only painful, but **it is also humiliating and inhumane**. The Roman writer **Quintilian** says, *“Whenever we crucify the guilty, the most crowded roads are chosen, where the most people can see and be moved by this fear”* (Declamations 274).

Calvary was located outside the city of Jerusalem. The crucifixion was **executed in a public place** to shame the victim and **served as warning and preventive to others**. So, that all the passersby that would see the pain and agony that the victim was going through, it would make them say, *“I am not going to do that, because I don’t want to go through that.”*

So, not only did our Lord suffered physical pain, but He also **experienced open shame**. But our Lord submitted Himself to the brutal death of the cross. **He endured the cross and despised the shame** (Hebrews 12:2).

But that’s not all! The most painful part of Jesus Christ’s death was not physical pain and the open shame, but **the pain of being forsaken**. At the cross, we do not hear our Lord complain about the crown of thorns, nor the nails and the spear, nor the mocking and insult thrown at Him, nor the disciples forsaking Him. But at the cross we hear His word of complaint where He cried with a loud voice, saying, *“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* (Matthe 27:46).

The physical pain and the open shame must be excruciating, but they pale in comparison to the pain of being abandoned by His Father. So, remember, the place called Calvary, first of all is a place of pain, intense pain.

II - A Place of Pardon

Calvary is not only a place of pain, but it is also a place of pardon. When our Lord was being falsely accused by the religious leaders before Pilate ... When false witnesses came forward and falsely testified against Him ... When Herod interrogated Him and mocked Him ... When His enemies spat upon His face and plucked off his beard.... When they scourged Him and beat Him up ... When they insulted Him ... When they crowned Him with a crown of thorns ... When they were driving those nails to His hands and feet, Christ opened not His mouth. In [Isaiah 53:7](#), we read, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

But then as He was in excruciating pain and open shame and dying the cruel death on the cross, He finally opened His mouth. And what do we hear? What were the first words we hear from our Saviour? These words in [Luke 23:34a](#), “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Even in His dying moments, our Lord did not speak any foolish words. There was no cry for pity or mercy. Not a word of complaint about His enemies. Not a word of condemnation and judgment upon those who crucified Him. But a word of prayer. A prayer, not for Himself but for others. A prayer of forgiveness for His enemies. The prayer was offered for those who were guilty of putting Him to death. The prayer was offered for all the soldiers who have whipped Him and nailed Him to a cross. The prayer was offered for all the religious leaders who have blasphemously and falsely accused Him.

The crucifixion took place, and this prayer was uttered by Jesus Christ more than 2000 years ago, but **it is as relevant and as powerful today** as it was then. Our Lord continues still before the throne of God, to intercede on the behalf of guilty sinners like you and me, crying, “[Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.](#)”

As you survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died, remember the place where they crucified our Lord is a place where you will find forgiveness. Though none of us would be able to stand if the Lord should mark our iniquities, **Calvary reminds us that there is forgiveness with Him.** Though your sins be as scarlet, Calvary reminds us that they can be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they can be as wool. Calvary is a place of pardon and forgiveness.

*Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span, at Calvary.
Mercy there was great and grace was free,
Pardon there was multiplied to me,
There my burdened soul found liberty—
At Calvary.*

-William R. Newell

III – A Place of Promise

Luke.23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40: But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41: And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42: And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43: And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**

Here we have the second word spoken by our Lord from the cross. **It was an answer to a prayer.** It was a response to the request of the dying thief. “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke.23:42). What a prayer! It’s a humble prayer. As one preacher pointed out, *“This man was not looking to be taken down off his cross, nor was he asking for a glorious position in the Kingdom. He was not requesting that he be able to sit at the right hand of Christ in glory. He just wanted to be remembered.”* “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom”

Our Lord responds with a word of promise.

Luke 23:43 Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Here is a word of promise. Our Lord responds to the prayer of the repentant thief with a promise—Paradise. What a glorious, satisfying answer our Lord gave to this thief who is in severe physical pain! What comfort this word must have brought him. The Lord promised this undeserving thief, Paradise, which is a place of complete rest, perfect happiness, no more suffering and pain, sorrow, death, crying, pain, cancer, heart diseases, failing memory, back aches, migraine, headaches, heart aches, high cholesterol, colds, stuffy nose. It is a place where righteousness dwelleth, no more sin, thief, criminals, terrorists, and wicked people.

But then that’s not all our Lord promised the dying thief. **To be in Paradise is a great and wonderful promise but Paradise is not enough.** Christ said, “Thou will be with me in Paradise.” This dying thief only asked to be remembered, but **he got much more than what he asked for.** Not only did Christ forgive him, but He also promised to take him **to be with Him in Paradise.** It is a great blessing to be forgiven, but it an infinitely greater blessing to be with the Lord Jesus Christ, not just for a time but for eternity. Truly we can say with the apostle Paul, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Oh, as you survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died, remember the place where they crucified our Lord. Yes, it’s a place of **excruciating pain.** But I am glad it’s more than that. Calvary is also a place of **complete pardon** and **precious promise.**

Closing Exhortation

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him ...

Calvary, it's a place of pain, a place of pardon, and a place of promise. Calvary reminds us of Jesus' great sacrifice—the perfect sacrifice which is able to forgive sin and to reconcile man with God ([Hebrews 10:12](#); [Acts 4:12](#)).

[There they crucified Him](#). At Calvary we see the mercy of God. Because of Calvary we have forgiveness and salvation. In [Ephesians 1:7](#), the apostle Paul speaks of our Saviour Jesus Christ and His forgiveness, and writes, “[In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.](#)” The blood that was shed at Calvary has the power to forgive and to cleanse sin.

*The blood that Jesus shed for me
Way back on Calvary
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its power!*

- Andrae E Crouch

That great song writer Fanny Crosby wrote,

*The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.*

Jesus Christ came to forgive. He came to save. He came to pay sin's penalty. He came to suffer and die for sinners like you and me to forgive and to save. You may have lived a good moral life; have great education; have a successful career; have a nice and respectable family, but what's most important is—**have you been forgiven?** Have your sins been forgiven, have your sin been washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ? Can you, by the grace of God, confidently say that you have been forgiven and, on your way to Heaven, when you pass on from this life? Have you come to Christ for forgiveness and salvation. If you have not, I invite you to come and come just as you are.

*Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.*

- Author: J. Hart

Oh, repent and believe the Gospel and experience the forgiveness that God alone could give! Remember the place where they crucified our Saviour. It's the place where you will see His pain, His pardon, and His promise.

AMEN!