

Forsaken, That I Might Never Be

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- [0 : 00] Well, the four Gospels together give us seven sayings from the cross, from our Lord Jesus. What a pulpit that Roman instrument of torture was, a pulpit from which flowed such words of life.
- Jesus was nailed to the cross at nine in the morning and died somewhere soon after three o'clock in the afternoon. Six hours, seven sayings and all of them windows into our Savior's heart.
- So there he is. Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing. Today, you will be with me in paradise.
- Woman, behold your son. Behold your mother. I thirst. It is finished.
- Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Six of the seven sayings. Some of you were counting and you realized I left out one.
- [1 : 14] It's the fourth of the seven sayings. It's the middle saying. It came at the end of the three hours of darkness from noon till three o'clock just before he died.
- And it's the hardest of them all for us to hear. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
- And it seems to me that this middle word takes us right to the heart of our Savior's sufferings. This window to his heart reveals the very worst part of his torment.
- And I must say that the more I see in these words, the more I love my Savior and hate my sin. Most recently, I've been helped to see more in this middle saying by Jeff Thomas, who spoke at our pastor's conference up in Grand Rapids a couple weeks ago.
- And then from our study on Wednesday nights as Roger has led us on the study of relationships. So let's look again tonight at our Savior's words from the cross and trust the Holy Spirit to inflame our hearts with love for him who suffered so much for us.
- [2 : 27] My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Forsaken. That's a relational word.
- That's something that happens in a relationship, isn't it? Someone's forsaken by another or abandoned, deserted by another. If we're to appreciate the suffering of our Savior, then we need to remember that the one who said these words is both God and man.
- Two natures in one person. And he has relationships both with God and with men. And so as God from all eternity, he has enjoyed relationship with the other two persons of the Godhead.
- With God, the father and God, the son. And he has known that perfect love, that unbroken fellowship in his relationship with his father as a son who lies in the bosom of his father.
- The most intimate relationship ever known. The father knows the son and the son knows the father. Not a thought in the father's heart that the son doesn't know. Not a thought in the son's heart that the father doesn't know.
- [3 : 40] It's shared. They are one. But the Bible makes abundantly clear that in the incarnation, this God became man. The second person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, became a real man.

Losing nothing of his divinity, he took on him our humanity. A human body, a human soul. Now, it's especially in that light that I'd like for us to look at these words of our Savior.

We know that man was made in the image of God. And whatever else that means, it surely includes the fact that our soul was made for fellowship with God.

For this relationship with God. That we have the capacity to relate to God in a way that none of the other lower creation can.

And so, we have not only this capacity for relationships. We also have a need for relationships. Both with God and with man.

[4 : 42] We were made first for relationship with God. To know him. To enjoy fellowship with him. To listen to him and to tell him our heart.

We were made dependent on him. We were made to need him. Weren't we? We were never meant to live apart from this close relationship with our maker.

It's part of what it means to be human. And what's true of our human nature is also true of the Lord Jesus' human nature. That his human nature was made with this capacity to know God.

And to enjoy him in close relationship. And to listen to him. And to talk to him. He himself was made to need God the Father. To be dependent upon God as a man.

And his humanity was never any more than ours. Designed to live apart from God. And that's what we see then in his life on earth.

[5 : 43] We see the Lord Jesus in his true humanity. In intimate relationship with his heavenly Father. We learn of Jesus' habitual practice.

That very early in the morning while it was still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. And went out to a solitary place. Where he prayed. Where he talked with his Father. Early morning times of fellowship.

Late at night. All night. In all of his temptations and trials. We find him turning to God. For wisdom. For strength. For comfort. For encouragement. He had this perfect relationship.

With God. That means that he lived the perfect life. We haven't. It means that he did.

He trusted in God with all of his heart. And did not lean on his own understanding. In all of his ways he acknowledged him. And indeed God did direct his path. And it means that the servant of the Lord.

[6 : 44] As he speaks in Isaiah 50 40. That the sovereign. This is Jesus. Speaking. That the sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue. To know the word.

To sustain the weary. He wakens me. Morning by morning. Wakens my ear to listen. Like one being taught. What must have those sacred sessions been.

Each morning. As Jesus listened. Morning by morning. As his ear was open to his Father. Who was teaching him. In that most intimate. Of relationship.

That he might then go. And speak a word in season. To men. There were two times. In his earthly life. When God's majestic voice. Was heard. Testifying to the intimacy.

Of his relationship. With Jesus Christ. You remember. His words from heaven. My beloved son. This is my beloved son. In whom I'm well pleased.

[7 : 42] Once at his baptism. As he's heading into the temptations. For 40 days. And 40 nights. And then once at the Mount of Transfiguration. Just as he's beginning.

To teach his disciples. About. The fact that he must. Go up to Jerusalem. And be rejected. Crucified. And rise again. The third day. Twice he hears.

That voice from heaven. And such words. Of commendation. And praise. Where Jesus. Constant enjoyment. And comfort. To think.

That my father. In heaven. Loves me. That I'm precious. To him. What. That must have been. In the midst. Of his rejection. And.

The resistance. That he. Received. From men. And from devils. Us. Well. Just as we. Take comfort. From others. In our.

[8 : 38] Rejection. So. The Lord Jesus. From his father. But as a man. He also drew much comfort. From God's words. In scripture. Those words.

That the Lord. Is my light. And my salvation. Those two. Were his. His God's words. Whom. Shall I fear? The Lord. Is the stronghold. Of my life. Of whom. Shall I be afraid?

Even when men. Evil men. Advance against me. To devour my flesh. God is. My refuge. And strength. And ever present. Help in trouble. These words.

About his God. And the one. That he had relationship. Were such an encouragement. To our savior. Never think. That Jesus. As a man. Did not need.

And did not draw. Comfort. And encouragement. From such promises. From his God. In scripture. That though my father. And mother. Never forsake me. The Lord.

[9 : 31] Will not. He will receive me. I will never leave you. Or forsake you. He derived. Rich encouragement. From that. Relationship.

To his God. Who spoke such promises. And so. Jesus. As a human. Was made. For relationship. With God. As to his humanity. And that's true.

Not only of us. But of Jesus. The true. The perfect man. But then. We're not only. Made for relationship. With God. We're made for relationship. With other human beings. Aren't we?

We were made to need. Other human relationships. We see this in marriage. We see it in the church. We see it in. All kinds of interdependent. Relationships. No one was made.

To be an island. To themselves. Nobody was meant. To live alone. Without human relationships. Not even. Though God.

[10 : 26] Meets our deepest need. For relationship. Remember. That it was said. To the sinless Adam. Who already was enjoying. Fellowship with God.

It is not good. For the man. To be alone. I will make a helper. For him. And that helper. Was not God.

He already enjoyed. That relationship. But he made another human being. To come alongside of him. Because he too. Has this desire. For human relationships.

God made. Humanity. In that way. Made to need. Other people. In our lives. And so he's given us. Relationships with people.

Like ourselves. Human beings. Human beings. And the same. Could be said. For Jesus. True humanity. Just as true. Of his humanity. As ours. That it's not good.

[11 : 22] For the man. To be alone. Even though he had. Perfect fellowship. With God. Jesus. Human soul. Was made to need. Other human beings.

Like him. And so. That's why we find him. Born into. To a family. A family. A family. A family. With needs. For a mother. And a father.

He grows up. In relationship. To his brothers. And sisters. Just as we have. And on it went. The community there.

In Nazareth. The. The fellowship. Of the believers there. This is our savior's. Upbringing.

As well. Jesus. Human soul. Was made. To need. Other human beings. Like him. And then. We see him. Gathering. Twelve. Of his. Followers.

[12 : 16] Into a. More intimate. Group. The twelve. Out of all those. Who were following. To be with him. And especially. To have three.

Who were. Very close to him. Peter. James. And John. An inner circle. That he. He led in. To his confidence. In a way. He didn't. The others. And he took them. Places. That he didn't.

Take the rest. And so. He takes them. To the top. Of the mount. Of transfiguration. He takes them. Deeper into. Gethsemane. And he opens. His heart. To them. To his closest. Intimates.

In ways. That you. Share your heart. With those. Who are closest. To you. You see. Jesus. Too. Had this. Human relationships. With people. In his life.

Other people. In his life. He was no. Loner. He lived. With others. And so. With this. Understanding. Of the God. Man. Jesus. Christ. Made. For relationships.

[13 : 09] We're now. Ready. To start. Moving. Toward. The cross. And the middle. Words. That he spoke. From that cross. At age. 30. He's presented. To Israel. As the lamb. Of God.

Their Messiah. And savior. How was he. Received. John. Says. He was in the world. And though the world. Was made. Through him. The world. Did not.

Recognize him. He came. To his own. But his own. Received him. Not. So though he came. Offering salvation. And eternal life. To his own.

To those. Of all people. Who should have. Welcomed. And received him. They did not. And so. Isaiah. Can prophesy. He. Is.

He was despised. And rejected. By men. Jesus. Was the stone. Which the builders. Rejected. The spiritual leaders. Of the nation.

[14 : 02] Looked him over. And said. No. He doesn't fit in. With our ideas. Of the kingdom of God. And they. Rejected him. And if we think. That rejection. Did not hurt Jesus. We don't understand.

His humanity. Does. Does it hurt you. When you're rejected. By other people. Then. It hurt Jesus. Too. He's a real man.

With a real heart. With real emotions. Even as we are. How do you feel. When a friend. Turns on you. Maybe. When you go through.

A divorce. He felt it too. Remember. He's a real man. So we read. He was despised. And rejected. By men.

A man of sorrows. And acquainted. With grief. His being. Despised. And rejected. Is connected. With his sorrows.

[14 : 57] And his grief. His rejection. Caused him. Sorrow. And grief. Being despised. By the people. Hurt. And he felt.

The sting. And yet. In his sorrow. And grief. Jesus took refuge. And solace. In the loving arms. Of his heavenly father. It was his constant.

Go to. In the midst. Of rejection. Yet. It wasn't. Only God. We find. The Lord Jesus. Turning. In his grief. As well. To those. Around him.

His friends. His disciples. So it's. John chapter 6. And great crowds. Are following. Jesus. And it's a. Long and difficult.

Sermon. For the. Folks. To swallow. And many of his. Disciples. Were told. That's those. Who were counted. His followers. From that time on. Followed him. No more. They were done.

[15 : 50] With Jesus. They deserted him. They abandoned him. They ended their interest. In him. But he had his. Faithful disciples. That he then.

Turned to. And said. You don't want to leave. Also. Do you. Now. There is something. Of the human heart. That longs. For loyalty. And support. And devotion.

From. True friends. When others. Are deserting him. Wholesale. And it's a proper. And a right way. That our Lord Jesus.

Turns. In such times. Of adversity. After all. Does. Proverbs. 17. 17. Not say. That a friend. Loves. At all times.

And a brother. Is born. For adversity. Our brothers. Not for. Hard times. Times. Times of rejection. Is that not why God gives these gifts to us.

[16 : 45] Of a. Of a friend. And a brother. That when we're going through hard times. We taste something of his comfort. Through these human relationships. And. So it's proper for Jesus.

As a man. To turn to his friends and brothers. In such. Adversity. And so he does. Now. In John 6.

Even though. He knew one was a traitor. And he must have rejoiced. To hear Peter say. Lord. To whom shall we go. You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and know. That you are the holy one of God.

No one who knows who you are Lord. No one who has tasted the value of your words. Can ever forsake you. Such was their statement. Of loyalty.

In times of desertion. Well those were not his. Though that encouraged him. It was not his ultimate refuge. And encouragement. Was it?

[17 : 40] He knew their weakness. He knew what was coming. That Judas would betray him. That the same Peter. Would three times deny. That he even knew him. And that they all would forsake him. And flee for their lives.

So. His ultimate comfort. Was from God. Alone. But I simply want to add. That that did not mean. That human comfort. Meant nothing to him.

He was a real man. With real human relationships. In fact. The closer to the cross he comes. The more he needs his friends.

And leans upon them. He comes into the garden of Gethsemane. And he's got his disciples with him. And he asks them to watch and pray with him.

And then he takes his three most intimate. James and Peter and John. And he takes them a bit farther. And he opens his heart to them. And says. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.

[18 : 38] To the point of death. Stay here and watch with me. Well they all sleep. Don't they? Being weary with sorrow. At his words.

And so he's left all alone. In his time of greatest need for comfort. From human relationships. And then Judas arrives. With the arresting mob. He betrays him with a kiss.

Now all betrayal is painful. But especially when it's one of your dearest friends. And that's what Jesus felt. Psalm 69.

Gives us something. Even my close friend. Whom I trusted. He who shared my bread. The closeness of table fellowship with me.

He has lifted up his heel against me. This was a knife that cut Jesus deep. And he felt it. As a human being.

[19 : 36] Betrayed. Oh but then there were still the eleven faithful. But not for long. For Jesus. As soon as he was arrested. Matthew tells us.

Then all the disciples forsook him. And fled. So now he's forsaken by the closest to earth. Closest to him on earth.

Peter goes on to disown him three times. And I just want to say that knowing it ahead of time. That all this was going to happen. Did not remove the sting of rejection.

When it all did come down. Jesus hurts. Jesus hurts. As his own. Forsake him. So step by step.

The man of sorrows is being abandoned. He's being cut off from all human supports. And he's being shut up to his one unfailing source of comfort.

[20 : 31] Earlier this very night. Jesus had said to them. A time is coming. And has come. When you will be scattered. Each to his own home. You will leave me all alone.

Yet I am not alone. For my father. Is with me. Notice what comforted our Lord. In the very thought of being forsaken by man.

And especially those closest to him. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone for my father. There's that one true. Faithful. Unfailing source of comfort in my life.

He's with me. And so even his men were forsaking him. Down to the last and closest friend. He basked in that unfailing love of his father in heaven.

John G. Payton was a Scottish missionary to the cannibals of the South Sea Islands. Back in the 18. Mid-1800s. The very first missionaries. That had been sent to this island.

[21 : 30] Had been beaten to death. Within hours. Within minutes of landing on the island. And so. It's to this island. In the South Seas. That John.

And Mary. His newly wed. Wife. Came with the gospel. The saving gospel. Of Jesus. Convinced that it would save cannibals. That Jesus saves sinners.

And just months after arriving on the island of Tana. Payton lost his young wife. Mary. In childbirth. And then the baby boy.

Outlived her. Just a week. Now Payton was left all alone. Far from home and friends. He buried them. Together. With his own hands. And often went to that grave to pray.

And later in his autobiography. He writes. But for Jesus. And the fellowship. He vouchsafed me there. I must have gone mad. And died. Be. Beside that lonely grave.

[22 : 27] He was alone. But not alone. His father was with him. Years later. He was tipped off. That a group of savage cannibals.

Was angry. And had plotted to kill him. On that very night. And so he took refuge. Out in the bush. And he. Climbed high in a large chestnut tree. He tells us of it. I climbed into the tree.

And was left there alone. In the bush. I heard the frequent discharging. Of muskets. And the yell. Of the yells. Of the savages. Yet I sat there.

Among the branches. As safe in the arms. Of Jesus. Never in all my sorrows. Did my Lord draw nearer to me. And speak more soothingly. To my soul. Than when the moonlight.

Flickered among these chestnut leaves. And the night air played. On my throbbing brow. As I told all my heart. To Jesus. Alone. Yet not alone. And if it be to glorify.

[23 : 23] My God. I will not grudge. To spend many nights. Alone in such a tree. To feel again. My Savior's spiritual presence. To enjoy his consoling fellowship.

And then a word to the reader. If thus thrown back upon your own soul. Alone. All. All alone. In the midnight.

In the bush. In the very embrace of death itself. Have you a friend. That will not fail you then. Jesus had that friend.

His father in heaven. And he told his disciples. You will leave me all alone. Yet I'm not alone. For my father. Is with me. So cut off. From all human support.

With none to pray for him. None to enter into his trial. His arrest. His. His. His. False accusations. From the crowd. With a helping.

- [24 : 19] Hand. An encouraging word. Not even their presence. When he needed it the most. The human heart of Jesus. Is reaching for human support. And finding none. I looked for sympathy.
- But there was none. For comforters. But I found none. Psalm 69 20. You left me. All alone. Yet I'm not alone.
- For my father. Is with me. He knows. He understands. He will never leave me. Nor forsake me. So. Throughout.
- The religious courts. Alone. When they charged him. With blasphemy. Before Pilate. All alone. All alone.
- Before Herod. When they mock his kingship. And dress him up. Like a king. All alone. When the crowd. Picks Barabbas. Instead of him. And chants. Crucify him. Alone then.
- [25 : 16] When they spit on him. When they pulled out his beard. When they beat him. And flogged him. And mocked him. Alone. As he carries his cross. Until he can carry it. No further. Simon is compelled.
- To carry it. For him. Alone. As he stripped naked. And nailed up to the cross. And hung up to die. There's this growing forsakenness.
- The closer Jesus gets to the cross. Left all alone. Yet I'm not alone. For my father. Is with me. But now.
- Even this sense of support. And comfort. Is to be stripped. From him. As he enters the uncharted waters. And his relationship to God. Never has he.
- Felt this. In his soul. I don't say. I don't say that he lost. His father's love. And favor. But that he lost. All sense. Of his father's love.
- [26 : 18] And favor. Because. There's mystery here. He was never more loved. By his father. Than when he was.
- Bearing his father's wrath. Due to. His people. You remember those words. In John 10. 17. Jesus says. The reason my father loves me. Is that I lay down my life. And now Jesus has come to the cross. And he's laying down his life.
- If ever there was a time. That the father. Could rightly say. If ever. I love thee. My Jesus. Tis now. It was then.
- At the cross. He's laid. Look at my son. Look at his obedience. He's obedient. To the death of the cross. Oh. I love my son.
- [27 : 22] And yet. His son must feel. The wrath. Without any mercy. The wrath of God. Upon him. For sin.
- For you see. The beloved son of God. Is who was made man for us. Is now being made sin for us. He's being made the very thing. That his righteous father hates.
- He's made sin. The thing that God's holy nature. Instinctively recoils against. In wrath and anger. And for which God created hell. Sin is the accursed thing.
- And Christ was made. Accursed. For us. And so we don't find Jesus saying. Alone but not alone.
- Because my father is with me. We don't hear those words. We rather hear the words. That pierce the darkness.
- [28 : 21] My God. My God. Why have you. Abandoned me. You. Who have been my never failing. Help.
- And consolation. You to whom I've turned. When others have forsaken me. And I found such support. You've always been with me. You've never left me.

Or forsaken me. Why have you. Forsaken me. And he cries. But there's no answer. Only the deafening silence.

That he's never heard before. And his choice of these words. My God. My God. Why have you. Forsaken me. His choice of those words from the cross.

Tell us that he is living the experience of Psalm 22. That those words in Psalm 22. Are more true of him. Than they ever were of David.

[29 : 17] Read Psalm 22. Where he. Grabs hold of those words. To say. That's me. On the cross. The strange outer darkness.

From noon till three. Is matched by a strange inner darkness. Of the soul. Well might the sun. In darkness hide. And shut its glories in. When Christ. The mighty maker. Dies.

For man. The creature's sin. And that outward darkness. And hiding of the sun. Is matched by an inner. Hiding of the father's face.

From him. The loss of his comfort. When bearing his wrath. For sin. And you notice. It's no longer. Father. Father.

His first word. From the cross. Father. Forgive them. His last word. Will be father. Into your hands. I commit my.

[30 : 11] There's no father here. Not in the darkness. There's only the forsakenness. My God. My God. Why have you. Forsaken me. He now reels.

Under the full sense. Of his infinite wrath. And anger. He's drinking. The cup of God's wrath. All alone. And. And he's in the greatest trouble.

That he's ever been in. And feels what it is to be forsaken. And abandoned. By God. And why? Because believers.

He was standing in for us. Wasn't he? It was substitutionary. Curse bearing. Christ in our place. Christ feeling. And experiencing. What we should have felt.

And experienced. Forever. And ever. In hell. The forsakenness. Of God's wrath. Upon us. You know.

[31 : 07] It's interesting. To see. How Paul describes. The punishment. Of the lost. In hell. In second. Thessalonians. One. He talks about. The punishment. Of those.

Who do not know God. Of those. Who do not obey. The gospel. Of God. And I wonder. If anyone. Is here tonight. That does not know God. That is not. Obeyed.

The gospel. That says. Repent. And turn. To Christ. Believe on him. And you will be saved. Here's the punishment. For those.

Who. Have not obeyed. The gospel. Of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished. With everlasting. Destruction. And shut out. From the presence. Of the Lord. Cut off.

From his presence. Forsaken. Abandoned. By him. And that forever. And ever. Without any hope. Of ever being anything. But forsaken.

[32 : 02] By God. To have God say. Depart from me. Away from me. You workers. Of iniquity. That's. How Paul. Under the inspiration.

Of the spirit. Describes. The torments. Of a soul. Damned. In hell. Cut off. From the presence. Of the Lord. From anything.

Of his mercy. Of his love. Not a drop. On his tongue. Brothers and sisters. This was our portion. This is what we would have drank.

All through eternity. Oh mystery. Of love divine. Lord Jesus. Was our portion. Thine. And is thy portion. Ours.

What a wonderful exchange. At the cross. That he takes our portion. He takes the cup. Of God's wrath. To be shut out. From the presence. Of the Lord. To experience. That forsakenness.

[32 : 58] And he drinks. That cup for us. And then he gives us. What his righteousness. Deserves. Eternal life. With our father. In heaven. Unclouded. Forever.

To know him. And enjoy that relationship. All because hell. Came to Calvary. That day. As our savior. Stood in. For us. There. And was forsaken.

That we might never be. So that we might never be forsaken. Not in this world. Not in our greatest trial. Not when left. All alone. By men. Not in our day of death.

Not in the day of judgment. Not for all eternity. To be absent here. Is to be present. With the Lord. The exact opposite. Of what hell is.

To be shut out. From the presence. It is to be with the Lord. And even now. To have his spirit. With us. Making real to us. The presence of Jesus.

[33 : 52] The presence of our father. So that we know his comfort. To enjoy the sweetest. Of all relationships. With the one true God. And Jesus Christ.

His son. Whom to know. Right now. Is eternal life. And oh. It's such an encouragement. Isn't it? To see that.

The darkness lifted. In the sky. The darkness. That strange darkness. Dissipated. And. The brightness.

Of the sun. Shown again. And the darkness. In Jesus heart. Dissipated. He does not die. In a state. Of felt. Forsakenness.

But with triumph. He cries. It. Is. Finished. Drunk. The wrath of God. Down. To the bottom. Of the cup. It's finished.

[34 : 45] All that. The obedience. That was required. To save. My people. From everlasting. Hell. It has been done. It's finished. The blood.

That must be shed. The death. That must be died. It's finished. It's paid. And then. With the restored. Comfort. Of his faith. He shouts. In a loud voice.

Father. You see. There's the restored. Assurance. And sense. Of his father. In heaven. That. Loves him. As his beloved son. Father. Into your hands.

I commit my spirit. And he breathes his last. And he was gone. Well. That's our savior. And that's something.

Of what he endured. For us. That's what it cost. To make us. The adopted. Sons and daughters. Of God. To enjoy. The glories.

[35 : 43] Of heaven. To enjoy. Here on earth. This relationship. With the living God. So let's love him. Let's give ourselves. Over to him again. Even as we take the elements. Of his blood.

And body. Tonight. In remembrance. Of him. Let's. Treasure his promised. Presence. With us. And let's look forward. To seeing him.

Face to face. Never. Never. To be separated. From him. Through all eternity. Amen.