

The Death of Deaths

Sunday, January 1st, 1989

Matthew 27: 33-36

“And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink. And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched Him there.”

I’m speaking to you today, on the subject: “THE DEATH OF DEATHS.” My text is taken from Matthew 27. I will be reading a portion of verses 33 through 36. I want you to listen carefully to this message on “THE DEATH OF DEATHS.”

In Matthew 27:33 it says; *“And when they were come to a place called, Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, there they crucified Him. And sitting down they watched Him there.”*

What do you suppose that these people there were thinking as they sat on the ground about the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ? As they sat there and watched Him suffer, bleed, and die, what do you suppose they were thinking?

The Pharisees were there, the religious leaders who had rejected their Messiah were there. They had hired false witnesses against Him. They had taken Him before Pilate to be tried. They inspired the people to cry out for His blood. The people there were led there by their religious leaders.

They cried out, *“Crucify Him.”* Pilate asked them, *“Whom shall I release unto you, Barabbas or Jesus which is called the Christ?”* They said, *“Give us Barabbas.”* He said to them, *“But what shall I do with Jesus?”* They said, *“Let Him be crucified.”* These people were sitting about the cross.

The Roman soldiers who had scourged Him and mocked Him and harassed Him finally nailed Him to the cross. They were there. This was a religious holiday. People were there from everywhere. It says, *“They took Him out to the hill called Golgotha and there they nailed Him to a cross and sitting down, they watched Him die.”*

Jeremiah wrote of this moment in Lamentations 1:12. The Lord Jesus is speaking here in this passage of Scripture. He says, *“Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like My sorrow which is done unto Me, which the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger. “Is there any sorrow like My sorrow?”*

His death is truly the death of deaths. There was no death quite like it. There is no sorrow quite like it. He is literally called, *“The Man of Sorrows.”* His afflictions are of God. Did you hear what He said? *“What is it to you, is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold My sorrows. Is there any sorrow like My sorrow, and My afflictions wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me?”*

Who afflicted Him? You say, “The people nailed Him to the tree.” The Scripture says, *“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.”* He said, *“The Lord hath afflicted Me.”* When was it? *“It was in the day of His fierce anger.”* The anger of Almighty God against all the sins of all of His people of all generations was met on Christ.

Is it any wonder that He said, “There’s no sorrow like My sorrow, there’s no death like My death. There’s no anguish like My anguish. There’s no suffering quite like My suffering wherewith the Lord Himself has singled me out and afflicted Me. He has not only afflicted Me, but He has afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger and wrath against all sin.”

What is it to you? I ask you today, what do you see in the death of Jesus Christ? As you sit there, put yourself in the place of these people sitting around the cross. There were the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Roman soldiers, people and folks from everywhere. They were sitting about that cruel tree watching this man die. They were looking up there and seeing Him on that cross.

That sign above His head says, *“This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”* What are you thinking and what goes through your mind as you sit there and watch Him? What do you see? Is it the death of a religious martyr? Is that what you see, somebody else has died for the peculiarities of his faith or His doctrine? Is that what you see?

Is it the death of One who has tried and failed in His efforts to reform the world? There have been a lot of those who have tried to change people’s patterns and life style, government, reformers and revolutionaries.

Is that what you see in the death of Jesus Christ? Is that a reformer that has failed in His effort to change the world? Is it the death of an example? Is that what you see? Sitting down and watching Him, is He showing us how we ought to be willing to die for what we believe? What do you see as you watch Him there? “Is it really nothing to you,” He said? Is His death the greatest, most vital importance to you?

Let me tell you what I see, by the grace of God, as I watch Him there. I will tell you what I see as I sit and watch Jesus Christ die on the cross. I see something!

Here is the first thing that I see. I understand by the grace of God, who it is, that is on that tree. That is the first issue to be settled. This is no ordinary Man. As I look there on that cross and I see Him hanging there in between the two thieves, I see Him suffering. I know this; this is no ordinary Man.

Pilate, when he presented Him before that raging, raving multitude said; *“Behold, the man.”* This is no ordinary man. This is the Man. That is what I see as I sit down and watch Him suffer on that tree. I know this; He is the God-Man.

You stop and walk around a little bit. When I was preparing this message to bring to you today, I wrote that down; on that cross between two thieves, outside the city of Jerusalem, being treated as an unclean leper, nailed to a cross is God in human flesh. I just had to lay my pen down and get up and walk around. I couldn’t sit there any longer.

The Centurion saw that. He said, *“Surely this Man is the Son of God.”* Christ said that, *“I and My Father are One.”* Paul wrote, *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.”*

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” The Word that *“In the beginning was with God and was God, and all things were made by Him. That Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”* That is the flesh on that cross. It is God in human flesh.

You say, “But God can’t die.” No, God can’t die but God in human flesh can die. God in a body can die. All that is done and accomplished at Calvary in the death of this Man, this God-Man, must be considered in the light of Who it is that is dying on the cross.

This is the first issue, as I sit and watch Him there. This is no ordinary man. If it is just an ordinary man, then this is an ordinary death. But this is the Death of Deaths. If this is just an ordinary man suffering, then this is just ordinary suffering and sorrow. But if it is the God-Man, if this is the pure, holy God-Man, then there is no sorrow like this. There is no suffering like this. This is of the greatest importance; it is the Death of Deaths. *“He suffered the Just for the unjust that He may bring us to God.”*

So, what do I see in the cross and the Man on the cross? The first thing I see is that He is no ordinary man. This is no ordinary death. This is the Man Christ Jesus. This is the death of deaths.

What is the second thing I see? As I sit and watch Him there, I see in the death of this God-Man the fulfillment of the very first promise that God Almighty made. I see the first time that God spoke after man fell, and the first promise He made concerning the redemption of fallen men. I see in that cross, the fulfillment of what God said immediately after Adam fell. That's right!

God spoke (by way of promise) after Satan had tempted the woman and after the representative man had followed the prince of evil, willingly, deliberately and had sinned against God and Adam had fallen. He was dead spiritually under the curse, and under the power of evil. God spoke to Adam and his posterity. This was the first time God spoke after man fell, and it was by way of a promise. This was the first time God spoke with any hope in him.

He said, "I'll put enmity between thy seed and the seed of the serpent and the woman's seed. You will bruise his heel and He will bruise your head. He will crush your head. The seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

What is His head? His head is His government, His power, His strength and Christ is that seed of woman. *"Behold, the Lord Himself, will give you a sign. A virgin shall be with child and thou shalt call His name Immanuel, (God with us)."*

The angels said to Joseph, *"Don't be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. That Holy thing conceived in her is the Son of God, (the Seed of woman). Call His name Jesus; call His name Immanuel, (God with us). Unto us a child is born a Son is given."*

Christ is that seed of woman and His heel was bruised. What is that? That is His lower part. That is His human flesh. His human flesh was bruised, battered and beaten. *"He bled and suffered and died."* I'll tell you what He bruised, concerning Satan. He tore up his government and his power. He crushed his head.

That is when our Lord met the forces of evil, and the power of evil. That is when He won the victory, when He crushed the power of Satan. He defeated him who had the power of death. He delivered all of His people. I see that. That is the Seed of woman and that is the only Seed of woman that has ever lived on this earth. He is there to destroy the power of evil and that of Satan.

Thirdly, I see in the death of that Man on the cross the fulfillment of every Old Testament picture, every Old Testament pattern, every Old Testament sacrifice, every Old Testament type of redemption. I do; I see it fulfilled in Christ as I sit and watch Him on that cross.

Starting with Abel is where we read about the first sacrifice in the Scriptures. But it wasn't the first sacrifice at all. In Genesis 4, when Abel's brother, Cain brought his fruits and vegetables which he had grown, the works of his own hands. Abel, being a sinner coming before God to worship God, seeking to approach God, brought the Blood of the Lamb and put it on the altar.

I will tell you this, Christ is that Lamb. Christ is Abel's lamb. When Abel put the blood on that altar, he was showing his faith in the coming Lamb of God, Who would bear away our sins.

You can see Abraham and Isaac walking up that mountain. They were going there to worship God and the boy turns to his father and says, "*Here's the wood and here's the fire, where is the lamb?*" This boy knew that you couldn't approach God without a lamb. "*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.*" Without atonement, there is no entrance into the presence of God.

Then, when he put that boy on the altar to sacrifice him before God, the Lord told Abraham, "*Stay your hand.*" Abraham looked over in the bushes and saw a ram. God said, "Take the ram and put him in place of the boy." He took his son off that altar and put that ram in the place of Isaac and the ram died and shed his blood. That ram is Christ taking the place of His people on the altar of sacrifice.

Do you see that Old Testament priest? How many thousands of thousands and thousands of times did those priests kill a lamb and take that lamb's blood, a censor of incense and go under the veil into the Holy of Holies into the awesome presence of God?

There, before the Shekinah glory, between the cherubim's, over the mercy seat, that mercy seat which covered the broken law, there were tables of stone that God gave to Moses." How many thousands of times did that priest sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat making atonement for sin? Then, he would go out of that Holy of Holies every year for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years.

Well, that priest is Christ and that blood is His own blood. That Holy of Holies is His presence and that mercy seat is Christ. The blood offering is Christ.

Do you see that Rock smitten when the people were thirsty and Moses smote the rock? Water came out of the Rock and they drank to their fill. That was the smitten Rock hanging on that cross. There out of His side came blood and water. Blood to justify, water to cleanse; sanctification and redemption came right out of the Rock Christ Jesus.

Do you see that brazen serpent lifted up when the people had been bitten and men were dying? All this is meaningless without the cross. There is no meaning to Abel's lamb. There is no meaning to Abraham's sacrifice on Mount Mariah. There is no meaning to the tabernacle or to the priesthood or to the Day of Atonement or any of these teachings. There is no meaning to it without that cross.

That is what I see; I see Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. *"Even so, must the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life."* What do I see in the cross?

I see Who is there. I see that it is the Son of God. I see the fulfillment of God's first promise and every promise and prophecy, picture and pattern in the Old Testament. I see it fulfilled in Christ. Yes, I do!

Do you know what else I see? Fourthly, I see in the death of Jesus Christ, as I sit and watch Him on that cross that it was no ordinary death for He is no ordinary Man. I see in His death, the character of God, better than anywhere else the character of God is revealed at the cross. Better, I say, than anywhere else.

Now, we all know this Scripture; *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* My friends, where above all places do you see the love of God demonstrated, manifested in a greater way than anywhere else than at Calvary? *"Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends."*

Christ didn't lay down His life for friends; He laid down His life for sinners, folks just like you and me, enemies. *"Herein is love. (We didn't love Him); He loved us and gave His Son to be a propitiation for our sins."* That is love! That is the love of God that knows no bounds. Oh the everlasting, infinitely, immutable, unchanging love of God.

Oh, love of God how rich and pure,
How measureless, how strong,

It shall forever more endure,
The saints and angels song.

Could we with ink the ocean fill?
And were the skies of parchment made

Were ever stalk on earth a quill,
And every man ascribed by trade

To write the love of God above,
Would drain that ocean dry

Could the scroll contain the whole?
Though stretched from sky to sky?

He didn't have to save you. He didn't have to save me. He didn't have to send His Son. He could have left us alone. He could have passed us by. He could have let us perish in our iniquities but God loved, God loved, God loved. I see it in the cross. I see love nowhere else in this entire universe.

Then, I see God's Holiness and God's Justice. Did you ever stop and ask yourself this question? Why did Christ have to die like this? Why the cross of shame? Why couldn't He just die of a heart attack? Why couldn't He have been just run through with a sword? Why all this terrible harassment, suffering, shame and this awful ignominious death? Why, why, why?

Why did He have to be separated from the Father? Why did He have to suffer like this? I will tell you why, it is because "*God is Holy and God must punish sin.*" God Almighty must lay upon Christ and pour upon Christ all the hell that is due for our sins.

There is separation from God and darkness and wrath, fierce wrath. "*The sorrows and the afflictions wherewith He hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger.*" You have never met an angry God yet. Someday men will.

Christ met an angry God at Calvary as a substitute, as a representative and as a sin-offering. He met the unbridled wrath of God. He walked the winepress of God's wrath. He drank the bitter drinks from the very bottom of the cup of Gods Almighty's indignation against sin. God will punish sin. "*God will be no means clear the guilty. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.*"

"*He is a Just God and a Savior.*" Do you see that at Calvary? "*God spared not His own Son.*" That is what you see at Calvary. "*God must be Just and Justifier.*"

I'll tell you this, my friends; these two things must be seen to have an understanding of the death of Christ. We must see two things; we must see substitution and satisfaction. He's not there for His own sins. He had no sin and He knew no sin. He's there for

somebody else's sin. He's there for my sins and your sins. He is there for all the sins of His elect, for all His people, for all His sheep and for all generations, Jew and Gentile.

As the stars of the sky and of the sands of the seashore, He is our Substitute! Do you see what I am saying? He is our Representative. "*As in Adam we die in Christ we are made alive.*" In Adam, we perish and in Christ, we are restored.

He not only is our Substitute, but He made full Satisfaction. He met the law of God and He obeyed it. He met the requirements of God and He fulfilled them. He met the Holiness of God and He measured up to it. He met the Justice of God and He took all it could give.

There at Calvary you see mercy and truth meeting together. "*There is righteousness and peace kissing each other.*" That is what I see in the death of Christ.

Oh, I wish I could get a hold of every preacher in the United States and in the world. I wouldn't take them to the Holy Land; they don't need to go over there. There is nothing holy about that place. They need to worship in spirit, in heart and in truth like I have tried to do today. Go back to Calvary and sit down and shut up and watch Him there. Take the open Word of God and find out what is taking place.

I don't wish to emphasize the mechanics of the cross above the mercy of the cross. They are both there. "*As Moses lifted up that serpent, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. I must go to Jerusalem,*" He said. "*I must suffer and die. He suffered the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.*" He carried out what had to be done to redeem His people.

As I sit there and look, I marvel at His love, I marvel at His grace, I marvel at His mercy and it is stamped indelibly on my heart. He changes my heart and my life and brings me to adore and to love Him and have the deepest unchanging affection. I hope a growing affection for Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

That is what I want to emphasize. I want to emphasize a reason why He died. There is a reason why He lived; there is a reason why He had to suffer. God Almighty has to be God.

You can't be saved at the expense of God's Holiness, and God's Justice, and God's Righteousness, without a full display of God's mercy. That is all at Calvary.

I hear people say, “Well, I don’t know anything; I just know that Jesus died for me.” Why did He die? What did He accomplish when He died? Why must He suffer like that? *“Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by and behold My sorrows?”*

What do I see fifthly, in the death of Christ? I see the actual putting away of all the sins of all believers. Now, my friends, sin is real. I’m not talking about stealing a watermelon. That is not your problem. The issue between you and God is not that you stole a watermelon one time or that you went to a picture-show on Sunday. That is a pack of foolishness.

Sin is a principle. Sin is a nature. Sin is the evil rebellion against God. Sin must be dealt with and sin must be punished. I ask you, “How are your sins going to be put away?” How is the sin of your imagination, thought and rebellion, pride, lust, jealousy, envy, covetousness and all of these awful sins that rule and reign in our hearts be put away?

God can’t walk with people like us. The law can’t put them away. The law just reveals it. The works of religion can’t put it away. The works of religion just aggravate and adds to our sins.

Baptism isn’t going to put away sin. How is sin going to be put away? Sit down at Calvary and take a look! *“He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”* That is what this Book says. *“He put away sin.”*

A Catholic priest can’t do it or putting water on you can’t do it. A Baptist preacher can’t do. The shaking of a hand or praying for you can’t do it. Jesus Christ is the only One who can put away sin. He didn’t do that by hocus-pocus. He did it by dying under the wrath of God against our sins! He paid the price!

“This man after He had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down on the right-hand of God.” And God said, *“Because He died, their sins, I remember no more.”*

Oh, I see in the death of Christ a death that is sufficient. You don’t have to add anything to it; it is sufficient.

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,

And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Loose all their guilty stains.

His death is effectual and His death is final. He said, "*It is finished.*" Don't you try to add anything to it.

Jesus paid it all,
All the debt I owe,

Sin has left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.