

Week of February 26-March 3

HE KNOWS

Scripture Reading: Read Mark Chapter 15

In yesterday's devotional, we examined the importance of the events surrounding the arrest and trial of Jesus. In today's devotional, we move to the crucifixion and to the one cry of Jesus from the cross that Mark records: *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* This phrase is translated by Mark for his Roman audience and means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It is a quotation from Psalm 22:1.

Why did Jesus ask this question? While hanging on the cross, was he mulling through in his mind the Scriptures to make sure he mentioned them all that applied to his death? In other words, was it simply his desire to fulfill another Scripture as he had so often in his life? Was it a lack of faith? In his moment of excruciating pain, did he lose it and feel like God let him down? Or was there more to it than meets the eye?

Jesus felt the nails. He experienced in his humanity the full horrors of crucifixion. He was not exempt from the pain. To view the Savior as simply taking part in a Bible Quiz tournament to see who could quote the most verses is to minimize the agony of the cross. His quotation from the cross must mean much more than that. On the other hand, to suggest that Jesus suddenly doubted or lost faith in his last moments before his death flies in the face of his declaration from the cross recorded in Luke 23:46, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." In addition, if Jesus suddenly lost faith in his Father and sinned by unbelief, then we are in big trouble since we needed a sinless substitute as seen in yesterday's devotional.

So, why the cry? The apostle Paul declares that "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*" (II Cor 5:21). When Jesus died on the cross, he took the sins of all of humanity upon himself...and God's holy wrath for those sins. The wrath we deserved, the punishment that was our just judgment, he willingly took upon himself. In those last moments on the cross, for the first time in the fullness of his humanity, Jesus knew, by way of experience, what it felt like to be separated from his Father, for the Father to turn his face away. This Jesus, who only knew unbroken relationship with the Father, for that moment in time knew what it felt like to bear God's wrath as he bore our sins. The writer of Hebrews tells us, "*For this reason he (i.e. Jesus) had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*" (Hebrews 2:17) No wonder the writer of Hebrews goes on to say, "*Since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Why did Jesus say these words? Perhaps it comes down to this, because of the cross, "He knows!"

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Approach Jesus today with confidence because he was separated from the Father so that you no longer have to be.

Take-a-way: Jesus was forsaken by the Father for your sake and mine.

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