

**32** As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. **33** They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). **34** There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. **35** When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. **36** And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. **37** Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

**38** Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. **39** Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads **40** and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” **41** In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. **42** “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. **43** He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” **44** In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

**45** From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. **46** About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, [a] lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). [b]

**47** When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

**48** Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. **49** The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

**50** And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

**51** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split **52** and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. **53** They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and [c] went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

**54** When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

**55** Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. **56** Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, [d] and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

## Why?

“Why?” is one question you will never hear the end of in a household with children. Why? Because children love to learn and want to understand the world in which they live so they ask, “Why?” That question may get old when you have learning four year old in the house. And yet even as adults we still ask the same question, “Why?” Sometimes it’s phrased as an exclamation, “Why me?” At others times it’s a legitimate question. Sometimes the question searches for the elusive answer that is not found because it just is. Why?

Now there ever was one who could ask the legitimate question of God, "Why me?" It would be Jesus. Yet even in these moments Jesus wants your understanding to move from questions without answers to mere amazement as you ponder, "Why me?" and know that it was because of his great love.

And yet it makes one wonder, "Why was Jesus even asking?" Throughout the gospel Jesus knows why he is here and why he has come. He even tells the disciples on more than one occasion that they are headed to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and rise. Peter even understood and tried to rebuke Jesus, "This will never happen to you!"

But in full obedience to his Father's will, Jesus went to Jerusalem. He gave his life as a ransom for all. In response to his perfect obedience. Simon of Cyrene - is forced to carry the cross for him because his disciples have abandoned him. Those willing to fight and die for him won't even take up his cross and follow him. In response to his perfect obedience the world turns on him. People mock him, "*Save yourself. Come down from the cross if you are the son of God! You saved others.*" They wait and watch for him to suffer and die. In response to perfect obedience and following his Father's will God abandons his son.

At this moment it looks like Jesus reaches his breaking point and calls out in anguish, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" This is the only time Jesus ever referred to his Father as God. Why me? There is no good reason for Jesus to be suffering and asking, "Why?" He's done everything in obedience to his Father's Will. Is Jesus questioning God or calling out against God, "Why me?" No but he is crying out in anguish to God. In anguish he goes back to God's Word and find words from the Psalm 22. Here David starts from a situation without hope, "*My God, My God why have you forsaken me.*" This Psalm is an expression that builds hope and confidence in God. In utter anguish David displays his confidence in God and - Jesus does the same.

He had been abandoned and forsaken by God. He suffered separation from God. Instead of turning his back on God, he turns to God for help. But instead of a response he finds silence. The sinless son of God, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world has become the most disgusting sinner and God can't even look upon his son.

There are three types of suffering that Jesus went through on the cross. First the pain that went along with a crucifixion. The *Passion of Christ* emphasizes the agony of Jesus. Then there is the shame that comes with a crucifixion. Your enemies gather around and mock you as you are pinned to a tree. You can't do anything. You're bound by nails and naked as people gamble away all you own before you eyes. But God doesn't want us to see what separation from him looks like. The world was veiled in darkness when God

forsook himself. The gospels don't give us the gory details of the crucifixion. They don't dwell on the Passion of Christ. They seem to gloss over it with, "*they crucified him.*" They don't want us to see the what as much as the why? Why Jesus? Why forsaken? Why me?

Because Jesus really was forsaken by God. He cried out turning to God to the only one who could help and he received no answer. He cried out, "Why me?" for your benefit and mine. Because Jesus knew the answer to his question was for you. *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus was forsaken for all the times we've questioned God or accused him? For all the times we've blamed him for our problems or searched for an answer that just isn't there, "Why me?" and turned away from God. This cross is the wages of our sin. It's what we deserve for all of our pride, anger, and abandonment See what turning your back on God deserves. See the temple curtain spell it out - we're different. Separate. Sinful.

We don't receive justice. Jesus did. That's forgiveness. It's not the end of sin and the fact that from here on we will be perfect people but we are no longer held accountable. We will no longer die. We will no longer be separate from God.

That changed things. That curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. Up to that point only the high priest could enter into the presence of God once a year on the Day of atonement. But with the tearing of the curtain - the way into God's presence is open to everyone. Including you and me. Jesus was forsaken so that you and I never will be. That leads to another question of mere amazement, "Why me?" Love. Love kept Jesus on the cross. That is the kind of God we have.

That doesn't mean we won't suffer physical pain. That doesn't mean we won't ever suffer shame. But that does mean we won't ever know what it means to be forsaken by God. we will never suffer the same separation that Jesus suffered in our place. Because God forsook his son so that he will not forsake us now. Because his son suffered for our sin and was forsaken in our place. Even in our anger, as you mourn and grieve remember that God is always with you, "*Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you*" (Hebrews 13:5). No matter how many times we ask God, "Why?" he still points us to his love, his son, on the cross.