

The Death of Jesus

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew in the 27th chapter, Matthew chapter 27.

We have been moving ever closer to Jesus' death, and today we actually see Jesus' death. We've already seen some of the account of what happened on the cross before the death, but now we come to Jesus' death on the cross. So if you'll read with me Matthew 27, verses 45 through 56. Before we read that, let me just say, are we streaming right now? Thanks. All right, beginning in verse 45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, Lema, Lema, Sabathani. That is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[1 : 24] And some of the bystanders hearing it said, this man is calling Elijah. And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.

But the other said, wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, truly, this was the Son of God. There were also many women there. I'm sorry, we're going to stop at verse 54 today. Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we again thank you for your word and ask your spirit's blessing upon it.

[2 : 33] We pray that you would make it clear, help us to see our Savior for who he is, that we might worship him rightly. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. So again, today we're looking at Jesus' death.

And what I'd like for us to do is really look at the circumstances that attended his death, how he died, look at the details of this passage, and then I really want us to zero in and consider what Christ accomplished in his death.

In particular, looking at this idea of the temple, the curtain being torn and what that means for us. But what are some of the implications of Jesus' death? So let's look first at what it tells us about how Jesus died.

We see there at the very beginning, now from the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. This is quite extraordinary. We're familiar with eclipses and what that would look like.

Today, our understanding even with science, some modern-day science, an eclipse, a total eclipse, would last about seven and a half minutes at the longest. Some of them are much shorter depending on where you are.

[3 : 36] But wherever you are in the world, if you're at the place that has the longest possible total solar eclipse, it's seven and a half minutes. So for there to be three hours of darkness over all the land would go beyond what we would even understand of an eclipse.

This is something quite unique that's going on as Jesus is dying. Maybe we can be reminded of 2 Kings 20, where King Hezekiah asked for a sign from the Lord.

And remember, he's told, what would you like for me to do? Would you like for the shadow to go forward 10 steps or back 10 steps? He says, well, shadows always move forward.

Let's make them move backwards. And we see that the shadow goes back 10 steps. And I forget, I've heard before about how much time we're talking about. But in some way, it's probably beyond our comprehension with the earth revolving around the sun, what that would mean.

But somehow, time was slow to even went backwards for a time in history. And so if we understand that our God is sovereign, He can do whatever He wants to, for whatever purpose darkness takes over, in a way, again, I think it's beyond what we would think of as just, they didn't have just a solar eclipse.

[4 : 51] They understood eclipses. They might have said something along those lines. Something unique has gone on here where the sun is darkened. Of course, this reminds us of the day of the Lord that's described throughout the Old Testament.

For example, in Joel chapter 3, 14 through 16. For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

The Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem in the heavens and the earthquake. I could spend a good deal of time talking about the day of the Lord in the Old Testament. We just finished our survey of the Bible, and that idea of the day of the Lord is something we spend a great deal of time on in the Old Testament.

But the day of the Lord really is speaking of the eschaton, or the end of time. What the end of the time will be like? Well, the sun and moon are going to be darkened in the stars. And so this same language is being seen here as Jesus dies.

And we've talked about already how Jesus has really ushered in the eschaton, or the end of all time. We're living in the end days. So Jesus is ushering this in, and I think really in fulfillment of Joel 3, we see the sun darkened as he dies.

[5 : 58] Now, of course, there's probably some symbolism in this as well. It probably signified or symbolized God's displeasure. There's darkness. These sinful men have crucified God incarnate.

There's displeasure with that. We understand that. God, although sovereignly has planned this to bring about the purpose of salvation, yet for men to raise their hand against God himself, God in human flesh, is a horrible thing.

Likewise, we understand that sin has been placed on Jesus. I'm always curious as we read this. I wish there was a clear moment where it tells us, and here's the moment when Jesus receives sin. But at some point before his death, he takes upon himself the sins of men. And even the darkness could symbolize that as well, that God the Father turning himself away from God the Son.

And we'll see some more of that in a little bit. I even thought about how this could correspond to Jesus' birth. You remember the wise men saw a star that appeared at Jesus' birth, and now we see really the opposite.

[7 : 08] Rather than light coming into the world, light's leaving the world. There's darkness. Jesus is really battling against the powers of darkness and casting out Satan.

Ephesians 6, 12. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

So there may be a reality to the fact that we see spiritual warfare going on here. Jesus is battling against the forces of darkness. And then really in the week leading up to Jesus' death. So after Jesus' triumphal entry, he's already in Jerusalem.

The week leading up to that, John 12 records Jesus saying, Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

He said this to show them what kind of death he was going to die, namely that of a cross being lifted up. He goes on to say in verse 35, The light is among you for a little while longer.

[8 : 14] Walt while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who waltz in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

And of course that couples with what is said at the beginning of John chapter 1. That the light has come into the world. And the light was God incarnate.

So we see that displayed there. And now Jesus is saying, For a little while longer you have light. But light is going to leave you. Before that light leaves you, be children of the light. And so again, there may be much symbolism here in the darkness.

But obviously there's been a wicked thing that's been done. And the light of the world is going to leave them. And we see as well in this account that Jesus becomes thirsty. Although it's not specifically said about his thirst here. But when they hear him cry out, someone fills a sponge. It says with sour wine. And put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. [9:15] I've mentioned already that this is different than what we saw of the wine mixed with the bile. So this is the second time in which Jesus has offered something to drink. Sour wine would be what it sounds like.

Wine that has gone bad. My family, I always annoy my family because I tell them that yogurt is basically milk gone bad. You know, it's already turned. And I'm not a big fan of yogurt. And they're like, no, no, no. You know, it's whatever it is. A bacteria or yeast that's been presented so it turns. When it says sour wine, it's wine that's gone bad. Basically what we would think of as like a red wine vinegar or something.

None of us really want to drink it. But this is along the lines of vinegar. Some of your English translations may even choose to say vinegar. You know how it cuts the teeth, how unpleasant it is. So this may have even been a mocking gesture that they would offer him this soured wine as something to drink.

That would have been quite unpleasant. I really don't have much more to say about the offering of the sour wine other than to say this. Why does that matter in the account?

[10:19] Why is it even recorded? Psalm 69, 21. They gave me poison for food and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink. And so it's been seen as a clear fulfillment of what was said in Psalm 69.

That what Jesus is experiencing really is a fulfillment of scripture. So I think the real point to that is to say prophecy is fulfilled. Jesus is living out what was foretold would be the experience of the Messiah.

And probably one of the big crucial aspects of this account of Jesus' death is really the son forsaking, excuse me, the father forsaking the son. We see he cries out, my God, my God. And this is in Aramaic. He cries out, Eli, Eli. We don't know who misunderstood it. But you understand that Elijah just means that the Lord is Yahweh.

Jah was Yahweh. And Eli means Lord. And so here we see the same thing in the Aramaic Eli here referring to my God. It's possessive. But you can understand why people might have misunderstood that as an abbreviation or referring to Elijah.

[11:27] Again, we don't know if this is Roman soldiers that may have overheard things, if this is Jewish people that may have misunderstood it. Some of them would not have been very familiar with Aramaic.

And some of them may have even, we've seen for the day of Pentecost, that some of them have traveled in and may have been there. So they misunderstand. They think he's crying out for Elijah. But really what he's doing is quoting Psalm 22. So again, we see a fulfillment of Scripture. Psalm 22, verses 1 through 2. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me from the words of my groaning? Oh, my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer. And by night, but I find no rest.

And so Psalm 22 is really an expression of this distance felt between man and God, that we would cry out to God and receive no answer. But the experience of Christ to have that same experience was very unique.

[12:27] Why? Because he's God from all eternity. He's dwelt within the Trinity. They've had perfect fellowship with one another throughout all history. And now something unique has changed.

Now he cries out and he gets no answer from God the Father. How could that be possible? Well, we've talked about this a little bit already, but God the Father forsakes God the Son because God the Son has taken upon himself the sins of man.

Though he himself committed no sin, we're told in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that he who knew no sin became sin. I'm not going to try to theologically flesh that out today, but the one who never committed sin became sin, whatever it means to become sin.

And in that moment, him becoming sin, then there's a separation between sin and God the Father, as we know there is from Scripture. Your eyes are too holy to look on evil.

God is holy. He's perfect. And now Christ has become sin. There has to be separation. Do you understand that? There cannot be the fellowship that there always was.

[13:42] Just as what happened with Adam and Eve in the garden. They had fellowship with God the Father. He walked with them in the garden. But that fellowship is interrupted, damaged, hurt by sin, and they're cast out of the garden.

And ever since then, we've longed to have that fellowship with God again. And now Jesus has really entered into our experience. He knows what it's like to be separated from fellowship with God. And it's no simple prayer that he prays. We read in verse 46 that he cried out with a loud voice. I think it's maybe because of the pain.

Maybe because of the suffering that he's experienced, that he cries out with a loud voice. Maybe it's an expression of the fact that God doesn't hear him. Even not as though Jesus would misunderstand this.

But you think of Mount Carmel when Elijah met with the prophets of Baal. He mocks them. Cry out louder. Maybe your God's asleep. Again, not as though Jesus is misunderstood.

[14:51] But it's that realization that God the Father is not answering. He's not hearing me. So perhaps even crying out because of that or the pain, the suffering. But for whatever reason, or because of sin, God the Father has forsaken God the Son.

Now I want to be clear. That's not an indication of a breakdown in the love that God the Father has for God the Son. John 10, 17. Jesus said this, For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again.

And so the Father loved the Son for what he's doing. And yet, because of sin, there has to be some separation or breaking of the fellowship. I think we can see as well that this also means that the Son has been given into the hands of the enemy.

This has been what Satan desired. What those who are opposed to God have desired.

That they could kill the Son. That they could defeat him in some way. We see, even in the temptation of Jesus, how Satan longed to defeat the Son and gain some power over him.

[16:13] We've seen other times where there have been those who have wanted to hurt Jesus. And we see things like, they took up stones to kill him and he walked through the crowd. There were times before where he's untouchable.

Because he's sinless. Because he's God. But now, as we think of God the Father forsaking the Son, an expression of forsaking is, God the Father is not intervening here.

He's allowed evil to triumph over God the Son. He's handed his Son over to the enemy. But in all this, I want to remind you that the Son took upon himself the wrath of God that we deserved.

Another expression, even of being forsaken by God, is to know the wrath of God poured out on you. But he did that for our sake. I mean, all of what we've seen at this point, he has done for our sake. That we who are sinners might not have the wrath of God poured out on us. That we who deserve to be forsaken by God because of our sin would not be forsaken by God.

[17:17] And so, all that we see expressed here, as difficult as it is for us to understand, it's done for sinful men.

It's done for those who would put their trust in Jesus Christ. That he takes upon himself, the forsaking, the wrath of God that we so rightly deserve.

And I want you to see as well that he died. Nothing profound here. But there have been those heresies in church history where they have argued that, well, Jesus didn't really die.

It only appeared that he died. The asceticism argued that in the early church. How could God the Son actually die? But I want to be clear here, in all the gospel accounts, what we see is that Jesus actually died.

We're even told when he died. In translating it into modern time, we'd say he died sometime after 3 p.m. in the afternoon on that day.

[18:18] Sometime maybe between 3 and 4. Which also coincides with the time of the evening sacrifice and the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb. We've already talked about how Jesus died on the day of the Passover itself.

But we see as well now that he's dying even at the time at which those sacrifices would have been going on. And so he actually dies. He dies at the specified time. Hebrews 9.15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgression committed under the first covenant.

So for him to be the mediator of a new covenant actually requires there to be a death. And Hebrews testifies to this. There was a death that issued in the new covenant. Jesus sacrifices himself that he might bring in the new covenant.

Verse 50 says he yielded up his spirit, which is just an expression of the fact that he died. But it wants us to understand that there's no illusion here. There's no trick. There's not some other guy who replaced him.

Even the idea of yielding up his spirit is just an expression for dying. It's not saying that the divine spirit somehow separated from the flesh, but that God the Son actually died.

[19 : 37] And I've already shown that from Hebrews 9, his death is necessary for there to be the new covenant brought into play.

But we also know that his death is necessary for atonement to be made for our sin. Romans 6, 23 says the wages of sin is death. In Hebrews 9, 22, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.

And so the wages of sin is death. Again, although I think we can rightly deduce this, although scripture doesn't directly address this, I truly believe that Jesus was incapable of death before he took upon himself man's sin.

The wages of sin is death. Therefore, if you're sinless, there is no death. And so Jesus could not have died, I believe, without having taken upon himself our sin.

And so to say it another way, it's our sin that actually enables and brings about the death of Jesus Christ. But he takes upon himself our sin. And for us to not know death, I know there's a way in which we all will experience death physically unless the Lord returns before that.

[20 : 46] But spiritually, for us not to experience the consequences of sin, in the terms of spiritual death, it was necessary that there be atonement made for our sin. It required his death.

And again, we saw in Hebrews 9, 22, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. And so blood had to be shed. A death had to take place that we might have forgiveness of sins.

And so that really lays out for us Jesus' death. I think it also, we've already addressed some of the implications of it. What does it mean for us? I really want to focus in on one aspect of this, although I know it's a minor part, but I think it's important for us to understand as we see Jesus' death.

Look with me at verse 51. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn into from top to bottom. I want to just for a moment consider, what does this mean? Why does that matter? I want you to understand that clearly. First, what was this curtain that's being spoken of? Well, you're probably aware, but the curtain separated the temple, the rest of the temple from the Holy of Holies, where God's presence was to dwell.

[21 : 59] The curtain was about 60 feet tall. Again, you're probably aware about 10 feet is a story when we talk about a two-story house. I think when I compared this before with you all, I pointed you to the hospital in Hazleton.

It's six stories tall. So if you've been in that or you've seen the outside of it, the curtain was six stories tall, 60 feet in the air, four inches thick, braided or twisted thread or material.

So four inches thick, you think about a two-by-four, which we know aren't really four inches today, but the exterior wall of the building you might think of or your house, typically studded by two-by-four, so a little thicker than that, made out of braided thread 60 feet up in the air.

And so it's been estimated that it weighed somewhere around six tons, 12,000 pounds in material or fabric. When it was carried, this is back even looking to the tabernacle, but when it was carried, it took 300 priests to carry the curtain.

And then Josephus, who was a first-century Jewish historian, says that the horses, that horses tied to each side could not pull it apart. And so as we understand this, this isn't just, oops, it kind of tore.

[23 : 21] Like maybe your clothing may tear if you move the wrong way or you get snagged on something. This is a massive piece of fabric. What was the purpose of the curtain? I mentioned this a little bit already, that the presence of God dwelt behind the curtain, but that doesn't especially tell us what the purpose of the curtain is.

It tells us a little bit about the Holy of Holies. But the purpose of the curtain was really to separate man from the presence of God, which was a good thing, because men are sinners and God is holy. And so the fear, the reason for the curtain was to protect man from God, lest somehow, accidentally, that those in the temple would look in or be exposed to the glory of God and be consumed.

I mentioned this passage earlier, but Hebrews 1.13, your eyes are too pure to look on the evil. And Isaiah 59, 1 through 2, behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dulled, that it cannot hear.

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he does not hear. And so there's a need for a sinful man to be separated from God.

[24 : 46] Again, I think, unless we die. An expression of this going further back is Adam and Eve in the garden covering themselves with clothing of some sort.

Why? Well, they're ashamed before God, but they know that there's something that's separating them. There was unhindered fellowship with God. Now there has to be some hindrance. There has to be some separation made between them.

We also understand that only the high priest could enter into the holy place, and that was only once a year. Hebrews 9, 6 through 7. These preparations having thus been made, and it's talking about all the arrangements of the temple that I've already been discussing, the priests go regularly into the first section performing their ritual duties, but into the second, that's the holy of holies, only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself, and for the unintentional sins of the people.

And so one time a year, one man in all the world was allowed to go beyond the curtain into the holy of holies. And for him to go, he had to bring a sacrifice for himself and for the people.

And implied, at least, is if he doesn't bring a sacrifice, if his sin isn't covered, then he would die. And no one else, not any of the other priests, were allowed to go back beyond that curtain.

[26 : 12] And so again, the curtain was placed there for our protection. God would be dishonored, and we would be consumed if it weren't for the curtain. But what we read happens when Jesus dies is the curtain is torn.

Now, if you've understood all this, the response ought to be, you should be pretty scared if you're in the temple and you saw that happen. Now, I picture people running from the temple when the curtain's torn, lest the glory of God be exposed to them and then die.

That's not what happens for a few reasons. I want to talk about what those are. We read earlier, providentially, in our scripture reading, 2 Samuel 7, David's desire to build a house for the Lord. God's response was, all this time, I haven't dwelt within a house. God didn't need a house. Right? He's omnipresent.

He doesn't need a house for his special presence to dwell in. But it's an honoring thing to want to build a house for the Lord and ultimately, it's Solomon who gets to build this house for God. So one indication or one implication of the destruction of the curtain, the tearing open the curtain is, God's not there.

[27 : 28] And we know God's omnipresent. I want to be careful. This is special presence isn't limited to the Holy of Holies anymore. God's presence almost, as it were, will release.

There's no house. There's no need for a dwelling place for the Lord anymore. Why would that be the case? You may remember Jesus when he encounters the Samaritan woman. She asks, she acknowledges, look, we Samaritans worship here.

The Jews worship in Jerusalem. What's the right place to worship? Jesus' response is, there's coming a day and now is when the true followers of God will worship him in spirit and truth.

And I think what we're seeing here, first off, is the fulfillment of this. We're no longer limited to a place. You guys know there are Muslims that still have to travel to Mecca to do their worship. We understand even looking back at the Old Testament, all these Jews, no matter where they scattered in the world, you don't want to go too far because you've got to come back three times a year to Jerusalem to worship God where he is in his temple.

[28 : 38] That's ended when the curtain's torn. Why? Because there's something that is completely different that's going on here. Again, in times, eschatological realities are coming to fulfillment.

The kingdom is advancing to the ends of the world. Satan has been bound in the death of Jesus Christ so that the kingdom can advance. And now, as the kingdom goes to the end of the world, they're not going to have to come back to Jerusalem to worship, but they can worship him wherever they are in spirit and truth.

Again, that tells us even the church here, this building, there's nothing special about the building. GFC's sanctuary isn't a holy sanctuary. It's a place where people gather.

But we know wherever God's people gather, where there's two or three gathered, there God's spirit is with us. So his spirit meets us, his spirit indwells Christians, and we can worship God wherever we are.

And so that now, that means that we have access not just to the earthly type, I wanted to deal more with this, but it would take way too long, but you understand that the temple is a replica of heavenly realities.

[29 : 46] They're given a specific pattern to build the temple in. Why? Because it mimics something that's real in heaven. And so, we're given access not to a type, a shadow, an imitation of the real temple in heaven, but by the death of Jesus Christ and the tearing of the curtain, we're given access into the true holy of holies, to God the Father in heaven.

This is Hebrews 10, 19 through 22. Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, it's never been in all history that anyone would have confidence.

I imagine even the high priest would be shaking in fear as he enters the holy of holies. But he's saying something different for us. We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil.

That is, his flesh. And since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed.

With pure water. And so what Hebrews is telling us is that Jesus' death has opened for us the most holy place. The curtain that protected people from drawing near to God, by his death, Jesus has provided access to the Father.

[31 : 19] The curtain's not needed. Because of the blood of Jesus Christ that covers us, sinful men can go into the presence of a holy God now. That means we have immediate access to God the Father in prayer.

We don't go through a human mediator. We don't depend on the priest to enter into the Holy of Holies for us and make atonement for our sin.

Jesus has done that so that now we can go to God the Father. Father, I know we live in a Catholic town so let me just address the fact that also means we don't pray to saints.

We don't go to a mediator. We don't need Mary to pray to God the Father on our behalf. even to argue for that to make that as an issue in many ways diminish the finished work of Jesus Christ. What Jesus has accomplished with the tearing of the veil gives us access to God the Father. We don't need someone else to put a veil between us and the Father. We can pray to God the Father.

[32 : 24] So we have immediate access to God the Father in prayer. I would say as well in terms of a mediator we have Jesus Christ as a mediator.

We'll see in a minute but as a greater high priest and so we go to God the Father knowing that Jesus continually is mediating that relationship with the Father. I think this we have to understand this also means that we one day will enter into the presence of God the Father spiritually when we die to be absent from the bodies to be present with the Lord and so we know when we die we have access to God the Father and we know that one day when Christ returns and we have glorified bodies we will dwell forever in the presence of God the Father without fear and with confidence and we're told that in that new earth there will be no temple and there will be no sun.

God will be our temple God will be the light of that place it also means that if you'll well let me say it this way the new earth is described in cubicle measurements because so is the Holy of Holies and I think what's being taught to us in God's word about the new earth is that all of us will dwell within the Holy of Holies the new earth will be a Holy of Holies it will be where God's presence dwells and rather than one man going once a year all of us will forever dwell in the presence of our God this is what Christ has accomplished in his death in the tearing of the curtain and again it's not a type that we will enter into but we will be there before the throne of God in his very presence in the true holy place that none of us could have entered before because of our sin and so we're told back in the Hebrews passage I read a moment ago that now we have confidence to enter we boldly enter we don't have to fear dying when we enter the presence of Christ if we're Christians why excuse me when we enter the presence of the Father why because Christ has already died in our place we're not going to die too he's already died in our place our sin has been paid for we need not fear rejection we can talk more about this as we look at

Jesus' resurrection but Christ has paid for our sins he's paid our rejection he's taken that upon himself and we know from the resurrection that God the Father has accepted the payment that

Jesus has made and so all we need to do is enter confidently into the presence of God the Father what a blessing that is I mentioned earlier that I would touch on Jesus as our mediator I've said a little bit about the new covenant already but let me read this is Hebrews 12 for you have not come to what may be touched a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words may the heavens beg that no further message be spoken to them so he's talking about Mount Sinai for they could not endure the order that was given if even a beast touches the mountain it shall be stoned indeed so terrifying was the sight that Moses said I tremble with fear but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God the heavenly Jerusalem and to innumerable angels in festival gathering and to the assembly of the firstborn who were enrolled in heaven and to God the judge of all and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel and so we're not coming to a type or a shadow and notice how it describes the type or shadow in Mount Sinai when God the Father appeared to Moses you remember what happened if even an animal touched the mountain it died so holy was God's presence and only Moses again representative as it were as a high priest one person is allowed to go up there and he cannot even look on God's face lest he die and so he looks on the back side glory of God God reveals a bit of his glory and you remember what happened when he came down from the mountain the people didn't want to look on him they were afraid to look on the reflected glory of God out of fear it was scary we might die by looking at Moses who looked upon a reflected glory of God so a reflection of a reflection of a reflection is enough to leave them in fear and praying that they don't have to keep looking at him so they ask him to put a curtain or a veil over his face and what Hebrews is saying that's not what we're coming to what are we coming to not to a veil or a reflection of a reflection of a reflection but we're coming to the very presence of God in heaven which do you think should be scarier right

[37 : 39] Mount Zion or heaven itself he says we through the blood of Christ have come into the greater reality and again remember not in fear but we come boldly what a change is taking place how is that possible well again the mediation of Jesus Christ 1 Timothy 2 5 for there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men the man Christ Jesus Hebrews 9 24 for Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands which are copies of the true things but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf so we can go because Christ has gone for us and finally Hebrews 4 14-16 since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens Jesus the son of God let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need and so again with confidence we draw near and what do we find when we draw near it's not fear it's not death it says that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need so I really wanted to focus in and we're going to come back to this in application but I wanted to focus in on this because I think it's so important let me briefly go through what else we see in this there are a few other miracles that are mentioned verse 51 as Jesus dies there's an earthquake

I think we see here even the creation itself testifying to the innocence of the son of man and the guilt of those who condemned him to death even the earth cries out we know as well that the earth is yearning for its redemption now as the son of man dies we see even the creation responding to that I thought about as well Jesus' words in Luke 19 40 you remember where Jesus said he answered them he said I tell you if these were silent these are the kids that are singing his praises praising him if these were silent the very stones would cry out we think about that sometimes imagine what would it be like for the stones to sing praises to God here you go the earth quakes praising Christ condemning those who condemned him 52 to 53 the one that you guys have all been waiting on and wanting to hear answers about the tombs are opened up I don't know what it is but right now culturally in Hollywood or with television there's this great fascination with zombies today right so everyone's wondering what is this all about when we see zombies or whatever you want to call them here happening just briefly touch on it my desire is to come back to this a little bit when we look at Jesus' resurrection look at the passage the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many so something about Jesus' sacrifice causes some to come back to life and it says after his resurrection they came

out of the tomb so we don't know if they came to life when he died and they stayed alive there in the tomb for three it's not clear to us exactly I'm not going to try to explain that because God's word doesn't give that to us I thought here's an area where we wish God would have given us a little more and he doesn't oblige us but what we do see is that after

Jesus' resurrection they come out of the tombs so it be appropriate when we it's evidence that Jesus is conquering death the defeat of death that when he's resurrected there would be bodies come out of the tomb and it's a foretaste of what we all will experience one day so there's what we'll talk about more in the future but we understand Jesus has defeated death 1 Corinthians 15 55 through 56 death is swallowed up in victory oh death where is your victory oh death where is your sting the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law but thanks be to God who gives us a victory through our Lord Jesus Christ so Jesus has defeated even death and he's given us the victory over that let me just close with a few points of application

I want you to see that the events of Jesus look at verse 54 when the centurion and those who were with him keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place they were filled with awe and said truly this was the son of God and so we have some Roman soldiers the centurion and those who were told to watch over the tomb excuse me watch over the cross of Jesus and so they witness all these things the response is worship and believe that he really is who he said he was they were filled with awe and said truly this was the son of God I think those who were convinced were Roman soldiers maybe there's some significance to this they didn't have the religious background that perhaps was a hindrance to them a baggage to others the

[43 : 42] Jews who expected certain things we talked about already the messianic expectation was that Jesus would defeat Rome and to see the Messiah dying on the cross led many to believe this couldn't possibly be the Messiah and so here we have some who don't have that misunderstanding and with open eyes they look upon it and their responses want to believe you understand as well that if these are the centurions who are tasked with watching over Jesus at the cross these are also likely the ones that we talked about in a previous sermon who mocked Jesus spit in his face and struck him these are likely the same ones and now they've turned from mocking to believe and it led them to it says they were filled with awe and I said already this is really just a word for worship they were led to worship Christ and I think we've just briefly even though we weren't physically there to witness it ourselves we briefly from

God's word have looked at Jesus death today how do we respond to that how do you respond to that well my hope is the response of everyone in this room would be worship for some of you that's going to mean that you first join with the centurion those who witness it and you believe Jesus truly to be the son of God that he is who he said he was that what he said he accomplished in dying for sin he truly accomplished that if you're going to have forgiveness of sin and access to God the father it's only through the blood of Jesus Christ and so my prayer and hope is that you'll put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ that you will believe that he is who he said he was and then you will join those of you who already have believed in praising him and being all of what we see here at the cross but secondly what I really focused on in the message was the curtain being torn and so I want to encourage you as we look at application that you have access to the father by the blood of Jesus Christ by his death you have been granted access to God the father I read for you earlier Hebrews 4 14 through 16 we have a high priest who passed through the heavens Jesus the son of God and it made some application for us it says let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need speaking of his prayer let us pray to God the father that we may find mercy and grace to help us in time of need and so the application that the author of Hebrews makes and that I want to go to God the father we know that ultimately this means that we'll be with him forever in his presence but that's not our experience right now though we have the spirit indwelling us so our experience right now is that we have access to the father I think about a year and a half ago my dad passing away and when you lose that relationship you know you learn to talk to them you wish you could call them back you can just call them up and talk to them and

I think here we have access to not a human father but God the father and how much do we neglect the access that we have the ability we have to pray to him do we take it for granted that we the application I think for us is that we are not to neglect prayer whether private or public and I want to call it a rebuke an encouragement maybe a combination of both we have recently started back gathering for corporate prayer versus doing it online and I want to encourage you all to come out

and join us for corporate prayer this is what we're doing we're speaking to God the father who provides for us mercy and grace to help us in time of need why would we neglect that why would we not want to participate in that do we somehow imagine that we don't really have needs we're not in need of

God's help what I often find in my life is that I pray more after things really go bad up until that point I think I got it completely and then I realize I don't and I start praying I said to you before the realization that we all ought to have is that none of us have it under our control all of us at every moment of our life are needy for God and his sovereignty to watch over us and so we ought to be foremost in prayer and not neglecting this great privilege that we have through Christ we praise him for what we see here in his death but praise him as well for the curtain being torn we're not limited to one place where we travel to worship we can worship God wherever we are we have private worship at home corporate worship here together as a church and we can pray to

[49 : 09] God the Father wherever we are and whenever pray continually without ceasing and so that blessing ought prayer dear Heavenly Father we do thank you that through Christ we have this great privilege that we can pray to you even now that he has opened for us the holy of holies not the type the curtain the shadow but the real holy of holies in heaven that we can enter with confidence and boldness in your presence and so Lord we even now want to boldly ask that you would work in the hearts of all who are gathered here for those who don't know you we pray that you would work in their hearts that they would believe that Jesus truly is your son even as the centurions and others have Lord work in their heart to save them and Lord we pray that for all of us that you would give us a heart to worship you that we would pray on our own and that we would not neglect praying together as a body

Lord that we would see that this is how you empower your church that this church corporately and all of us individually are in need of your help of your grace and your mercy and that we would together go before you in boldness and confidence seeking that help that grace that mercy Lord we thank you that not we know that because of Christ you so graciously answer those we thank you and give you the glory in Christ's name amen