

Father, Into Your Hands...

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[0 : 00] As we come to study God's word, we are going to return to Luke, Luke chapter 23, where we have! The five sayings of Christ that are recorded in this passage.

! Just as a recap and for those that maybe haven't been here in week one we looked at Jesus' response you have said so when Pilate questioned him are you the king of the Jews and we then saw how Pilate on three separate occasions declared Jesus innocent but still handed him over for crucifixion we then in week two looked at the compassion and the love of Jesus for the people as he warned them of what was to come and we looked at how that warning is for each and every one of us as we read the warnings in the Bible of the wrath and the judgment that is to come and the importance of preparing for that in week three we were pointed to Jesus the one who intercedes for us as he said on the cross Father forgive them for they know not what they do and last week we were reminded of the promise that if we put our trust in Jesus that on death we will be with him in paradise this morning as we turn to verses 44 to 49 we'll see a number of things mentioned in the passage and we'll hopefully look through the passage under three headings the darkness and the curtain the declaration and the confirming and the dispersed and the centurion and just before we turn to read God's word let us pray again dear heavenly Father we thank you again for your word and we pray that as we now seek to study it together that we would know what it is to be still and know that you are God that our hearts and our minds would be still before you and that we would hear each one of us speak our and hear our alike what you have to say to us through your word and that we would indeed learn from it and be changed by it for your honour and for your glory in Jesus name

Amen Luke chapter 23 verse 44 the death of Jesus it was now about the sixth hour and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour while the sunlights failed and the curtain of the temple was torn in two then Jesus calling out with a loud voice said Father into your hands I commit my spirit having said this he breathed his last now when the centurion saw what had taken place he praised God saying certainly this man was innocent and all the crowds that assembled had assembled for the spectacle when they saw what had taken place returned home beating their breasts and all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things the darkness and the curtain we read there in verse 44 it was now about the sixth hour and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour while the sun's light failed there was darkness over the whole land for three hours before the death of God's son his one and only son a death that was the ultimate sacrifice for our sin is there a significance to the fact that there was darkness for three hours if we were to turn back to Genesis 22 we see recounted for us the story of Abram going out to sacrifice Isaac and I'll just read a few verses for you and after these things

God tested Abram and said to him Abram and he said here I am and he said take your son your only son Isaac whom you love and go to the land of Moriah and offer them there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will shall tell you so Abram rose early in the morning saddled his donkey and took two young men with him and his son Isaac and he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place which God had told him on the third day Abram lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar off we can only imagine those of us that have children the dark cloud that would have sat over Abram for these three days as he had to walk out to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son his one and only son picture of him there walking with his head bowed and only on the third day did he lift up his head or lift up his eyes to see the place that he was to go afar off three days three hours and we go to the book of Exodus chapter 10 where we read the ninth plague was before the death of the firstborn in Egypt chapter 22 again sorry chapter 10 of Genesis in verse 22 so Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven and there was pitch darkness in all the

land of Egypt three days they did not see one another nor did anyone arise from his place for three days but all the people of Israel had light where they lived commentators tell us that the darkness that covered the land at the time of the crucifixion was not an eclipse as the Passover which was been celebrated at that time occurred at the time of a full moon as with the ninth plague this was an act of God the sixth hour was the middle of the day as it says the light of the sun failed living here we know what it is to experience power cuts everything goes dark inside the house you can imagine stepping outside the church today as the service finishes at midday and being met with complete darkness in those days people wouldn't have had streetlights people in their homes wouldn't have had candles lit because it was the middle of the day complete darkness and as we read in Exodus they did not see one another nor did anyone rise from his place for three days it was as if the world stood still they did not see one another nor did anyone rise from his place for three days between the sixth and the ninth hour there was complete darkness darkness over the land people who had gone to watch the crucifixion or those going about their business up until the sixth hour would have stood still in amazement and bewilderment at what was happening no warning just complete darkness the other week there we were sitting having our breakfast and all of a sudden mobile phones started going off because they were testing the warning system in those days there would have been no warning no telling what people were to do just complete darkness then we've got to ask ourselves what happened during that period of darkness what happened during that three hours what we find out is that a transaction took place a transaction that took place that then takes us to the curtain what do we read in the second half of verse 45 and the curtain of the temple was torn in two in some of the other gospels it tells us it was torn from the top to the bottom what was the significance of the curtain and what was the transaction that took place when you go home I'd encourage you to read Hebrews 9 and 10 I'm going to select a few verses which hopefully will help us understand what took place during that three hours what was the significance of the curtain [9 : 51] Exodus 26 gives a full account of the construction of the temple and again it'd be helpful for you to look at that and read it but Hebrews 9 verses 1 to 3 now even in the first covenant there was regulations for worship and an earthly place for holiness for a tent was prepared the first section in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the presence it is called the holy place behind the second curtain was a second section called the most holy place and what was the significance of the most holy place Hebrews 9 68 preparations having thus been made the priest goes regularly into the first section performing their ritual duties but into the second 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 by this the holy spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first curtain or the first section is still standing verses 11 to 14 and here is where we see the transaction but when

Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands that is not of this creation he entered once for all into the holy places not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood thus securing an eternal redemption for if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctify for the purification of the flesh how much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God purifying our conscience from dead works to serve the living God and then the assurance that is now ours Hebrews 10 19 to 23 therefore brothers since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of

Jesus by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain that through his flesh and since we have a great priest over the house of God let us draw near and with her true heart and full assurance of faith with her heart sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and her bodies washed with pure water do we have that assurance this morning it's right that we come and we draw near to God but do we come with that full assurance of faith don't just look at the cross this morning understand and accept what was done on that day during that period of three hours of darkness a transaction took place Jesus Jesus' blood was shed for each and every one of us that we may come into the holy of holies sprinkled by the blood of the lamb the darkness and the curtain then takes us to the declaration and the confirming verse 46 then

Jesus calling out with a loud voice Jesus had now been hanging on the cross for three hours over three hours we'd seen in previous weeks they'd been up all night he'd been mocked he'd been beaten spar upon stripes were put on his back his physical strength was such that Simon of Serene

had to carry his cross but now we read then Jesus called out with a loud voice significant enough for Luke to record this the men beside him would have been quiet except for the groans of the pain and the anguish that they felt as they hung on the cross there would have been a buzz within the crowd that were there the lights had been out for three hours the lights had come back on the sun had returned to its full strength but what

Jesus had to say he wanted everybody to hear and he called out in a loud voice he made a declaration and what was that declaration the declaration was father into your hands I commit my spirit maybe asking what's the significance of this as a statement from Jesus it's a confirming what do you mean it's a confirming it's a confirming of a prophecy that we can read in Isaiah 53 Isaiah 53 in verse 11 and 12 out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied by his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities therefore I will divide him a portion with the many and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he poured out his life to death and was numbered with the transgressors and he bore the sin of many and he makes an intercession for the transgressors did you see it there because he poured out his life he poured out his soul to death it was a choice we read it or Neil read it for us in John chapter 10 for this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again no one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord

[16:43] I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again this charge I have received from my father the time of Jesus his death was his choosing we see that once he had made the declaration we see that he breathed his last he didn't gasp for breath he didn't slowly ebb away he made his declaration and he breathed his last why does Luke record this for us Luke was a doctor he would have seen many people die before he was writing about Jesus but having been told about Jesus death by those that witnessed it Luke recognised realised that there was something different about the death of Jesus death didn't take Jesus

Jesus gave himself up to death we read it in Hebrews 9 14 Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God we thought earlier as we looked at the passages in Hebrew of Jesus as the ultimate Passover lamb and this gives us insight into and helps explain something of Jesus death we learn from the other gospels that he died quicker than would have been expected when Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate Pilate inquired and was surprised to learn that Jesus had died so quickly it's the other thing that we notice in some of the other gospels the soldiers didn't have to break Jesus legs to speed up his death and again what's the significance of this again if we go back to the

Passover Exodus 12 46 tells us when the Passover was instituted and the instruction was given for the treatment of the Passover lamb Exodus 12 46 it shall be eaten in one house you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house and you shall not break any of its bones if we sang on through Psalm 34 we would have sung the verses many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivers him out of them all he keeps all his bones not one of them is broken many of the many are the afflictions of the righteous and as we know from what we have read and what we understand there was only one that was truly righteous Jesus was the pure spotless lamb of God the only one who was without spot or without blemish he was the one who came to be sin for us his body was not broken he was was and was to remain the perfect sacrifice for each and every one of us do you see that this morning that this was the sacrifice that was made for each and every one of us he set an example in his final words father into your hands

I commit my spirit have you given that prayer much thought about committing your life into the hands of God Jesus was a perfect example for each and every one of us the prayer is that each one of us would come and commit our lives into his hands this brings us to our final point the dispersed and the centurion verses 47 to 49 now when the centurion saw what had taken place he praised God saying certainly this man was innocent and all the crowds that assembled for the spectacle when they saw what had taken place returned home beating their breasts and all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things we work in backwards from verse 49 to verse 47 simple question I want you to consider as we come to the end of our sermon is who are you are you one of the group in verse 49 standing at a distance are you among the group that came to see the spectacle and left beating your breasts or are you like the centurion verse 49 all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from

Galilee stood at a distance have you been attending church for years you would count yourself an acquaintance of Jesus you've got to know him over these years over the time that you've been coming you've maybe been reading your bible at home but when the bread and the wine are passed next Sunday to remember his death you'll be watching from a distance you'll watch and not participate verse 48 or are you like the crowds that assembled for the spectacle and then they saw what had taken place returned home beating their breasts you're here and you'll maybe be here next Sunday you may be been here many times before you see what is happening and only as you leave do you realize the significance of what you have witnessed and you go home beating your chest in despair or are you like the centurion who stood there at the cross saw what had taken place and praised

[23 : 29] God saying certainly this was an innocent man centurion had a duty to be there centurion had been there many times before he had witnessed crucifixion after crucifixion in many ways was probably hardened to it but he went home a different man that day he had been to the cross of Christ and in seeing how Jesus died on the cross he praised God and said certainly this was an innocent man we looked before at how Pilate had declared Jesus innocent and in the first testimony that we read as the centurion praises God he says certainly this was an innocent man the spotless lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world he saw the innocence of Jesus he saw how Jesus died and it caused him to praise

God he said earlier with the young ones that we could have stopped in the bay at St Kilda and just sat and watched and thought how beautiful a place but it was only when we answered the call of the warden to go forward and put our feet on the island and walked among the houses that were there did we really experience what St Kilda was like are you going to stand and look at the cross and stand at a distance as Jesus stands with his arms wide open and says come come to me are you going to walk away and beat your breasts or are you going to be like the centurion who praised God and recognised that Jesus was an innocent man that had died for him let us pray you