

## 6 Hours

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Week 4, March 10, 2024

### **What separates us from God is sin.**

If Jesus does not pay for your sins, you will.

*(33) At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. (34) And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani" (which means, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"). (Mark 15-NIV)*

Let me invite you to take out your sermon notes. Today at the end of the message we are going to add a worship piece. I will try to leave some time on the clock, because after we look closely at Jesus death on the Cross, today you are going to want to worship God because of Jesus Christ atoning death.

Because of those 6 hours, Jesus substitutionary death, has the power to deliver you from sin. Any time. Any place. Any sin.

We come to the final hour of Jesus earthly life. Here we see the most horrific experience Jesus endured, separation from God and the carrying of the sins of the world-past, present, and future.

*He suffered in silence, content to let God set things right. He used his servant body to carry our sins to the Cross so we could be rid of sin, free to live the right way. His wounds became your healing. (1 Peter 2:24-MSg)*

So, I want to give you the opportunity because many of you are going to want to express gratitude and thanksgiving. Some may even want to do business with God. So don't leave early and miss out on the power and presence of God. He always shows up in a special way.

**One more note.** It is in these extended times of worship; God often heals people and provides power to deliver.

So don't miss your opportunity to ask God to heal you of sickness, sins, bitterness, resentment, addictions, emotional pain. Ok, let's get started.

**As you age** it is imperative that you take care of your health. Emotional Health. Relational health. And physical health. Several years ago, my cholesterol was peaking and spiking at around 300. It should hover around 125-175. My psychiatrist son, Kenny told me, "Dad, we can have you for 5 months or 5 years." It is up to you! That was my wakeup call. So, I took a deep dive into the world of nutritional health, and after climbing Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa, I moved towards a more plant-based lifestyle of eating.

Along the way, I noticed in my research that many health-conscious experts suggest you make substitutions along the way. Many of the labels I read suggested I make a substitute. I bet you have seen this on some product labels. The word is substitute.

**Substitute chocolate.** Friends' carob is not chocolate. You will not find in any universe a carob that is a chocolate.

**Substitute sugar.** That means taste does not matter.

**Substitute beef.** If you see that, run. There is no such thing as a tofu or garden burger. This is a marketing myth. Hamburgers are only made of hamburger. Ham and burger. Right?

**Substitutes** often fall short. Imagine going to a concert, and someone comes out onto stage at show time and tells you, "We are sorry to announce, U2, can't make it, but we are **substituting** U3."

Or sorry, "the Beatles will not be able to play tonight, but we are **substituting** the Crickets."

In many cases, substitutes just don't work. One day Jesus endured 6 hours of unimaginable suffering and pain. He did this so you could have a relationship with God, in this life and the life to come.

But, prior to that, and especially in the Old Testament, God accepted the sacrifice of an animal. God accepted the animal substitute to cover your pile of sins. Then God announced, animals are out, my Son Jesus atoning death is the **only substitute** I will accept if you want your sins forgiven and you want heaven as your home.

*11-18 Every priest goes to work at the altar each day, offers the same old sacrifices year in, year out, and never makes a dent in the sin problem. As a priest, Christ made a single sacrifice for sins, and that was it! Then he sat down right beside God and waited for his enemies to cave in. It was a perfect sacrifice (substitute) by a perfect person to perfect some very imperfect people. (Hebrews 11-MSG)*

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Return with me to Calvary. The hill that Jesus Christ died on. A place where Jesus hung, mutilated, humiliated, elevated, lacerated, isolated, unappreciated, and violated. Jesus hung on a cross from 9am, in the morning to 3pm in the afternoon. The...

First 3 hours Jesus offers words of forgiveness, assurance, and love.

The word of **forgiveness**, *Father forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.*

The word of **assurance**, *today you will be with me in paradise*. If you did not hear that message last week, go listen to it on-line. I want you to have absolute assurance, rock solid confidence, steely eyed certainty, you are going to heaven when you die!

Then we looked at the word of **love**. Which is about relationships. Jesus told Mary his mother, John my most loyal and loving follower will take care of your needs.

**Just a sidebar.** Church history tells us that after John returned from exile on the Island of Patmos, in the Mediterranean Sea, where God showed John the end of the world and he recorded those events in the final book of the bible called the Book of Revelation, John pastored a church in Ephesus, Turkey. Sitting on the front row each week as John preached about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Mary sat listening intently.

**Forgiveness. Assurance. Love.** That is what the first 3 hours is all about. 9 o'clock. 10 o'clock. 11 o'clock. At 12pm, noon the climate changes. The weather changes. The temperature changes. The light changes.

### **At 12, everything goes dark!**

Think about this for a moment. Isn't this time of the day some of the brightest? Some of the lightest? The time between 12pm-3pm?

It is often the hottest part of the day. After Jesus had been hanging on the cross for 3 hours, a supernatural darkness descends upon Jesus Christ.

A puzzling midday darkness enshrouded Golgotha.

For the next 3 hours, the hill is quiet. It was not still, but quiet. For the first time, there is no noise. Not a sound. The hustle of the crowd, the busyness of the guards, the clanking and clamor of soldiers subsides when the darkness drops. Darkness descends. A puzzling midday darkness enshrouded Jesus.

No more ridicule. No more mockery. No more insults. No more words.

One by one, the crowd disappeared. Descended for home. Even the soldiers hunkered down on a storm riddled hill. Their only protection from the elements was a robe, a helmet, and a spear.

An eerie evil presence moved along the ground. A sinister serpent slithered around the base of the cross. A haunting and unholy existence appeared in the darkness.

As minutes became hours between 12pm -3pm, three men seemed dead. Labored breathing was the only sound you could hear in the dark mist. Minutes become hours. All three men on their crosses seemed dead.

An occasional gasp would remind you; death was about grab another victim. At times in Israel's history, the God who possessed all authority manipulated the weather, the sun and even time itself to work his eternal plan. Let's review for a moment God's power over nature in a boat. In a valley. At a staircase.

*<sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Mark 4-NIV)*

*On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel:*

*"Sun, stand still over Gibeon,  
and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."  
<sup>13</sup> So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,  
till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, (Josh 10-NIV)*

*<sup>7</sup> "This is the Lord's sign to you that the Lord will do what he has promised: <sup>8</sup> I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz." So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down. (Is 38-NIV)*

While natural disasters, take lives, and disrupt our world, God will at times take control of his universe, and use his natural laws of nature for his intended purposes.

*(<sup>33</sup>) At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.*

**And this is such an occasion. Light is suspended. And darkness has descended.** It is like night in the middle of the day. We are creeping closer to 3pm, on the day of Jesus' death by crucifixion.

God makes it dark in the middle of the day, the word is *skotos*, darkness.

The word means to darken, obscure.

To blot out.

To blank out.

God is obscuring the cross from the sight of any human. Even those just feet away, attending the crucifixion.

The darkness was like a curtain that fell over the scene. Fell over the savior. Fell over Satan's sinister activity. This would be the final torture Jesus would experience.

What was happening to Jesus was so evil, God dropped a curtain of darkness hiding what Jesus was experiencing.

In a way, God was saying this is so bad, so evil, so terrible to watch, God has decided to hide these events from the sight of mankind. God tells us, he decided to darken the setting. God will not even allow mankind to look on the most horrific and horrifying of heavens activity.

Jesus is sacrificing himself for the sins of the world, and it is such an ugly sight, that God hides it. The total accumulation of all of mankind's sins, is deposited onto the second member of the trinity. Onto the only person who ever lived a sinless life. Onto God Himself-the Christ.

Suddenly, Jesus can stand the spiritual and emotional suffering, no more.

**And silence is broken.** From the depths and darkness of the hill, comes Jesus' reaction to those moments.

Then Jesus screamed, cried out, the word order in Greek is voice (phone, we get the word phonograph), mega (large or gigantic), cried out, shouted, Jesus screamed it, (ana-Boaw).

And what is the 4<sup>th</sup>, series of words Jesus screamed, <sup>(34)</sup> *And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani" (which means, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"). (Mark 15-NIV)*

As if someone had yanked Jesus' hair. Or perhaps Jesus' head had slammed against the cross, that bore his name. Like a knife cutting through paper, the scream cut through the darkness.

Standing as straight as the nails would permit, Jesus screamed, *"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani."*

This is the most shocking of all Jesus words on the cross.

Perhaps we can understand (1) father forgive them, (2) today you will be with me in heaven, and (3) John take care of mom, but this one.

Now, Jesus says in his raspy and scratchy voice...His voice was raspy and scratchy, Jesus continued, *"My God, My God."*

What do we see happening? Words of rejection. Words of abandonment. Words of dissertation. In a volcano of erupting pain, Jesus questioned God like a defense attorney questions a witness, *"Why have you forsaken me?"*

Let me pause for a moment and bring this home. Perhaps in a small way, you can identify with Jesus at this moment.

Because you too have experienced abandonment.

You too have experienced rejection.

You too have experienced dissertation.

Some have felt the sting of rejection and abandonment. It is a pain like no other. Some of you growing up, like me you were rejected or abandoned by a parent. Some of you as an adult have been rejected by a marriage partner.

Years ago, a man put a child in a store basket, wheeled the child into a Walmart, and then turned around and walked away. He left that child abandoned, forsaken, and rejected. Even thinking about it is hard to comprehend.

But God turned away from Jesus because during those moments Jesus carried all of the sins, of every person who has lived and will live regardless of severity.

Because of those 6 hours, Jesus substitutionary death, has the power to deliver you from sin. Any time. Any place. Any sin.

My sins, Hitlers sins. Your sins, Herod's sins.

**Jesus carried the sins** of good people and evil people. The mistake that good people make is trusting in their goodness. Because all have sinned, everyone needs to acknowledge only Jesus Christ righteousness can ever make them good.

**Jesus carried the sins** of those who released Zyklon-b gases that dropped through small openings in the ceilings of concentration camps like Dachau, Germany killing 2000 people at a time.

When the guards opened the doors they found piles of naked men, women, and children in the corners. They had attempted to climb on top of each other in an effort to flee the choking clouds of the gas as it descended.

**Jesus carried the sins** of those in the Soviet Union who were responsible for the deaths of between 20-26 million people between the years of 1917 to 1989. Names like Siberia, the gulags are etched into world history.

**Jesus carried the sins** of Chinese communists who killed between 26-30 million counterrevolutionaries who died in China's prison system. Some Chinese emperors bragged in public about burying alive over 46,000 scholars.

Humans do horrendous evil.

**Jesus carried the sins** of those who in Argentina between the years of 1976-1983, killed tens of thousands by torture, stripping people naked and throwing them out of planes into the ocean.

**Jesus carried the sins** of Iraqi troops who used nerve gas on the Kurds, and Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge who killed millions to remove all western influence, including educators and intellectuals in an attempt to return Cambodia to an agrarian culture.

Human cruelty is not only possible, one day it will be punishable.

**Jesus carried the sins** of those who committed heinous and evil acts against those alive, but also against the unborn. Americans and others around the world, using a variety of methods to abort, have killed more than 63 million babies since 1973.

Sadly, and wrongly, the prevailing mentality is that such killing is not so bad. The majority of those who participate in such killings will often find a way to justify such actions.

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Sin. Sin. Sin. No matter how evil, my coveting my neighbor's corvette, or you are coveting your neighbor's lawnmower, every sin ever committed was atoned for in hours 12pm – 3pm, while Jesus died on a cross. And this fact, is shocking and eye opening to most people when they hear this truth:

If a person chooses to reject Christ, they go to hell with their sins paid for. (1 John 2:1)

<sup>2</sup> *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, **and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.***

Ok, let's go back to Jesus in the dark, Jesus carrying mankind's depravity (sin) and Jesus about to become the debt for our sinful behavior, beliefs, thoughts and attitudes, actions, and destructive ways.

*My God, My God why have you forsaken me?* The word there means to reject me. You have abandoned me. You have deserted me.

What does abandonment do to a person's life? People with abandonment issues struggle to enjoy healthy relationships and often are anxious or fearful that they'll be left by those who are closest to them.

In Jesus final days of ministry, he was abandoned and rejected by everyone. Judas betrayed. The Jews rejected Jesus and called for the release of Barabbas. The disciples fled. All

accept John and some loyal and loving women. They all left because they were afraid, they are going to get arrested and killed.

*My God, My God why have you forsaken me?* Every time Jesus refers to God in the bible, he calls him father. This is the only time in Jesus' life, where he does not call God Father.

At this moment, the relationship is broken. God is holy, he cannot look on sin, and Jesus is atoning for my sins and yours. I want you to put a sin on the table as we move toward our conclusion. Put it in the front of your brain. Name it. Acknowledge it is a sin. Because that day, Jesus' atoning blood canceled that sins effect. Got the sin.

Having a hard time. Ok, I will use one of mine as an example. At the end of the service, you will be able to put your sin in prayer.

Here is the point I am making. God does not want another day to go by, without you being forgiven of every sin you commit. So, how can I have that confidence? Know that Jesus died for your sins during those 6 hours.

What happened? Jesus became my substitute. Now, let me show you some of the benefits. These benefits are only conditional on having faith and trust in Jesus Christ atoning death and resurrection to give you the power to live for him.

1. Somebody has to pay for your sins. (Rom 3:23)

*<sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

2. *If a person chooses to reject Christ, they go to hell with their sins paid for. (1 John 2:1)*

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, **and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.***

3. Jesus' atoning death has paid for the damage you have done because of sin. (1 John 2:2)

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4. God poured onto Christ all of our sins, then poured into us God's goodness. (2 Cor 5:21-LB)

*<sup>21</sup>For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God's goodness into us!*

Sin does to a life what scissors do to flowers. A cut at the stem separates a flower from a source of life. Initially the flower cut is attractive, still colorful, flowerful, and full of fragrance. But, over time the flower begins to wilt. The leaves will shrink. T

The flower pedals will stink. No matter what you do, this flower will never live again. Humans make every effort to stay alive even after sin has cut them off from life.

\*Pour water on the stem and flower. Wrong decision.

\*Place the stem and flower back in the soil. Wrong decision.

\*Baptize the stem and flower. Wrong decision.

\*Glue the flower back on the stem. Wrong decision.

Do what you wish. The flower is dead. A dead flower has no life. A dead soul has no life. Cut off from God, the soul withers and dies. The consequence of sin is not a bad day. A bad mood.

God's solution is not to preserve that which is dead, but to raise the dead. *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone; the new has come! (2 Cor 5:17 NIV)*

God cannot stand the thought of losing one of us, the thought of his kids rotting in the cemetery. So, Jesus shows up when we are a corpse, and he becomes the corpse caller.

We are dead, and he is the dead raiser. The only person who remains dead and, in the grave, are the ones who don't think they are dead.

Christ died on a cross, carried your sins, forgiving them and then extending Jesus' righteousness to you.

The cross was the instrument of an atoning death, the empty tomb is an instrument of daily resurrection power.

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Father,

I take responsibility for my sin (name it). I have no power to remove my sin (name it), or sin's consequences. I am grieved that I have disobeyed and broken the heart of my Father because of my sin (name it).

I repent of my sin (name it). I change the way I think about my sin (name it). I show remorse for my sin (name it). I change my behavior about my sin (name it). I am free from the cost of sin and sin's consequences, as You desire.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.