

Famous Last Words #2 – “My God, My God, Why...”

Have you ever wanted to ask God “Why?” Why did this happen, why did that happen.

A seventeen-year-old girl was going to a Bible study. At the same time, there was a guy who had too much to drink. The guy hit her head-on. It was his third time to be arrested for drunk driving. It was her first time to be killed. Why Lord?

Why is there so much pain in this world? So much divorce and abuse? Why do so many good people die young? Sometimes, I just don't understand why. Why all the pain? Why all the heartache?

Sometimes it feels like God is very near, but sometimes He feels like He's far away. So many questions in life just don't have clear answers. Do you ever feel like that? Have you ever felt like Jesus felt on the cross when He cried out, “*My God! My God! Why?*”

We're studying “**Famous Last Words,**” the words of Jesus as He gave His life for us on the cross. Today, we look at the time when He asked His Heavenly Father, “Why?”

We'll pick up the story in Matthew 27:45-46, “*From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land.*” Now, when was this? It was from noon to 3 pm, the middle of the day when it should have been daylight.

Why did that happen? Well, I don't know for sure, but we do know that Jesus became sin for us, and when that happened His Heavenly Father turned away, and when His Father withdrew His presence, the world became dark.

In verse 46, we find some of the **loneliest words** in the Bible, “*About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’*”

There are things that happen in life that just don't seem to have a good reason as to why they happened. Why do good people die young? Why does God answer **some** prayers and **not others** the way we think He should?

Why do some of the people get married and promise to love each other forever end up crushing each other? Why do some couples whose greatest desire is to have kids, and they can't? And other couples bump into each other in the hallway and get pregnant?

Why do so many things that just don't seem fair seem to happen? One guy put it like this: **He said**, "Why is my life so empty? Why do I wake up every day in the same old bed, walk into the same old kitchen, eat the same old breakfast, read the same old paper, drink the same old cup of coffee, kiss the same old woman? Get in my car, drive the same old car to the same old job, work for the same old boss, get the same old paycheck, drive back to the same old house, eat in the same old kitchen, walk into the living room, sit down in the same old chair, fall asleep watching the same old show, walk into the same old bedroom, look at the same old wife, ask her the same old question, get the same old answer? Go to sleep, wake up the next day and do the same old thing. Why? Isn't there more to life than that?"

Are you in the middle of a challenging time right now, if you're not, one day you will be. Sometimes some well meaning people will offer **over simplified** answers to very **complicated situations**.

The **four most common** simplistic & easy answers for hard times are these.

1. *The reason this is happening is because it's **your fault**. If you didn't have some **sin in your life** then this wouldn't happen. There must be some secret sin in your life.*
2. *Or maybe they will tell you if you had a little more **faith**, then this wouldn't be happening to you.*
3. *Another thing you hear is: "Oh, I know why bad things are happening to you. It's **Satan's fault**." Could it be Satan? I don't know, the evil one does attack, and it could be that you are experiencing a hard time because it's your fault, or it could be Satan's attack.*
4. *And then another person will say, "You know, **it's God's will**". Which is it? Is it my fault? Is it Satan's attack? Is it God's will? Is it two of these? Is it some combination? Most often it is a complex situation and I can't find simple answers to those questions.*

As we examine the words of Jesus on the cross and His life as a whole, we notice that from the moment He was born, **His spiritual enemy, Satan, attacked Him**, and often he did it through other people.

Even when Jesus was a baby, Herod sought to have him killed. Jesus, in His hometown, was known as a prophet without honor. Some guys tried to push Jesus off a cliff. People called Him a heretic, a fanatic, said that He was demon possessed, a drunk, and a glutton.

He was falsely accused. He was tortured, beaten, taken to the cross, and **He never once complained**. In fact, the first words you can find in the bible of Him uttering anything that even resembles a complaint was when He became sin for us, the world became dark, the Father withdrew His presence, and Jesus cried out, **“My God! My God! Why?”**

It's very easy to have faith when the sun is shining, but it's another story to have real faith when darkness covers our world. How deep is your faith?

There were three Hebrew young men named **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, and the King built a giant idol that was ninety feet high made of gold and commanded everyone to worship it. But the young men would not.

“...and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? ...if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace.” Daniel 3:14-18

And what did they tell the king? Verses 16-17, *“Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.”*

It's easy to have faith when you're safe. It's another story when you are in a real-life situation and then you will see if your faith is real or not.

How deep is your faith? **How real is it?** When darkness enters your world, how real is your faith? These three young men uttered some great words of faith. King Nebuchadnezzar said, *“I'm going to destroy you,”* and they said, *“Our God will deliver us.”* Incredible faith.

Then they took their faith to a **higher level**, and they said, verse 18, *“But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”* How deep is your faith? Jesus cried out, *“My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?”*

We see things different ways. Take a look at the letters on the screen. Some people, in the middle of loss or pain, would put the letters together this way, *“God appears to be **no where** near”*. But it all depends on your perspective, other people would say, *“No, you don't understand. God is **now here**. He is in our presence.”*

We can look at the same thing, but see **different perspectives**. What is incredible about Jesus is that, the only thing He needed to endure the physical pain, the emotional pain, the relational pain, the only thing He needed was the presence of His Father.

That was it, and the only time that He complained was when the Father withdraw His presence. And the same is true for us. We only see part of the story. We only see **our** part.

There is the **Father's perspective**, which is so much bigger. In I Corinthians 13:9, Paul showed us that on this side of eternity, we only see part of the story. He said, *"Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."*

In the middle of the pain, I need to remind myself that I only see part of the story, that God's perspective is much bigger and broader than ours, the Bible says His ways are higher than our ways. His understanding is greater. His **infinite** wisdom is more than my **finite** knowledge can even comprehend.

Think about it this way: I take my daughter Bonnie in for a shot when she was a baby, about 12 months old, and let me tell you she had the spiritual gift of cute. And we are bonding, we are having a good time and she's sitting down on the little table with the little white sheet on it and everything is great. She is having a good time with daddy.

So anyway, without her noticing, the doctor gets out the syringe. Bonnie is sitting there having a blast and the doctor sticks the needle in her leg. I turn away, I can't look. When I turn back Bonnie has this horrified look on her face and she is looking at me like she has been betrayed.

She has this panic look in her eyes and then she let out a blood curling scream that must have lasted about 7 minutes and she's looking at me as if to say, *"My daddy, my daddy! Why?"*

And I wanted to explain that this is for **her** benefit, for **her** good, but as hard as I try her little 12-month old mind can't comprehend it.

We only see part of the story. You think about Jesus dying on the cross, and imagine the different perspectives of the story. You see the **crowd**, who at one time cried out, *"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"* The crowd must have been thinking, *"Yeah, we're getting rid of another heretic."*

And what would the **disciples** be thinking? *“We left our homes. We left our families. We gave up everything. We honored Him. We followed Him. We did everything He said, and now He’s dying. It can’t end this way. Did we do all this for nothing?”*

And then, you look at **Jesus’** part of the story, and although we don’t fully understand why He asked “why,” I do know that He was fulfilling the prophecy in Psalm 22:1, when He cried out, “My God, My God! Why?” *“Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?”*

And then you think of **God’s** part of the story, God’s heart at this moment was surely breaking, and He turned away with the most sacrificial, unselfish act of love that you could ever imagine, as He loved **you** so much that He allowed **His** Son to suffer for you in your place.

Let’s look for a minute and try to get some insight into **God’s part of the story.** Jesus said, *“My God, My God! Why?”* Why did God forsake Him to the cross, there are at least two reasons.

1. Why did God forsake Him? **Because Jesus became sin for us.** II Corinthians 5:21, *“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

Don’t forget that God hates sin, and wherever God finds sin, sin must be judged. Jesus became sin for us and died on the cross in our place. Now, why did God look away? Habakkuk 1:13, *“God’s eyes are too pure to look on evil; He cannot tolerate wrong.”*

When Jesus became sin, hatred, murder, adultery, rape, jealousy, envy, lying ... when Jesus became these things, God’s eyes were too pure to look upon sin; He had to turn away.

So holy is God that when **Abraham** beheld a glimpse of His glory, he said, *“I am but dust and ashes.”* **Job**, when he saw a glimpse of the presence of God, said, *“Therefore, I despise myself in His presence.”* **Isaiah**, getting a glimpse of the presence of the glory of the Lord, said, *“Woe is me! I am ruined!”*

God is holy and full of love, when the world asked why He let His Son die on the cross, He said, *“I’ll tell you why. It was done for you.”* Never forget the Father’s perspective.

2. Jesus cried out, “*My God, My God! Why?*” reason number two that the Son was forsaken was **so that we could be forgiven**. Jesus became sin and died with sin and was buried in a grave, and in three days later, God raised Him from the grave – **clearly displaying** that death, sin, hell, and the grave had been **defeated** by the Son of the living God.

I Peter 2:24, speaking of Jesus, “*He bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*”

“*My God, My God! Why?*” and God would say, “*I did this out of love for you.*” If you are asking why, if you are hurting and you don’t understand, please never forget the Father’s part of the story.

There was a story of a dad, who the love of his life was his wife and his eight-year-old son, and this eight-year-old boy idolized his dad. This dad had a job that he loved. He operated a drawbridge, and did it with great integrity and accuracy, and he knew that his job was very important and many times a day, he would raise the drawbridge up with the throw of a lever at just the right time so the ships could pass through, and at other times, he’d drop and lower the drawbridge so the train could pass over, and his communication had to be accurate and precise to make sure everything was done just right.

And one day, his eight-year-old son came to work with him and the boy was having a blast and the father was having a blast, and late in the day, a train was coming, and he looked for his son.

And the son saw the train and knew it was too soon and bridge was still up and he yelled to let his dad know but the noise was too loud and the father didn't hear him, so the son ran to pull the manual lever on the huge gear box to lower the bridge and here is the rest of the story...

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The father noticed the train and without knowing where his son was, he started to cry out, “Son, where are you? Where are you?” and finally, he saw that his son had fallen down into the huge gears and would be crushed if he lowered the bridge and the father realized that he had one of the most important decisions ever to make.

With moments to make his decision, he could either throw the switch, killing his son or, he could save his own son’s life and let hundreds of passengers on the train fall to a certain death.

This father made the **most sacrificial decision** a father could make. He threw the switch. He watched the gears start to turn as his son was quickly caught in the gears, and looked up with panic and fear to look at his father as if to say, "Why?" The father couldn't bear to look..

The father's heart was broken. And as the father was crying out in the darkest moment of his life, he watched the passengers on the train traveling by, completely oblivious to what this father had done for them.

Some were sitting back reading the newspaper. Some were talking to each other. Some were playing cards, and the father looked on, knowing that he had just given the life of his son, and people were unaware and didn't care.

Can you imagine what the Father feels like when we live our lives without taking notice of the most sacrificial loving gift that anyone could ever give, and we act completely oblivious to what our God has done for us? *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* John 3:16

Perhaps we should be saying, *"After what Jesus did for us, I will never leave You nor forsake You."* Some may say, in the middle of their pain, *"God is nowhere."* Others draw close to Him and say, *"No, You don't understand. In the middle of our pain, God is now here, and the presence of a good God, is all we need."*

Maybe you have questions you don't have clear answers to, things you don't understand, and you tempted to ask "why." **"Why is this happening?"** I don't have the answers but I do know the presence of God is what we need. His presence is greater than any reason.

If you are hurting today, I would be honored to pray for you. It could be financial struggles. It could be a health problem with you or someone you love. It could be relationship struggles. It could be that your world is falling apart.

And maybe you are thinking, ***"Bob, I'm hurting. I don't fully understand this. Would you pray that the presence of God would minister to me, and that it will be enough."*** If that's your heart's cry, would you write it on the card, I would be honored to pray for you.

Why did God forsake Jesus? Because Jesus became sin for us. He did something for us that we couldn't do for ourselves. God wired us that when we sin, we feel guilty because He installed into each of us a moral code, and in some way, deep down we know we are sinning against God.

Often when we sin we try to make up for it by doing good things and being good people. The problem is, if we could be good enough to work our way to God, then there wouldn't have been any reason for Jesus to come and die for us.

God so loved you that He sent His Son to die in your place. The sinless Son of God, was slain for the sins of the world. **What do you do? What's your part?** It's simply a choice. You ignore it and pass on by on the train, or you say, "*Lord, I believe that You loved me so much You sent Your Son, Jesus.*"

The Bible makes an amazing promise, it tells us that even though we are all sinners and the penalty for our sin is death, but that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. **How are we made right with God?** The Bible says it is only through grace by faith. It's believing what Jesus did for us.

What do you do? Simply acknowledge the fact that you have sinned before God. **The Biblical word is "repent,"** which means to turn away from your sinful ways, and to turn toward God and say, "*Jesus, forgive me. Make me brand new. I surrender my life to You.*"

This isn't some sort of religious decision. **This is a life decision.** The Bible says that all of your sins will be forgiven. It doesn't matter what you have done. It will be forgiven, and you will be born into the family of God.

You have a choice. Pass by on the train and ignore it, or take the step of faith and say, "*Yes, I believe it.*" Your life will never be the same. Say, "*Yes, Jesus, be the Savior and the Lord of my life.*"

Let's pray. Lord, I pray that in this special moment Your presence would be more real to us than we've known in the past. Lord, according to Your word, we draw near to You and we know that you will meet us, and You draw near to us. We pray according to Your word, Lord, that You would be our shelter, our hiding place, that You would be a place of refuge, that You would be our peace that goes beyond human understanding.

When circumstances are not what we think they should be, may Your presence be enough. May Your goodness overwhelm our pain. May Your love take over the dark places in our lives. Lord, when our world is dark, may Your light shine in. Lord, may we find Your presence and Your peace in the middle of our pain." Amen.