

Sermon for Lent #4 Devotional Message—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—3/6/2002

Title: “Why have you forsaken me?”

Text: Mark 15: 33-34: ³³At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" [GW]

Introduction: *Ills.: The terror in being abandoned (Boblo boat)*

Theme: A prayer of absolute desperation is always heard by the Heavenly Father because he will never leave us or forsake us for Jesus' sake.

Crying out for help when we feel all alone

- Sin has erected a wide gulf between people and God
 1. **Ills.: Unreconciled differences with another is one of the loneliest places you can be**
 2. Often we move ourselves away from God when he never left
- Our stubbornness only wants to look for God on our terms
 1. We feel abandoned by God because we are looking for him in the box we created for him and he is not there
 2. **Ills.: LOVING WHAT KEEPS BITING US**
- Even in the midst of the fallenness of our sin, the Father is the best place we can turn to
 1. *Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'* Ezek 33:11
 2. In our self imposed loneliness God calls us back to himself in Jesus and for Jesus' sake

Secure in claiming God's presence for Jesus' sake

- Jesus was abandoned by God so that we never would be
 1. Hell = were God and his blessing are not
 2. Because the full load of the sin of all humankind & its hellish punishment were on Jesus, God actually had left him
 3. As Jesus said, “it is finished” and then God raised him from the dead, for believer hell's separation no longer true
 4. *God has said, "I will never abandon you or leave you.. .Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."* Hebrews 13:5, 8
- Praying for mercy and deliverance in the midst of our living hells
 1. **Ills.: When hell freezes over**
 2. In what “living hell” are you standing from which God provided deliverance long ago and is waiting on you to take?
- Praying that we might stay in his presence continually
 1. It is not so much about praying that God not abandon us but that he would cause us to stay close beside him
 2. *“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”* Psalm 16:11

Loving what keeps biting us

Hettie Green was a famous millionaire. She lived in seclusion and became a virtual recluse. She had only a few friends and an ugly mongrel dog that kept biting the few friends she did have. One of them said, "You've got to get rid of that dog." Hettie refused. She said, "That dog loves me and he doesn't even know how rich I am."

Hell Freezes Over

I heard a story the other day about hell freezing over. It seems that a rough and gruff man from Massachusetts who didn't live a very good life died and went to hell. The devil really wanted to punish him, so he put him to work breaking up rocks with a sledgehammer. To make it worse he cranked up the temperature and the humidity. After a couple of days the Devil checked in on the man to see if he was suffering adequately. The Devil was aghast as he looked at the man from Massachusetts happily swinging his hammer and whistling a happy tune. The Devil walked up to him and said, "I don't understand this. I've turned the heat way up, it's humid, you're crushing rocks and sweating. Why are you so happy?" The man smiled, looked at the Devil said, "This is great, it reminds me of the hot humid August days back in Massachusetts. This is fantastic! It's just like home" The Devil decided to change things a bit. He dropped the temperature, sent down driving rain and torrential wind. Soon, hell was a wet, muddy mess. The man from Massachusetts was happily slogging through the mud pushing a wheelbarrow full of crushed rocks. Again, the Devil asked how this man could be so happy in such conditions. The man replied, "This is great. Just like April back in Massachusetts. It reminds me of working out in the fields doing the spring planting! The Devil was completely baffled. In desperation, he tried one last ditch effort. He made the temperature plummet. Hell was blanketed in snow and ice. Confident that this has done it, the Devil checked in on the man. He couldn't believe his eyes as he saw the man dancing, singing, and twirling his sledgehammer in glee. "How can you be so happy. Don't you realize its 40 below zero!?" screamed the Devil. "Hell's frozen over!" replied the man from Massachusetts, "The Patriots have won the Superbowl!"