

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

The 7

PART

4

TITLE

Acceptance

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:33-39



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Good morning church family. It is a little unusual to preach this way, I have to confess. My name is Daniel Savage, and I'm the pastor of Discipleship here at Providence. Me preaching this way is only one of many unusual things that is happening right now. It's been an unusual week. I've thought so much about this week, and the unusual nature of the circumstances that we're facing. Things being closed down, and culture and society grinding to a halt, everything changing almost hour by hour it seems. I woke up this morning and was thinking about this sermon, thinking about our time together, and our time in the word, and in Mark chapter 15. I woke up so grateful that there are some things that are not changing.

There are some things that are remaining the same that we're going to focus on this morning. I wanted to encourage you with some of those things as we get started this morning. One of the things that is not changing is your church family. Even though we can't gather here in this room, and we're not here on this church campus, we are still a church family. People united and brought together by our love for God, our love for each other, and our belief in Jesus Christ. Another thing that brings us together and that does not change is God's love for us and His goodness towards us. It remains the same this morning, and finally the thing that we will spend most of our time thinking about this morning is the gospel itself.

The good news of Jesus Christ has not changed. It remains the same this week, and in fact it's more encouraging this week to me than it has been in a long time. I can't wait for our opportunity this morning to think together about the gospel of Jesus Christ. We're continuing this series that we've been in called the seven. Where we are looking at the seven recorded sayings of Jesus on the cross. He was on the cross for a number of hours, and the Gospel writers recorded seven things that he said. We're looking at one of those statements each week, and looking at how each of those statements addresses a basic human need. This morning we're thinking about the phrase, my God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? We're thinking about the human need of acceptance.

Let me pray and then we'll get started this morning. Bow your heads with me and let's pray. Heavenly Father thank you for the opportunity that we have this morning to be in Your word together. To be reminded of things that do not change. Lord, I pray that You would take these truths and plant them deep in our hearts. Lord, I confess, I admit to You from the beginning that we do not have the wisdom, the understanding to take these words, and know them and apply them the way that we should. Lord, we need your help, and so God will you help us? Will you make plain what you are expressing about Yourself here in these verses? Will you teach us this morning. Will Your Spirit God lead us into all truth we pray. I pray most of all that Jesus would be lifted high and exalted.

That as He is lifted high, He would draw all of us to Himself. Lord may it be so this morning we pray in His name, Amen. This morning Mark chapter 15 verses 33 through 39 we're looking at and thinking about acceptance. Thinking about the opposite of acceptance which is rejection. The pain and nature of rejection is something that we've all experienced before. My earliest memory of tasting and feeling rejection came in middle school. I had a group of friends, I had grown up with them. I made the mistake, I didn't know it was

a mistake at the time, but I made the mistake of telling them that I was going to be changing schools about halfway through the school year. What I experienced over the second half of that school year was my friends beginning to pull away from me, and beginning to distance themselves from me.

I felt the pain of rejection really for the first time that I can remember. I remember even going home and expressing to my mom, I don't know what to do. My friends don't like me anymore. I remember the pain of that, and if you've been around long enough, lived long enough, you felt that pain of rejection. I want to say something that may be obvious to you this morning, but that pain of rejection is not something that we were created to feel. You think about what God said about Adam and Eve in the garden in Genesis chapter two. At the end of that chapter it says that they were naked and they were unashamed. Meaning there was this perfect harmony in their relationship. There was no fear of rejection. There was no manipulation. There was no sin that had taken place.

There was this perfect trust and harmony. There was this acceptance of one another. Their acceptance wasn't just with each other, it was with God as well. They had this perfect relationship with God. They were accepted fully by Him, and they never doubted it. But when sin enters into the picture, everything changes. They begin to fear rejection from each other. They begin to cover themselves and hide. They fear rejection from God as well. They knew that their sin would separate them. This is a problem. We were created to be accepted by God and to live in relationship with Him, but our sin has separated us from Him, and this is one of the problems that Jesus came to remedy. He's going to address these issues as He's on the cross speaking to the people that surround him in Mark chapter 15, verses 33 through 39.

If you have your Bible, open it up and look at these words with me. Mark chapter 15 starting in verse 33, "And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. At the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi lema sabachthani?' Which means, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Some of the bystanders hearing it said, 'Behold He's calling Elijah.' Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to Him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing Him saw that in this way He breathed his last, he said truly this man was the son of God."

Now I want to warn you as we get into this text of scripture, that it goes from bad to worse before it gets better, but it will get better. Verses 33 and 34 are all about the pain of rejection. The pain of rejection and separation from God. God's judgment in these first few verses is in full view. It begins by talking about the darkness that covered the whole land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. The common interpretation there is that it was from 12 noon to three o'clock in the afternoon. The text doesn't tell us what that darkness was like. It doesn't say if it was slightly darker like an eclipse, or if it was dark like night, but we do know that it was obvious to everyone that something was different.

Several commentators I read think that it's a fulfillment of Amos chapter eight verse nine when it says, "And on that day declares the Lord, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your feast into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation." All in reference to a coming judgment because of the great sins of the people. J.C. Ryle, a prominent theologian in the 1800s writes about this miraculous darkness. He says, "What did the miraculous darkness teach? It taught the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the eyes of God." God hates sin, and Jesus had become sin for us. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin. So that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

After three hours of darkness, Jesus cries out with a loud voice. "Eloi, Eloi lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" There's a couple of things that are really unique about this cry. One, is that the cry is recorded for us in the language that Jesus would have spoken it. One commentator said, "The Holy Spirit, in order to engrave it more deeply on the memory of men, has chosen to relate it in the Syriac language. For this has the same effect as if He made us hear Christ Himself repeating the very words." It's as if we can hear Jesus Himself saying these words in the cross. The question is, why did He want us to feel this cry more deeply in this way?

Why is it so important for you and I to know the pain of His separation? It's because God wanted you and me to know that Jesus tasted the full cup of God's wrath. He wanted us to know that before... That He bore the whole weight, the full weight of separation and rejection from God, so that we would know that there was none left for us. There is none left. There is no separation and being forsaken left for those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. Something else that stands out about this cry is that it's a quotation from Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Is the first line of Psalm 22. You can read Psalm 22 later, and I recommend that you do. What you will find there is a remarkable description of what is happening here on the cross, and it was written 1,000 years before it happened. 1,000 years before the crucifixion David writes about mockers wagging their heads.

He writes about his mouth being dried out. He writes about the piercing of his hands and his feet and casting lots for his clothing. Clearly a prophecy about what was going to happen on the cross. But what Jesus quotes is the opening line. That initial cry, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? What we're supposed to draw from this cry is the pain of rejection and separation. All of us have tasted some form of rejection, and it's a pain that we all dread. It's like a bitter taste in your mouth. It leaves a mark. It's something that you don't forget. The fear of rejection begins to build the first time you experience it. Think about the difference in the social interactions of preschoolers and teenagers.

You take a group of preschoolers to the park and you let them run out and there's other preschoolers there, and within five minutes they're all friends with each other. They may not know each other's names, but they're all playing with each other. They'll just walk right up to each other and say, "Hey, do you want to play?" Contrast that with taking a group of teenagers and dropping them off at an event, with other teenagers

that they don't know. What do they all do? They back off. They wait for someone else to make the first move. Why? Because those teenagers have lived long enough to taste the bitter taste of rejection. They're not going to put themselves out there. They're going to wait for someone else to make the first move. They're going to hang back and see what everyone else does.

We all have felt these feelings. The pain of rejection and separation. It's this fear of rejection that drives many of the things that we do. It drives our actions, our behaviors, our decisions. This fear of rejection, this fear of man, it can drive us and shape us. This pain of rejection and separation isn't just limited to our relationships with each other, but we feel it in our relationship with God. Sometimes without even knowing what to call it or how to name it, but we feel this rejection. We feel that our sin has separated us, and we know that it's not right. It's not good. We spend our lives chasing after satisfaction and fulfillment that we can only find in a relationship with God, but we don't know that we're separated from Him because of our sin.

The book of Ecclesiastes about, how man spins his days chasing after the wind, trying to find some satisfaction. But the Bible teaches clearly that that satisfaction is only found in a relationship with God. Verses 33 and 34, about the pain of rejection, and verses 35 to 37 get even worse. It's about the hopelessness of rejection. In verse 35 the bystanders think that maybe he's calling for Elijah, probably misinterpreting what it is that He's saying. One of them goes and fills a sponge with sour wine, and puts it on a reed and gives Him a drink, just to wet his mouth. Then they step back to see if Elijah will come. This is a really sad picture if you stop and visualize it for a second. You think about Jesus on the cross suffering, bleeding.

At this point in the crucifixion He is in excruciating pain. His mouth is so dried out because He's lost so much blood He's dehydrated. He can hardly breathe. He's labored. He's obviously in pain. He would have been a picture of suffering. There's a crowd of onlookers and they see Him, and He's crying out, and their only thought is to wet his mouth. So that He can keep crying for Elijah because they think maybe we'll see something amazing. Here He is suffering and dying, and their only thought is maybe we could see something incredible. Jesus here is bearing the full weight of rejection. The Father is rejecting Him. The officials and religious leaders have rejected Him. His own people are rejecting Him. They sit back to see if anyone will come to help Him.

Then verse 37 says, "And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last." No one came. Jesus dies without anyone coming to his aid. Elijah did not come. An army of angels did not come. His disciples did not mount up a rebellion to save Him, He just dies. Still separated, still under the weight of rejection. This is a tragic end. I want us to think together this morning about how this tragic end is what you and I have earned for ourselves. Our sin separates us from God and destroys our relationship with others, and left to ourselves, our end would be what Jesus is experiencing here. Total brokenness, death, and the loss of everything good. This is what Jesus is tasting on our behalf. This is the end that our sin has earned for us, and yet here we see Jesus, the righteous one, the one who had never sinned, tasting and experiencing the grief that we should experience.

Verse 37 ends on such a low note. Jesus, the hope of the nations, the redeemer, the rescuer, the champion. He utters a loud cry and breathes His last. But Mark doesn't want to leave us there. He wants to give us some hints that something incredible is coming from this dark moment. We've seen the pain and the hopelessness of rejection, but now I want to see with you the evidence of the removal of rejection. The evidence of the removal of rejection. He gives two indications that something unique has happened. First, in verse 38 it says, "That the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." Second it says, "That the centurion who stood facing him saw that in this way He breathed his last and he said, truly this was the son of God." That's an incredible thing for a Roman centurion to say.

A Roman centurion looking upon a Jewish man being humiliated and crucified, part of a conquered people. A people that his people reigned and ruled over, and he looked upon this man and said that was the son of God. What would lead him to say that? There was enough evidence from all that was going on. The darkness that covered the land, Jesus speaking words of forgiveness from the cross, the earth shaking, the rocks splitting. There was enough happening for the centurion to know that something was different about this crucifixion. What about the curtain? Why does Mark tell us about the curtain in the temple tearing from top to bottom? Well, the curtain in the temple was extremely significant. It symbolized the separation that was required between a sinful people and a holy God.

God wanted to dwell among His people, and so He had them build a temple for worship. The temple was supposed to remind them of His presence among them. The curtain though was a reminder that God, while he was close, there needed to be separation. God could not be, or the people could not be in the presence of a holy God because of their sin. There's this whole system of sacrifices and blood that was shed, and there was this curtain that separated the people from what was called the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest once a year would go into the Holy of Holies, where the presence of God was said to dwell. He could only go there after a series of sacrifices. The people were separated from the presence of God. This is a problem that Jesus came to fix.

God's desire is to dwell with His people. But sin had separated us, so Jesus came to endure the pain and suffering that was required. He was separated from the Father and rejected, so that we could be brought near. When Jesus had endured the rejection and separation that our sin deserved, God tore the veil in the temple to show us that we no longer had to be separated from Him. We could now be near to Him. The writer of Hebrews is talking about in Hebrews chapter 10, when he writes in verse 19, "Therefore brethren, since 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. Since we have a great high 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. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." I want to give a few applications this morning of how you can apply these truths to your life. First and most important,

if you've never trusted in Christ, I want to plead with you this morning to trust in Christ for the removal of your sin, shame and separation from God. This is the good news. The good news is that even though you were dead in your transgressions and sins, separated from God, Jesus came to live the life that you could not live. To obey perfectly the laws of God, and fulfill the righteousness that we need to be in God's presence. He died the death that you deserve to die.

He stood in your place so that you could be forgiven of your sins. The miracle of the gospel is that His righteousness is placed on you, and your sin was placed on Him and He died in your place. Psalm 103 says that our sins are separated from us as far as the east is from the west. The Bible teaches that to put your trust in Christ, what you must do is admit your sin. Confess that you are a sinner. Believe in Jesus, that He lived the life that you were supposed to live, and died the death that you deserve to die, and confess Him as Lord of your life. The Bible says that if you will call upon His name, you will be saved. Call upon Him today. Ask for forgiveness for your sins, and He will wash you clean. Trust in Christ.

If you're already a believer, then I want to encourage you to find your identity in the work of Jesus. You are eternally accepted. Find your identity in the work of Jesus, you are eternally accepted. There's a few ways, a few practical ways that I think we can apply this. Number one, if you think about how we can apply this. Number one, resist the sins that come from a fear of rejection. How do we live in this identity that Jesus has purchased for us? One, we resist the sins that come from a fear of rejection, like lying, boasting, rejecting others for social status or hoarding of resources, or buying things to gain the approval of others. These are all things that we do because we fear rejection. Those who are living in this identity where that Christ has purchased for us that we are eternally accepted, we can resist these sins.

We can turn away from these things because we know that our identity is one who is eternally accepted by God, and so it frees me. It frees me to put myself out there, to love others, even though they might reject that love. It frees me to forgive others, even though they might reject my forgiveness. It puts me in a position to serve in love and advance, because I'm not afraid of rejection. I am eternally accepted by God. I'm not naive to think that you and I will be able to put these things to death after one sermon. What we must do is rehearse this identity over and over again. We have to preach this to ourselves, that we are eternally accepted by God, which leads to the second thing that we can do. Secondly is rejoice in, and meditate on your acceptance.

Rejoice in and meditate on your acceptance. Think deeply about how you've been accepted by God. Think deeply about how Jesus was rejected so that you could be accepted. I want to give you three statements for you to meditate on. Three things that you can go to over and over again this week and meditate on, as you think about your identity in Christ as eternally accepted. First, you are never forsaken because Jesus was forsaken. God is always with you. He says as much in Hebrews chapter 13 verse five it says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." God is always with you because Jesus was forsaken. How is it that God makes this promise to sinful people? How does He tell us that He is always going to be near us? How does He tell us that He's always with us, and He will never forsake us?



Because Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” Jesus was forsaken so that you and I never have to be. He is always with you, and during a time of uncertainty like we’re in right now, it may be a great time to meditate on the truth that God will never leave you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Second, you are never rejected, because Jesus was rejected. God always accepts you. God always accepts you. Sometimes we can convince ourselves that we are rejected. Even after we’ve put our faith and trust in Christ and we know that our sins are forgiven, we can convince ourselves that God surely is rejecting us now. I’ve committed this sin too many times. I’ve made this mistake too many times. I’ve asked for forgiveness too many times.

We certainly deserve to be rejected. But the glory of the gospel is that Jesus stood in our place, and we’re not accepted because of our performance. We’re accepted because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We’re accepted because we’ve been clothed in His righteousness, and our sin has been removed. I know some of you right now, even as I say these words, think that God could not possibly accept you. But I want you to know that when you think that way, and when you believe that, you are diminishing the power of what Jesus has done on the cross. He paid for your sins. He lived a life of perfect righteousness, so that you could always be accepted. So that your record would never hold you back. So that you could be clothed in His righteousness and accepted by Him forever.

Third, you are never separated from the Father, because Jesus was separated. God is always near you. The writer of Hebrews is talking about in Hebrews chapter four verse 16 when he 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.” While life is grinding to a halt over these next few weeks, there probably has never been a better time for us to draw near to God. To practice being in his presence. To do what the writer of Hebrews said, to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. We should practice these next few weeks being in the presence of God. As I was thinking about this all week, I kept thinking about the promises in Psalm chapter 16 verse 11 that, “In His presence there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

As I was thinking about what Jesus has done for us, and how He stood in our place and how He tasted rejection and separation for us. He did so, so that we could enjoy these promises. So that we could draw near to the presence of God, where there is fullness of joy, and we could come to His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore. So church family my encouragement to you this week, is do not be satisfied with lesser joys, but instead practice being in the presence of God. Spend time in prayer. Spend time in the word. Meditate on pieces of scripture that help you to visualize who God is. Go to Isaiah six and visualize the throne room of God. Go to Revelation one and read about the resurrected Christ.



Go to Revelation four and five and picture the throne room that it is depicting there, and the lamb who is there and all of His glory and power. Practice being in the presence of God. Pray until you pray as Brian encouraged us earlier, but go to His presence, where there's fullness of joy, and enjoy the right that Jesus has given us to draw near to the Father. Practice being in His presence this week. Because Jesus was forsaken, you are never forsaken. Let's pray, and then we'll sing. Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity to be reminded this morning of the good news that does not change. Regardless of our circumstances and how the world may be shifting and changing, your truth remains the same. Our hope is with You, guarded in heaven. It's unfading. It's undefiled. It cannot be touched by moths or rust.

It is a glorious inheritance, kept in heaven by You. God help us to look to that inheritance, that great hope, and help us to find our hope in You. Help us this week to practice being in Your presence. Help us to find fullness of joy and pleasures at Your right hand forevermore. God, give us a hunger to be with you. God I pray that we would be a people who would not settle for lesser joys, but we would devote ourselves to running after you. We would be a people that love to be with You. We would rejoice in this ability that Jesus has purchased for us to be in Your presence. We pray in His glorious name, amen.



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