

God forsaken

Matthew 27:46: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"

Here we have the original words of Jesus in his own language, Aramiac. This is the language in which he ministered, prayed and died. And it means: "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"

Sabachthani, forsaken, means "to abandon, to let go, to leave."

It is awful to be forsaken. It is not natural for anyone to be totally alone. We have a God-created need for others and for God himself. To be forsaken means that no one is able or willing to help you. You are totally alone.

At the end of his life Jesus was totally on his own. The crowds and his disciples had turned against him. His family did not believe in him. In his dying hour he cries out that even God has forsaken him! Of everything he suffered, this was his greatest pain and sorrow.

According to his divine plan God physically forsook Jesus. It was because God abandoned Jesus, that Jesus could be betrayed by Judas, was mocked, spit upon and was falsely accused. It was because he was abandoned by God that Jesus, though found to be innocent, was still treated as though being guilty. It was because Jesus was abandoned by God, that he was whipped, had a crown of thorns forced on his head, and nails were driven through his wrists and feet. It was because Jesus was abandoned by God, that he died the cruel death of the cross.

To be forsaken by God in this fashion is to suffer the torments of hell. Hell is the complete absence of God and all that is good. Hell is complete separation from God.

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" This cry scares and surprises us. It must also be answered. Why did God forsake Jesus in both body and soul? What was the barrier that existed between the first and second persons of the Holy Trinity?

The barrier was sin. It was our sin which broke the bond of communion between the Father and the Son. Jesus took on our sin. He was cursed and abandoned and forsaken, to save us from our sin. The question was: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The answer to this question of Jesus is: Our sin! Your sin and my sin is the reason why God has forsaken him.

Precisely because he went to hell in this way, we know victory, forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Christ took our place. He was separated from God, so that we don't have to be. This is why we also share in Christ's victory on Easter Sunday. We are also raised with him. O God, what a Saviour you sent to us!