Matthew 27:45-56 | Dave Stough

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Preacher: Dave Stough

[0:00] Thank you. We've got the crew. Isn't it great to be a part of a family? I like to do fix. Man, oh man. So I'd like to start out today with a little bit of a storm story.

When I say the eye of a hurricane, you guys know what I'm saying, like the nucleus, the center, right? Okay. So have you ever heard what it is like to be inside the eye of a hurricane?
First time I heard somebody mention it, I thought, man, it's like death or something, you know? But I found out, it's something different. Though the rest of the storm churns out high winds and rain, this actually just destroys things in its path, the eye of a hurricane is a calm, peaceful area.
You can watch videos of people from the, let's see if I can get this right, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency. That's it. One of those alphabet government agencies.
They do a good thing. These guys ride in through the storm. They're pretty high up. And they get into the eye of the hurricane. They're strapped in for the ride of their lives.
[1:15] Getting there, I've watched this video. This guy just, people were just, they were strapped in, but they're still like half out of their seats. And they make it through. And it's total turbulence.

Then all of a sudden, when they get through into the eye, it's total calm and peace. You can look straight up and see just clear blue skies. They show it on their video. So the people who have been there, they say that it's surreal.
As far as the eye of a tornado goes, not many people have been in one and lived to tell about it. There are a few. In 1928, a farmer named Will Kemp from Greensburg, Kansas, watched the tornado come and saw the destructive force of it, and went down into his storm cellar, which I think is part of living in Kansas, right?
So he's seen this thing wreaking havoc, got down in the cellar, and he looked up. And the eye of the hurricane passed over him. And it stayed there for a while.
And he said, everything was as still as death. That was his words. Interesting. So in much the same way, the event of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is filled with the violence and the chaos of all sorts of sin and of God's wrath.
[2:51] But in the midst of it, there is his peace he offers to us that come to him by faith. What a holy God accomplished at the cross.

It transcends time, problems, and defeats the works of Satan. As Mark preached last week, he said, no death has ever been more important.
Important to God because the sacrifice Jesus made fully satisfied him so that he could righteously forgive sin.
And important to us, of course, because it changes eternity for us. Even right now, it changes eternity for us, for those who believe. So today, we're going to look closely at it.
My prayer is that each of us, starting with me, draw closer to God and experience more peace in our lives. The peace that only comes from him.
[4:04] Our text is Matthew 27. You can open up there. We're in verses 45 through 56. It starts out with Jesus already on the cross.

He's already went through tremendous suffering before this. He's been betrayed by Judas. He's been the disciples fled. He's been mocked by the Sanhedrin.
He's been punched in the face. He's been, he's had a crown of thorns pressed in his head and beat in with a reed. He's had a whip, a cat of nine tails that rips flesh off your body.
So he's been through much here. All this occurred before what we will read here today. And as gruesome as all that sounds, we're about to read something that is even worse.
Today, the time to drink the cup of wrath has arrived. It has arrived for Jesus. He drank the full measure of God's wrath when our sin was laid upon him.

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[5:25] To get a glimpse, we've heard some verses in the last several weeks. Mark read a few last week. I think David had some. We read about God's wrath.

I'm going to read one that I had read once before, weeks, I guess months ago. If you've heard this, you can hear it again.
It's good. Well, it's hard, but it's needed. It's Isaiah chapter 13, verses 6 through 13. It says, Oh, the day of the Lord is coming cruel with fury and burning anger.
To make the land a desolation, he will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash their light. The sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light.
So I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their wrongdoing. I will put an end to the audacity of the proud and humiliate the arrogance of tyrants.
[7:02] I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold. Therefore, I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the Lord of armies in the day of his burning anger.

I don't know, when you read something like that, the first thing I say is, man, I'm glad I'm not there. This is something that you can, there's imagery to kind of comprehend it, but that wrath is coming from God.
This gives us an idea of the fury the Son faced as the Father laid our sin upon him and judged it. The subject of the wrath of God is not an easy topic to discuss here.
So, even as believers, it's not the most pleasant, right? It's easier to talk about God's love and forgiveness, isn't it?
But the fact of the matter is that we cannot understand the depths of God's love and his forgiveness until we understand what Christ saved us from.
[8:14] I heard this quote on the radio and I wrote it down. And I want to read this. It is God's settled conviction to be wrathful towards sin.

It's his settled conviction to be wrathful towards sin. His very nature requires it. It took the abandonment and death of his own Son to satisfy his holy judgment so he could forgive us.
So let's read about it. Read with me Matthew 27, 45 through 56. At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock.
At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink.
[9:29] But the rest said, Wait, let's see whether Elijah comes to save him. Then Jesus shouted out again and he released his spirit.

At that moment, the veil in the sanctuary of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened.
The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem and appeared to many people.
So when the centurion and those with him who were keeping guard over Jesus saw the earthquake and the things that happened, they feared greatly and said, Truly, this was the Son of God.
And many women who had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for him were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.
[10:42] Our text starts out by saying it was dark across the whole land for three hours, from 12 o'clock to three o'clock.

This darkness was obviously a direct intervention by God into his creation. God can do with what he pleases with his creation.
He did this, I believe, to mark this time as a gruesome occasion. Now some people have thought that it was God using a solar eclipse.
But we know it was not a solar eclipse for two reasons. One, solar eclipses last for about seven minutes at the equator and at Israel's latitude even less.
And two, solar eclipses happen at a new moon. Passover takes place at a full moon. So God himself is marking this event with darkness, showing its awfulness to get our attention.

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[11:58] During this three hours, Jesus was silent. There were seven things said by him from the cross, but not during this three hours.

So close to the end of this time of this darkness, Jesus cries out with a loud voice, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
We have recorded for us in the four Gospels the other things he says, but Matthew picks this one to primarily focus on.
He mentions another one, but he doesn't say what it is, but he picks this one. He's emphasizing what happened between the Father and Son while our sin was being judged.
The Father could not be with the Son. The Father who is eternally one with the Son could not have fellowship with him then because of the sin, our sin laid on him.
[13:09] Jesus was the scapegoat. He was the sacrificial Lamb of God. This is when he was made a curse for us, as it says in Galatians.

He was made a curse for us. This is when it happened. So how could a holy God be with him then?
To forsake means to abandon.
Have you ever been abandoned? Do you know someone who's been abandoned? It means to leave behind. Jesus was totally alone.
The pain of the whip and all the things I had mentioned earlier, they pale in comparison to this. They pale in comparison to be forsaken by the Father.
I think this is the ingredient in the cup of wrath that had to be the worst. It's recorded in the Bible that the Lord Jesus always done what was pleasing to the Father.
[14:14] This is why in John chapter 1, Jesus is called the Word. His very being expressed the Father.

His very, who he is, he's one in being with the Father, right? He affirmed this when he said in John 10, I and my Father are one.
So when Jesus was on this earth, ponder that for a minute, by the way. Just, you know, it's kind of hard to understand, but that's who he is, right?
And yet, something's different here. When Jesus was on this earth up to this moment, he had his Father's approval.
Remember his baptism? This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. But not now. He's abandoned.
[15:15] Notice he did not even say, Father, when he cried out. He didn't say, Father, Father, why have you abandoned? He said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Just the night before, when he was in the garden praying about this very time that he would be going through, and he said, Father, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but let your will be done.
Even on the cross, just hours before this, he said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. But here he says, my God, my God. He can't even say, Father, He can't even say, Father, when our sin is on him.
So you know that that sacrifice, the things that he went through, it's effective. Someone mentioned a verse to me before I came up here. The extent of what Jesus went through is why it says in Isaiah, by his stripes we are healed.
Healed spiritually and healed physically according to his will. Because there was such a price to pay here. So as he goes through this shame of our sin on him, it's like the father is somehow not his father.
[16:49] What Jesus knew by his very nature from eternity was not experienced by him during that time of judgment. Don't try to understand it.

But it's there. The father could not be with the son then. His holiness demanded separation. His holiness demands judgment on sin.
This is the shame and humiliation of our sin on the Lord Jesus. So isn't that what death is, though? It's separation when our body, when we die, our soul and spirit, our real selves, separates from our body.
And if you don't know the Lord Jesus, when you die, you'll be separated from God for all eternity in the lake of fire. This is the second death.
The righteous wrath of God is not something that you want to face, any one of us want to face. If you have not done so already, and I'm not telling you to do anything.

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[18:03] It's funny how we have this language. If you have not, put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You need to.

The Bible says, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. He took this punishment for you and He's waiting for any, for all.
He's waiting for people to quit trusting in themselves and believe in Him. Matthew, writing in Greek, reminds his readers, which were primarily Jewish, that Jesus spoke in Aramaic.
Some spectators, when He said, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani. So some of the spectators didn't understand what Jesus said.
They thought Jesus was calling for Elijah. And they wanted to see if He would come. They were there just for a show anyway. This crowd said earlier, if you are the Son of God, come down from that cross.
[19:16] It doesn't work that way with God. He has already showed Himself in many ways. And He is waiting for people to come to Him in repentance and faith.

They brought light, they thought lightly of blaspheming God. The people who had to know that Jesus, they had to know that He made the lame to walk, He made the blind to see, they had to know that He raised Lazarus from the dead.
That was the big hoopla when He came into the city just days before this. And they hailed Him as the Messiah at that time. Many of them liked the things that He did, but they did absolutely not like, they hated, what He said.
Our Lord Jesus testified of a righteous judgment to come and showed people their sin the way God sees it.
All the way to the end, people were jeering and mocking Him in their unbelief. And though they could find no fault in Him, they still kept it up. They were like drunk with satanic delusion.
[20:37] And they were actually pleased to see Him die. Does that sound kind of familiar to you right now with something that's going on in our culture?

Rejoicing over somebody who died? a person who's lied about and misrepresented and all these things just because there's this, behind all this political talk we have, there's a spiritual warfare going on for the souls of men, women, and children.
Satan operates in the realm of deception and hatred. one thing I did appreciate about Charlie Kirk was that he was not ashamed at all to tell people about the truth of Jesus Christ.
From his testimony, you know, you could say he knew Him. I mean, he sounded very sure, confident in the Lord, not himself. And based on that, I can say that now he's experiencing the peace and joy of what it's like to be in the presence of the one who died for him and rose from the dead.
You know, Jesus said earlier in the Gospel of John, no man takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. If I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again.
[22:06] Jesus was in control when he died. And make no mistake about it, he is in control of when you and I will die. Verse 50 of our text records that Jesus cried out with a loud voice and then he yielded up his spirit.

We know from Luke's Gospel that he said, Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. In spite of being near death, the text says he shouted with a loud voice.
He yelled out these words. The fact that he could do that after being at this point, think about like physically how he was at this point.
So he'd been on that cross for six hours, not to mention all the things I mentioned before that he's probably almost all bled out. And just to breathe, you've got to push yourself up where they nailed your feet.
You've got to push yourself up because the weight of your body keeps you from getting a good breath and he's got to be so weak, right? But there's something more going on than the physical here.
[23:22] This proclamation that he made, Father, into my hands do I commend my spirit was a demonstration of divine power. Even though he was being executed, our Lord chose when he would die.

Even now, everything happening to him was under his sovereign control. He departed this earth when the work of paying for sin was finished.

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Verse 51 says, at that moment, the veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom and the earthquake, the rocks split open.
Would you have liked to have seen that? Wow, what a sight, huh? There's some powerful imagery being conveyed by the Holy Spirit in this verse regarding what happened at the temple.
Can you pull those pictures up? If you're not familiar with the sacrificial system instituted by God at the Jewish tabernacle or temple, you're going to miss something here.
[24:32] So I brought a few pictures here to kind of help us see it better. So, this is the tabernacle when the Jews were in the desert.

God instructed them on how to build this. And I'm not going to get into detail here, but in essence, it was God's way under the covenant of the law for sinful man to meet with a holy God.
And there's the outer court. That's where people would come and bring to the priest their animal to spill its blood to offer a sacrifice for them.
The priest, so people would meet the priest there in the outer court. But that tent there is the tent of meeting and only the priest could go in there. All right? And it's divided into two parts.
The back third of it, this is not the greatest picture, but they didn't have cameras back then, so. And I can't blame this on AI. I think this was just a video snapshot I took, but be that as it may.
[25:41] The Holy of Holies is the back third of that place. And in there was the Ark of the Covenant. And in the front before that was the holy place and only priests could go in there.

All right. Can you go to the next picture? So, we're going straight into the back third where the most holy place is. This is the Ark of the Covenant. Only one person, the high priest, could go into this room where the Ark of the Covenant was one time a year.
Inside that Ark of the Covenant are tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments on them. There's a few other things, but the Ten Commandments is what's important here. And so that was God's law.
And underneath that, I'm sorry, over the top of that is the mercy seat. It's a lid on top where you see the cherubim angel figures there.
So what's being communicated here is the law is God's standard of perfection. It's a reflection of His moral character. And it's the standard by which He judges sin.
[27:01] Okay? And so on that mercy seat, the high priest that would come in there once a year and He would sprinkle blood on it to satisfy God's holy requirements to judge sin.

It was good for one year. The blood is what kept God from breaking out into judgment upon sin. And the high priest would actually have to offer, have to go through a ritual that God prescribed.
And he had to offer sacrifices for his own sin, go through ceremonial washings. He had to do all this before he entered in there. They tied a rope on his ankle just in case he did something wrong in his approach to God if he approached flippantly because he would die in God's presence.
And they had to pull him out of there. So the message being conveyed there, you don't want to come into the holy of holies.
You don't want to come into God's presence without having your sins dealt with His way. Now, we can go to the next picture. This is the place before you go into the holy of holies.
[28:22] The priest would enter in and there's that purple veil there, the curtain. And that's what separated the two. And this is the veil that Matthew is talking about that was being, that was tore from top to bottom.

And that's how we know God tore it. It was tore from top to bottom. And I heard that thing is so thick that it would be, like you have to have something real sharp to do it anyway. But God, God is showing us something.
He tore it from top to bottom. So, what's God saying here when He did that? What's He pronouncing?
He's saying, paid in full, come on in. I am fully satisfied forever with what my son did for your sin at the cross.
That's what He's saying. This, along with the resurrection of Christ when He rose later, these two things are God's stamp of approval on that sacrifice that Christ made at the cross.
[29:38] It's because of this, I'm done with that, it's because of this that we now have access into the most holy place, the real holy place, the throne room of God in heaven.

Jesus opened it up. As the writer of Hebrews puts it, you can now come boldly to the throne of grace and obtain mercy and help in time of need.

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So, Matthew's account of the crucifixion, it focused on showing us the power of what Jesus did in giving us access to God.
And it also shows us that anyone can come in and find that access to God. He did this by showing what the Roman soldier said.
Matthew, writing to Jews, was sure to include the testimony of the Roman soldier proclaiming faith in Jesus Christ. the Roman centurion and the other soldiers crucifying Jesus knew this was no ordinary death.
[30:49] Mark's gospel makes it a point to say that this centurion was standing in front of Jesus. Think about what he witnessed. Well, first of all, think about this man was used to seeing people die on a cross.

It was a gruesome event, but that was his job. he knew very well that people would die slowly, and yet he's seen Jesus yield up his spirit.
He's seen Jesus choosing the time of his death. He's seen it dark from noon to three. The earthquake, the rocks split open.
And you know, if you start thinking about this, the soldiers were the ones that were there when Jesus was being whipped and all that when his trial was going on.
And he had right on top of the cross, this is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. So he knew his accusation. You have to wonder what he thought about that.
[31:58] He probably understood what was going on in the trial because Luke records that not only did he say truly this is the Son of God, he also said this is a righteous man.

Our text says that he and the other soldiers witnessed these things were greatly afraid. That word I looked up, you know what that word means?
Greatly afraid. Terrified. Okay. It means to fear greatly. So it was interesting to note that it's the same word as used in Matthew 17 when Jesus was up on that mountain and he physically revealed his glory to Peter, James, and John.
And the Father spoke from heaven saying this is my beloved son and who I'm well pleased. Hear him. And their faces hit the ground and it says that they were greatly afraid.
Same word. In both instances, the fear of God came upon people because of the demonstration of divine power. So this, all this going on, this was a supernatural event that that centurion looked at.
[33:25] God. And unlike many of the Jewish people around him, he recognized who Jesus was. He said, truly this was the Son of God.

Our text also makes it a point to mention that some of the female disciples of Jesus were there witnessing all of this. Matthew mentions Mary Magdalene and then Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, when you read the other Gospels, you find out that that James is one of the twelve disciples, James the lesser.
So there's Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, one of them is a disciple. And then there's the mother of Zebedee's sons, which is Salome, and she's the one, by the way, that came with her sons and asked Jesus, can my son sit at your right and left hand when you enter your kingdom?
And she did that, it says, bowing down before him. She knew who Jesus was, she believed, and you know what, remember what Jesus' response to her was? He actually said it to James and John, he goes, can you drink the cup that I'm about to drink?
Right? Well, I think she now knows, right? But all these women were faithful followers. They followed Jesus from Galilee, they ministered to him, they remained faithful, they did not flee from him even now at the cross.
[35:04] The love of God is seen in the service of these women. So Matthew's making it a point that they stayed close as they could all the way through.

And it is to them, as you know, that Jesus appears first when he rises from the dead. As believers, we have the assurance of the presence of the Lord with us.
If you have come to faith in Christ, he actually lives in you. Your body, it says in 1 Corinthians, is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
Well, some days I think, what kind of temple is this? I'm pretty messed up. I'm not just talking physically here, you know. But God guarantees that to us because of what Christ suffered for us at the cross.

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The judgment we deserve, Jesus Christ took, and the righteous, abundant life that is his, he gave to us and he still gives to us.
[36:14] The Holy Spirit living inside of us is God's imprint on our soul. That is why the Holy Spirit, through the pen of Paul, said in 2 Corinthians, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation.

All things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. Make no mistake about it, when we come to Christ, something changes in us. Yeah, we struggle with our old man the rest of the time we're here, but there's something new that God put there.
On the deepest level of our being, we've been made alive together with Christ, it says in Ephesians.
Can the musicians come up? So there were two painters. They were in a contest to see who could paint a picture the best that captured the concept of peace.
One painter painted the sunset over very calm water. It looked very nice and it did have a calming appearance. the other painter painted a storm.
[37:39] The picture showed dark clouds, lightning, waves crashing on a shore. Things look pretty chaotic. like.

But down in the bottom corner of that picture was a big rock. And at the base of that rock, there was like a cleft area, there were birds singing joyfully.
There was a safe haven there for them. Jesus is our safe haven. He is the peace in the middle of this world storm.
Because of what he accomplished when he died and rose again, we have the very presence of God living in us as our shelter. And he bids us to come to him to enjoy that.
So not only have we been spared from the wrath to come, but his presence brings us his peace in the here and now, in our everyday lives. Romans chapter 8 asks this question.
[38:48] What shall separate us from the love of God? Then, after listing a whole bunch of things that seemingly could separate us from the love of God, Paul proclaims that nothing or no one will ever be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen? Amen. Amen. Amen. So I asked myself a question when I was preparing this sermon that I want to ask you now. What are you going to do with the promise of God's presence and peace?
I thought about that. The first thing pressed upon my heart was to simply to simply spend time first thing when I get up enjoying the presence of God.
I have to change some habits. I remember last week, this is discipleship now we're talking about, right? Last week at Sunday school I had the chance to pop upstairs briefly and I sat at the table and they're talking about prayer and I was asked, do you have a certain place and time that you spend praying?
And I kind of like thought about it and I had a half-baked answer because I have a half-baked approach to it quite frankly. So my prayer for us is that we regularly remember this great love that God has for us and get alone and pray to Him and thank Him for it and start talking to Him first thing.
[40:41] Now it's good also when you get up to have a song in your heart and have one throughout your day that talks about this and so we're going to sing one now and I didn't know what day was going to play ahead of time but the Lord did so we'll go ahead and sing.

Thanks.

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