



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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March 28, 2012
Midweek Lenten Worship
Pastor Randy Ott

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 15:16-38](#)
Sermon Text: [Matthew 27:45-51](#)

The Wound of Abandonment

All these weeks now we've been looking at *Sacred Head, Now Wounded*. We've looked at all these wounds, and we've seen our actions in these wounds. When we've seen the Wound of Betrayal, Apathy, Denial, and Mockery, we've seen ourselves and our own lives. We've seen it as we looked at Judas, at Peter, at the three sleepy heads in the Garden, and the soldiers who mocked him. The one we look at tonight was caused by us, but it's not one that we could carry out on our own. It's one of abandonment, not the abandonment of the disciples who fled in fulfillment of that prophecy Jesus had told them about; "I'll strike the shepherd and the sheep will flee." ([Matthew 26:31](#) and [Mark 14:27](#).) This is the Wound of Abandonment that comes from the Heavenly Father abandoning Jesus. This comes as Jesus quotes [Psalm 22](#) and cries out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It's a wound that is unlike all the others. It's a wound that certainly we cause, but it's one we don't share in as such.

I think it's a wound that Christ lived through that was the worst of all the wounds. This was drinking the cup of God's wrath down to the bitterest last drop. This is what Jesus prayed about in the Garden and said, "If it's your will, don't let me have to drink this." ([Luke 22:42](#).) This is the One who created the world. This is the One who has been in perfect union with his Heavenly Father from before eternity. This is the One who from the time he was born lived perfectly in line with the Father's will. This is the One who did what you and I could never do. He was perfectly in tune and walked the straight path of the Father's will each and every day of his life. Here he is, the One who has done this, on the cross, and the light goes out of his eyes. In the midst of this darkness, this palpable darkness which is the presence of God pouring out his wrath on Jesus, he is all alone. There are people around. There are people mocking him. There are people next to him, on his right and on his left, but he is all alone.

The presence of God has been withdrawn from him. That is what sin is. When you and I sin, it's not a matter of doing this or not doing that. God has said don't lie, don't gossip, all those kinds of things; sin, in its essence, is separating ourselves from God saying "God, you said go this way, but I'm going my own way. I am on my own and I'm going my own way." The consequence of sin is utter and complete aloneness. It's at that moment, when Jesus is forsaken by his Heavenly Father, that he really dies. It's not later when he cries out and gives up his Spirit because that is the moment he is enduring eternal death in our place on the cross because that's what you and I deserve. When the light goes out of his eyes, when he cries out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?," he is alone in a way no man has ever been that has walked the face of

this earth while they were on this earth. He is enduring the very agony of hell. That's aloneness. He became completely alone because he became sin for us.

You can't understand this, but you have to think about it. You have to meditate on it. You have to contemplate it. You have to turn around and look at it from each angle and just consider the greatness of God's love for you and for me. Here is the One who is so united to the Father, saying to his Father "Leave me alone. I need to be alone because I have to suffer your wrath now for them so that they don't have to be completely alone." I can't understand that. I can't comprehend that.

From all eternity he is one with the Father and now he is alone. This aloneness is unlike anything you or I, I hope, will ever experience. That's the essence of hell. We don't get that. We joke about it. We see it in movies. You hear people say it. You've probably heard people say "If I go to hell, at least I'll have company." What a foolish statement.

Think about what we've seen as the glimpses of hell we've seen in Scripture. The rich man and Lazarus, what did that rich man long for? He longed for someone to take the tip of his finger, put a drop of water on it and have the tip of his finger as human contact. Part of the agony of hell that he was enduring was this aloneness. Hell isn't Satan running around having a good time tormenting people. In hell in eternity Satan himself is in torment. It's aloneness. It's separation from every blessing of God that we enjoy while we are on this earth.

Because Jesus went through that, you and I never have to be alone again. Never alone. Never again. That's our confidence. That's our certainty because of what Jesus did...perfectly obeying the Father in our will and then taking the aloneness that we deserve. So when we face our physical death, we don't have to be afraid of aloneness that is on the other side. Did you catch that when we sang that last verse? When you sang that last verse of *O Sacred Head*, did you catch that?

*My Savior, then be near me
When death is at my door,
And let your presence cheer me;
Forsake me nevermore!
When soul and body languish,
Oh, leave me not alone,
But take away my anguish
By virtue of your own!*

That's the confidence you and I now have. We won't be alone. We talk about it in [Psalm 23](#). You've heard those words over and over. Even when we walk through the darkest valleys, the darkest shadows, the darkest valleys which they translate "the valley of the shadow of death," I won't be afraid because you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. I don't care if you're going through life and you feel alone. That's your feeling. You're a sinful human being. Your feelings are up, down,

they're all over. They're everywhere. When you feel alone, you need to go back to an objective truth that exists outside of your feelings. That objective truth is that Jesus lived and died in your place so that you are never alone. Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. Never alone. Isn't that an amazing thought? Isn't that an incredible thought?

At the end of what I read to you, did you notice how the emphasis was on sound? The curtain in the temple tears from top to bottom. The rocks split. The earth shakes. There was a lot of sound going on. Strain your ears and listen for the sound that is greater than all of them. It's the sound of the gladness in the joy and the praise in your heart because you know that when Jesus went through this, it means heaven is open to you. Between now and when he calls you to heaven, you may still stumble away. You may fall. You may wander. But now the path to heaven is always open. The way back is right back there to that cross and knowing that Jesus suffered that aloneness in your place so that you will never be alone. That cross for you has now become the gate of heaven.