**The Forsaken King**

 March 17, 2013

Mark 15:16-47

Key Verse 15:34, “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*’- which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

From this week SWS we want to prepare our resurrection day celebration. As we know, the gospel consists of two parts; first part is Jesus’ suffering and death and second part is his resurrection. All gospel books end with Jesus’ suffering and death and his resurrection. Bible says that Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection is the good news of great joy for all the people on earth. And this is core of the whole bible for us to know. God wants each individual to understand the gospel and accept Jesus as personal Saviour and king. When we do so, our life is transformed from slaves of sin and Satan to God’s dear children and can bear Christ-like image. Today, we will learn the first part of the gospel; about Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. Especially we want to hear Jesus’ cry on the cross, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ and think about its meaning. May God help us to understand Jesus’ cry deeply and accept his marvellous love for us!

**1. King Jesus was mocked in our place (16-20)**

In verses 1-15, Jesus was finally sentenced to be crucified by Roman governor Pilate. Before being crucified, Jesus was flogged and his body was torn and bloody. In verses 16-20, the Roman soldiers began to mock Jesus. How did they mock Jesus? They put a purple robe on Jesus and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on Jesus’ head. Purple robe was worn usually for royal class people like king. Crown also symbolizes kingship. But in order to humiliate Jesus, they set the crown of thorns on Jesus’ head as a mockery. The soldiers began to call out to Jesus, “Hail, king of the Jews!” and again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. When they struck him on the head with a staff, the blood smeared out by the thorns of Jesus’ head and face. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to Jesus. When they finished mocking Jesus, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him and they led him out to crucify him.

One of the most difficult things for us to bear is being mocked, and insulted. Man is created in the image of God. So even evil man doesn’t wants to be mocked or insulted. When they are treated like that, they usually burst into anger. But Jesus was silent. Why was innocent Jesus silent in such humiliation and mockery? The prophet Isaiah prophesied about this in Isaiah 53:3-4, “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrow, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.” Jesus was silent to take up our infirmities and shame and sorrows. Jesus was silent to be mocked in our place where the terrible sinners like us (you and I) had to be placed.

When we live godly lives, the bible says that we will be rejected and mocked and persecuted. (2Ti3:12) Sometimes we are mocked for outward appearance or accents. But even though we are mocked, we can avoid from being hurt in our hearts when we remember Jesus mocked for us. So the author of book of Hebrew says in Hebrew12:2-3, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

**2. King Jesus was crucified in our place (21-32)**

When Jesus was led out to be crucified, he was already exhausted. Jesus repeated to fall and rise. Then a certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, the Roman soldiers forced him to carry the cross. When they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull), they offered him wine mixed with myrrh. It was like a pain-duller. But Jesus did not take it. Jesus decided to bear all the pain to carry our sins in his own body. Finally they crucified Jesus. Crucifixion is the most horrible execution among executions humankind had invented. On the cross the crucified criminal dies slowly receiving the maximum pain. But biblically speaking, Jesus’ crucifixion was planned by God. Deuteronomy 21:23 says, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’” Jesus was crucified to be cursed in our place. Yet the soldiers were such ignorant about what was going on the cross. They just performed their duty as usual and dividing up Jesus’ clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. It was the third hour in our time 9 am when they crucified him.

The written notice of the charge against Jesus read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. They wrote this notice in order to mock Jesus but amazingly it was true that Jesus was the king of the Jews; the long promised and awaited Messiah in Israel history. The king of the Jews is not a political king as the Jews misunderstood but spiritual king for all mankind to save them from their sins. (Isaiah 9:6&7) The soldiers crucified two robbers with Jesus, one on his right and one on his left. Jesus looked like the boss of robbers in the middle of them. In this way they wanted to completely humiliate Jesus by making him a condemned criminal. About this Isaiah also prophesized in Isaiah 53;12b, saying “… he was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

After crucifying Jesus, the enemy of God began to insult and mock again just like Roman soldiers did. Look at verses 29-32. “Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘So! You, who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourselves!’ ‘In the same way the chief priests and teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.’ Everyone wants to save themselves. Jesus also could want to save himself and he had power to save himself. But Jesus chose to remain on the cross in order to obey God’s will for world salvation. Coming down from the cross might be good for Jesus. But if he had done so, how could God’s plan for world salvation have been fulfilled? Here we learn that without sacrifice we cannot serve God’s salvation work. When our sufferings become tough and unbearable, we sometimes want to come down from the cross. But we learn from Jesus that we have to remain on the cross. That’s why Jesus taught his disciples in Mark 8:34b and 35. “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”

**3. King Jesus was forsaken in our place (33-41)**

At the sixth hour; in our time 12 noon, darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour which means 3 pm. In John 8:12, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” But when Jesus was crucified, this time was the time the world was losing the light of the world. At this, even the sun didn’t want to shine to this world. Look at verse 34. At the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “ ‘*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” During the messianic public life, Jesus had never cried out in this way because although he had suffered a lot, his love relationship with the Father had never been broken. Jesus could endure all hardship as long as he had love relationship with the Father. But on the cross, for the first time Jesus felt that he was forsaken by the Father. The Father God had always been with Jesus until now but on the cross even for a while the Father had to forsake Jesus to fulfil his world salvation work. To Jesus a broken relationship with the Father was most painful. So Jesus cried out in a loud voice. “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” And we know this cry of Jesus was for us. In a gospel song, there is a sentence. “I am forgiven because you were forsaken. I am accepted; you were condemned…” Yes! this is the reason why Jesus was forsaken. Jesus was forsaken in our place so that we may be accepted to God. It was we who had to be forsaken from God because of our sins. But God put all our sins on Jesus. In God’s eyes, Jesus became a murderer, adulterer, rapist, and the worst criminal. By doing so, God’s righteous judgment for all sinners including you and me was satisfied to God. When God’s righteous judgment was satisfied in forsaken Jesus, God finally could open the way for sinners to come to him. Look at verses 37 and 38. “With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” In the Old Testaments, the curtain of the temple symbolized the barrier of sin between the holy God and sinful men. But when Jesus died on the cross, the amazing thing happened. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This means that now the way for us to come to holy God is open. In this world we experience being forsaken or abandoned by others. When parents divorced, their children suffer from the sense of being abandoned. Young students are sometimes bullied in the school. Being forsaken or abandoned is the greatest pain that man can experience in this world. But we must remember that it is our sins that separate us from the love of God. In Genesis 3, when man sinned against God the true love relationship with God and between husband and wife was broken. And Isaiah 59:1&2b say, “Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God.” But here is good news. Jesus was forsaken on the cross to take away our sins. In this Jesus, if we repent and accept Jesus as our Saviour and King, our love relationship with God and with men is restored. Jesus’ death is the ultimate expression of God’s love and the only way of restoration of our love relationship with God and with men.

Jesus’ death restored the Roman centurion’s life. Look at verse 39. When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” The Roman centurion had been trained to be cold and pitiless to perform his military duty. Such man is most unlikely person to be changed. Yet it was not so. Even merciless centurion was deeply moved when he witnessed Jesus’ death on the cross. He had witnessed so many crucified criminals until now but to his eyes, Jesus was totally different. He could see that Jesus’ death was not merely an ordinary criminal’s death. Amazingly Jesus’ death made his spiritual eyes open to see the death of the Son of God. So he confessed, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Jesus’ death changed another person called Joseph of Arimathea. He was a prominent member of the Council who was waiting for the kingdom of God. He was afraid of revealing his faith in front of religious leaders when Jesus was alive but somehow when he saw Jesus’ death, something amazing thing happened. His fear was gone. He became courageous. So he went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body and he buried Jesus dead body in a tomb cut out of rock.

In today’s passage, we learn that Jesus died for our sins. Jesus was forsaken for our sins. Jesus’ cry on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” teaches that our love relationship with God is most important matter in our lives. Jesus was forsaken for us to be accepted to God. In this Jesus now we don’t need to suffer from sense of being forsaken or abandoned any more even though we experience those things in this world. If you accept Jesus as your Saviour and King, now you are children of God and you receive God’s abundant love and all good things and he never leaves you. May God bless each of us to receive this marvellous love in Jesus! Amen.