

Good Friday

No rift in the Trinity, no cold shoulder – and a Father you can run to

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, April 3, 2022
PASSAGES	Psalm 22; John 16:28-32; John 10:17-18; 1 Peter 3:18; Leviticus 17:11; Isaiah 53:10-12; Hebrews 9:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:25:31 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

At the cross the Father did not turn his face away from his Son. Father, Son and Spirit were united in purpose, love and presence, reconciling the world; Jesus laid down his own life, and it is his death – God’s own blood – that atones. Jesus does not coerce the Father into loving you. He reveals that the Father already does.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Psalm 22, the psalm Jesus quotes from the cross, says outright that God “has not hidden his face” from the afflicted one. David felt forsaken because he had not yet been rescued from men trying to kill him, not because God had abandoned him relationally.
- ◆ Saying Jesus was “cut off from God” is incoherent on its face, because he is God. [Hebrews 9:13-14](#) puts the Spirit at the cross, and Jesus said that when his disciples left him alone, “the Father is with me.”
- ◆ What atones is Jesus’ death, not an infinite quantity of pain or a cold shoulder from heaven. The life is in the blood, and the blood shed was God’s.
- ◆ Again and again people tried to kill Jesus and the Father protected him. At the cross the Father did not intervene because the Son chose to lay down his life – they were one in purpose.
- ◆ If you believe God cannot look at sinners, you will not run to him when you sin. God is the first person you should go to.

- ◆ “Jesus doesn’t coerce the Father into loving you. He demonstrates it.” The whole Trinity was on display, aggressively pursuing us.

► 1:25:32

These notes pick up partway through Matt’s message: the recording’s captions begin in the middle of his second point, as he walks through [Psalm 22](#). His own summary near the end gives the first point in brief – God can look at sin and be around sinners, even be their friend, and Habakkuk’s complaint that God is too pure to look on evil ([Habakkuk 1:13](#)) “is based on confusion, and that confusion should not be turned into dogma.” The question running through all of it: did the Father turn his face away from Jesus at the cross?

2. The psalm Jesus quoted says God did not hide his face

► 1:25:32

On the cross Jesus cried out the psalm’s first verse ([Matthew 27:46](#)). Matt kept reading the psalm. David prays, “Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog!” – “there’s that enemy thing again.” David is not complaining that God has scorned him, but that men have, and men want to kill him. So he turns to the Lord, and then comes the line Matt had been waiting for:

► 1:26:06

“You who fear the LORD, praise him! ... For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.”

PSALM 22:23–24 ↗

“Isn’t it funny – maybe not ha-ha funny – but the song that Jesus quotes literally says God doesn’t turn his face away from the afflicted one, and yet we use that as evidence that he does.”

► 1:26:45

Some books and Christian radio say that for a moment Jesus cried out and no one heard. Matt disagreed. Jesus was putting into words what David said, and David knew he was not forsaken relationally. He was forsaken in the sense of *I’m in danger, people are trying to kill me – where’s my rescue?* He directed that cry to God because God was the only place to go. “It would be weird for us to say Jesus quoted it in a way different than the way David meant it.”

► 1:27:23

Then the psalm turns a corner: the afflicted shall eat and be satisfied, “all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD,” and kingship belongs to the Lord, who rules over the nations (Psalm 22:26–31). The psalm ends with a people not yet born hearing “that he has done it” – last words that could be translated *it is done*. Matt wondered aloud whether Jesus, who said “it is finished,” was praying through the whole psalm too. Then, “lost in the weeds,” he came back to the point.

3. Was Jesus cut off from God?

► 1:28:48

We often claim Jesus was separated or cut off from God, “which at the face of it is incoherent, because he is God” – God from God, light from light, true God from true God, as the creed says. What happens, Matt suggested, is that we reverse-engineer our picture of hell onto the crucifixion: if hell is a cold shoulder, that must be what Jesus experienced. So he asked where each person of the Trinity was. The Son is not going anywhere. The Spirit?

► 1:29:30

“For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God ...”

HEBREWS 9:13–14 ↗

► 1:30:06

The Spirit was right there, cooperating with the Son in the same power, love and purpose. “Now what’s the Father up to? If he’s not in unison with them, then he’s the one cut off, I guess.” But Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30) – “he didn’t say ‘usually.’” And he said the lifting up of the Son of Man – on the cross, and in glory – would reveal it: “The one who sent me is with me” (John 8:28–29).

► 1:31:29

For anyone who thinks Jesus is merely cryptic, Matt went to the place where the disciples themselves say he is speaking plainly:

“I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.” His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!” ... Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.”

JOHN 16:28–32 ↗

► 1:32:07

The timing is the point. When will they leave him alone? When the shepherd is struck – when he is dying. “That’s exactly the time Jesus says, I’m not alone, because the Father is with me.” So the Father and the Spirit were with the Son at the crucifixion, doing exactly what Paul describes:

► 1:32:40

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18–19 ↗

“There was nobody doing, like, ew. There was no cold shoulder. There was unity and power, purpose and love and presence.”

4. His death is what atones

► 1:33:19

The fourth claim Matt pushed back on: that Jesus’ sufferings of pain and separation are what atone for sin – leaving his actual death as an afterthought. If Jesus was not cut off from God, what did he endure on our behalf? We always say there was an exchange – like Indiana Jones swapping a bag of sand for the statue. So what was exchanged?

► 1:34:00

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh.”

1 PETER 3:18 ↗

A physical death, Matt said. “That’s what atones for our sins. That’s why we are redeemed and forgiven. He didn’t endure massive and infinite amounts of passive aggression.” Why a death? Because of what he called one of his favorite verses in the Bible:

► 1:34:32

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”

LEVITICUS 17:11 ↗

► 1:35:40

Pour out an animal’s blood and you pour out its life. And whose blood was shed for us? Christ, “who is God over all, blessed forever” (Romans 9:5). The blood shed for you was God’s blood. We have no claim on immortality – only God has it (1 Timothy 6:16) – and we were sent out of the garden precisely so that we could not reach the tree of life and live forever (Genesis 3:22–24). Dead in our trespasses, with no hope of living, we receive the life of actual deity poured out. “The life we live is borrowed.”

Who was trying to kill Jesus – and who kept stopping them

► 1:36:53

Nazareth wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff (Luke 4:28–30). He healed on the Sabbath and people plotted to kill him (Matthew 12:14). He healed a lame man and they sought to kill him (John 5:18). Some thought he was the Christ and others wanted him dead (John 7:30). He claimed equality with God, twice, and they wanted to kill him (John 8:59; John 10:31). Many believed in him, so many wanted to kill him (John 11:53). Each time, the Father protected him.

► 1:37:24

“Who’s out here trying to kill Jesus? That’s us. Who’s the one stopping them? The Father.” In Acts the men of Israel are told plainly that they crucified the Christ (Acts 2:36). So the Father was plainly able to rescue the Son, and did, over and over. Why not this time – leaving him, in that sense, forsaken to die?

► 1:37:52

“For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

JOHN 10:17–18 ↗

► 1:38:22

This time the Father, respecting the wishes of the Son, did not intervene, because they are one in purpose. Why did it please the Lord to crush him (Isaiah 53:10)? “Because in his bruising is the purchasing of nations.” The Father abandoned Jesus to his killers to honor his Son’s wishes.

► 1:39:02

Which, Matt said, disposes of the charge that the cross is “divine child abuse.” First, no children are involved: Jesus is a grown man according to the flesh and, according to the Spirit, “the ripe old age of eternal.” Second, Jesus laid down his own life. No one took it, the Father least of all – he had been rescuing him over and over until the Son said, I’m laying it down, and the Father said, all right, let’s do this. “Don’t imagine that the Roman centurions were the ones who had control over this situation. Jesus was the actual mastermind behind this whole thing.”

“It is finished”

► 1:39:31

So what did he experience on our behalf? Isaiah wrote it beforehand:

“Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death.”

ISAIAH 53:12 ↗

► 1:40:05

“That’s the focus.” Some books say that when Jesus cried “It is finished” (John 19:30), he meant he had finished suffering an infinite amount of pain. Matt offered two better readings. First, it probably referred to fulfilling all prophecy: he had done everything he came to do. Second, he likely said it proleptically – speaking of something about to happen as already done, the way someone watching a death-row inmate walk by says “dead man walking.” “He’s going to say it real loud and clear when he resurrects,” but in that moment it made sense to say it before he breathed his last, because he was giving us his death – which is, after all, the wages of sin:

► 1:40:52

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

ROMANS 6:23 ↗

Why it matters

► 1:41:18

Matt summarized: God can be around sinners, even be their friend. Christ's blood gives life to mortal sinners because it is God's blood. Like David, Jesus knew he was not relationally abandoned; the abandonment was to a physical death, and he chose it. The focus of the cross is not the pain, with his death as an afterthought. The focus is the death.

► 1:42:20

Then, "your favorite part." If you believe the wages of sin is a cold shoulder and passive aggression, and that God cannot look at or be around sinners, "who do you turn to when you are in sin and you need help?" You can only sit there imagining the Father's rage, hoping Jesus has coerced him into loving you – for now, until you mess up again. It also shrinks Jesus, the friend of sinners, into something less than God. "If you are caught in sin and need help, God is the first person you should go to."

► 1:43:28

And think what it says about the Father. Matt offered what he called a terrible analogy. A guy likes a girl, but she agrees to a date only under threat of death, or after her sister gives up her life to make it happen – and the whole evening he knows she does not actually like him. Rearrange the same characters: she wants to go out with him so much that she is willing to die to make it happen. "Totally different." The same goes for a business forced to acquire an insolvent "dumpster fire" versus one willing to do anything to get it.

► 1:45:19

If the reason the Father loves you is that Jesus pulled his elbow until he gave in – fine, I'll love these people, but only because my son died – then deep down you know God does not really like you. It will come out when you pray and when you worship, and when you are in sin you will reach out to someone else instead.

"Jesus doesn't coerce the Father into loving you. He demonstrates it. He doesn't convince the Father to love you – he reveals the Father's love for you."

► 1:46:30

"You were not saved and forgiven because of a brief rift within the Trinity. The entire Trinity was on full display, aggressively pursuing us." Why go to all this trouble? Because it settles where you will turn; because it shows the Father's love rather than producing it; because it is true and is how God reveals himself; and because he cannot be loved without being known – "how are we going to love him the way he wants if we know him wrong?"

► 1:47:07

Jesus did not save us from the Father. Matt pictured a kid listening to parents argue and hoping it turns out in his favor: there was no spat in the Trinity ending in a tentative verdict – we’ll let you in, but you’re on probation, mister. “All of these things indicate God’s disposition: wanting to save you. Everyone in the Trinity in harmony – Father, Son and Spirit – pursuing, reconciling, loving.” He closed by praying that the church would understand God, walk in his love, “and believe it with our whole hearts.”

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- Psalm 22
- Habakkuk 1:13
- Matthew 27:46
- Psalm 22:23–24
- Psalm 22:26–31
- Hebrews 9:13–14
- John 10:30
- John 8:28–29 (NIV)
- John 16:28–32
- 2 Corinthians 5:18–19
- 1 Peter 3:18
- Leviticus 17:11
- Romans 9:5
- 1 Timothy 6:16
- Genesis 3:22–24
- Luke 4:28–30
- Matthew 12:14
- John 5:18
- John 7:30
- John 8:59
- John 10:31
- John 11:53
- Acts 2:36
- John 10:17–18
- Isaiah 53:10
- Isaiah 53:12
- John 19:30
- Romans 6:23

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt pointed out that Psalm 22 itself says God “has not hidden his face” from the afflicted one. How does reading the whole psalm change the way you hear Jesus’ cry from the cross?
2. Jesus said that when his disciples left him alone, “the Father is with me.” What difference does it make to you that the whole Trinity was present and united at the crucifixion?
3. Matt argued that Jesus’ death, not an infinite amount of pain, is what atones, because the life is in the blood. What did you find clarifying or challenging in that?
4. Where have you pictured God as unable or unwilling to be near you in your sin, and how has that shaped where you turn when you fail?
5. If Jesus reveals the Father’s love rather than coercing it, what would it look like for you to run to God first this week when you need help?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvvIHVUmTuE&t=5131s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.