



~ Charlie Mackesy

Practice Resurrection

Lenten Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Jesus

~ March 10, 2021 ~

Forsaken

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

~ Matthew 27:46



*You are invited to light a candle as a sign that Jesus is present with you in Spirit.
You can print off the image on the last page for you or your children to colour.*

*Feel free to sing along with the songs.
Please read the **bold print**.*

WELCOME

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
the communion of the Holy Spirit,
and the fellowship of the saints be with you all.

SINGING ~ *Lord Have Mercy*

O Lord, have mercy.
O Lord, have mercy.
O Lord, have mercy,
Have mercy on us.

—Tom Wuest

SETTING THE TABLE

Take a moment to become aware of your ears—your listening. In the moments of silence, pause your playback device and give attention to what other sounds are happening around you right now that you did not hear before.

Now make the shape of a fist. Hold it tight. Then release your clenched muscles and hold your hands flat, palms upward. What have your hands received today? Who have your hands touched today?

In today's Bible reading Jesus speaks of being forsaken. Embedded in Jesus' words is a strand of hope that not everybody surrounding the cross could hear. It takes a discerning ear, steeped in the Psalms to hear this hope.

As you listen, imagine the darkness coming over the land. Imagine feeling the dirt underneath your feet. Listening with your ears to all the different sounds: the whisperings, the mockery, the tears. As you watch and listen to what Jesus does and says, how do his words resonate with you?

WORD OF GOD, WORD OF LIFE ~ MATTHEW 27:45-50

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

Pause your playback device and take a few quiet moments to let the Word of God sink in. Let the Spirit draw your attention to certain words, images, thoughts, and feelings.



RESPONDING TO THE WORD

~ FORSAKEN ~

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
(Matthew 27:46)

Pause your playback device and try one of the following exercises today.

(You can give some or all of the others a try in the days to come
if you have time and interest.)

1. Have someone in speak in your ear. Then have them stand far off—maybe in another room—and say the same thing to you but in a way that you can still hear them.
 - What changes do you notice? How does the “near experience” feel different or the same from the “far experience”?
 - With that in mind, can you share a story of a time when you’ve known God’s nearness? What about a time when God has felt far away?
2. Have you ever struggled with the distance between what you know is true from your faith and what feels true in your circumstances? Have you ever felt forsaken by the God who we believe is always near? How did (or do) you manage that difference? Take some time to write those thoughts down, or share them with a friend or family member.
3. Think about this past day. What do you hear the most? What you do listen to the most? What do those noises or voices say? Do they leave you feeling forsaken? Or are they life-giving? Do you think God might have been communicating to you at some point? What might you do, or stop doing, in order to tune your ears more to God?
4. Has there ever been a time when you felt you weren’t heard? What did people do (or not do) to tune you out? Has there ever been a time when you really felt listened to? What happened that made you feel that way? Is there someone who comes to mind that could use a listening ear? How can you be with others in their suffering? – letting them know they are not alone in their pain. Take some time to consider what you can do this week to be present with people who are having a challenging moment, day, or time in their life.



SONG FOR THE DAY ~ *He Will Know*

When your heart is in despair He will know,
When you feel beyond repair He will know,
He will know, He will know.

When your night is filled with fear He is near;
When your day is filled with tears He will hear,
He will hear, he will hear.

When this world leaves you behind He will know,
When it all seems so unkind He will know,
He will know, He will know.

—*Steve Bell*

CLOSING PRAYER

**O Christ, by praying for those who crucified you,
you lead us to forgive without counting the cost.
O Christ, by opening paradise to the repentant thief, you awaken hope in us.
O Christ, by remaining faithful until death, you show us the road to greater love.
O Christ, by taking the burden of sin upon yourself,
you reveal to us the way of generosity.
O Christ, come and help our weak faith.
O Christ, create a pure heart in us; renew and strengthen our spirit.
O Christ, your Word is near; may it live within us that we might live in you.
Amen.**

BLESSING ~ *To Him Who is Able (Jude 24-25)*

To him who is able to keep you from falling
and to present you before his glorious presence
without fault, and with great joy,

To the only God, our Saviour
be glory, majesty, power and authority
through Jesus Christ, our Lord
before all ages, now and forevermore

Amen, Amen.

—*Brian Moss*



Practice Resurrection is the result of a partnership between Living Hope Christian Reformed Church (livinghopecrc.ca) and Highland Community Church (www.highlandcommunitychurch.ca).

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GOD, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY

WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? I AM THIRSTY. IT IS FINISHED. GO, INTO YOUR HANDS, I COME TO MY SPIRIT.



are Doing. They tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise. Here is your son. Here

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? IS YOUR MOTHER