

Calvary

by John Ridley

Calvary is the place where Jesus removed the curse of sin and offered us mercy and redemption through his sacrifice, bringing peace and forgiveness to those who come to him with a humble heart.

Duration: 39:34

Scripture: Romans 3:24

Topics: "Suffering And Redemption", "Justification By Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the significance of a place called Calvin, which is described as a place of pain and suffering. The preacher mentions historical locations such as the Roman Colosseum and Smithfield in Old England, where Christians were persecuted and killed. The preacher then transitions to a personal experience of visiting Waterloo, a famous battlefield, and expresses excitement about being there. The sermon concludes with a story about a woman who found solace in the Bible and discovered the message of redemption and justification through faith in Jesus Christ.

Transcript

From the most precious place on earth, Luke 23, 33, the place which is called Calvary. The place which is called Calvary. Now there's only a rightful text on Good Friday Night.

All our thoughts today have been focused more or less upon the crucifixion of our Lord. And the cleansing hours of the day we come to the place called Calvary. Very early one cold winter's morning in 1919, I arose from the most shipwrecked, in the main hall of the YMCA Brussels, and began to work my limbs to get the blood circulating after a freezing night.

I'd just about been frozen on those two beds with my grey coat over me, and then picked up my habit back, put on the grey coat and launched out into the dark streets of the Belgian capital. I walked for some time through those streets, in the gloom of the morning, early morning, and came at last to a waiting tram car, the light was on, the day hadn't broken. And I boarded that tram car and settled down and waited for... We started off, and we paddled the best part of half an hour.

And then the car pulled up, and I arrived at a place called Waterloo. My visibly faded dress that I wore, the cobblestones of that old Swedish village, feeling in the words of Lord Byron, my cred was upon an empire Dutch. Quivers and shivers of excitement went running up and down my spine as I thought of Waterloo.

Waterloo at last. Why was I excited? Well, you see, when I was studying to be a regular soldier, I lectured on advance to a goodly country of people on the centenary of the battle, and now I'd reached the place, and I was just filled with excitement. Just a nasty battlefield where the destinies of nations had been decided.

But what of this battlefield, where the destinies of souls had been decided? Tell me. The place which is called... Tell me why the very word has a sob in it, a throb in it, a pulse in it, that quickens the heart and brings the tear to the eye if you've got a soul to think at all. Talbot.

Talbot. And that's the place where we've come to tonight. What kind of a place is it, this Talbot? Well, it's a place of pain and favour.

That's the birthplace, a place of pain and favour. There, there they crucify, there they crucify. I know quite well there have been many places of pain, of favour.

I could take you in spirit to the Roman Colosseum, where the martyrs were thrown to the lions and the leopards and other wild beasts and torn to pieces in excruciating agony. I could show you the place called Smithfield in old England, where the fires burned around the Christian martyrs. I could take you where I went once, down the Red River in Mississippi and to go to the cotton field where some of those slaves before the American Civil War gathered in the cotton, beneath the lap of the past master and under the burning sun and with poor food, a place of pain.

I could take you beyond the battlefield, oh, what a place of pain. A poor fellow said to me on the morning of Marlincourt in 19- Sadly wounded, oh John, I'm in pain, I'm in pain. And I could only think to whisper to him, oh joy that teaches me true pain.

I cannot close my heart, and a few moments later he's passed to me. I remember another place that's held in wood called the Devil's Wood by those that fought there, where they saw big, strong, hefty men sitting in the aid station, crying like babies. Tears rolling down their faces with the pain of French food.

Agonising pain, poorer than other places of pain which they've held. You go to the hospital ward tonight, you see that sufferer that has just been operated on or has just been knocked over in some accident. And see the pain, hear the cry, oh, for an injection to relieve the pain.

You go to David, as he writes the 55th Psalm. It's a place of pain, alright. Oh, that the bones which thou hast broken.

Philip Peter, as he rose out of the high tree, falls on the morning of Calvary weeping as though his heart would break. The place of pain, the broken heart. I know, you're right, there are many places of pain besides Calvary.

There, they crucify him, and crucifixion was the deadliest death known to the ancient world. It not only kills a person slowly, but it evades them. It drags every bone out of joint.

It tricks the body in an abominable way. It creates a purge that dries the whole person up. Withers the person.

It's brought an agony to the suffering loss of blood. And the increasing weakness of the system, and yet the poor victim staggers before that pain. And one of the miracles of Calvary is that in six hours, the Lord

has finished it all, dismissed his sin.

And Pilate couldn't believe it, that he was killed already after six hours. Crucifixion was pain. Calvary.

A wretched place. A place of disgust. A place of degradation.

By one occasion, you know, in my travels I had a remarkable experience. I was taken down into the vault of a church, right into those solemn vaults underneath the church. And the guy took us to a great big opening, wasn't very pleasant, led us into this opening of one of the vaults, and he said, Now, these bodies represent the man 800 years dead, have you? Oh, and I heard some of the people exclaiming certain words of disgust, but I didn't feel very wholesome, you know.

But I had the opportunity in my life that I was at something in the atmosphere of that it was an eerie person, I tell you. And we were glad to get out into the bright sunshine. Oh, Calvary.

The place of the dead. I want to tell you that when you come to Calvary, dear friends, you come to the very crown and pedestal of sin. All its camouflage, all its clothes, all its top measures.

All of you! And you're facing this horrible skeleton, right? The skeleton. You've come to be devoted to what sin really is. There you see him, whom you know sin, beginning to take that great place of sin.

He's perfected for our want of love. He was pure for our pollution against him and his father. He was forsaken for our vileness.

He entered darkness because of our darkness. Calvary, where they crucified him. Oh, the face I saw there.

He who did nothing worthy of death, could come to a death so debased and defiling as Calvin. What wonder! Have you come to that place, young man, that young woman? Have you yet come to that place? Could you say in valid proof, I may not know, I cannot tell what pains he had to bear. But I believe it was for me he sunk, he suffered.

Have you done that? Well then, you might be able to say in after years, a golf mono, a great French pastor, the one whose death bed went into deep and deadly pain, prolonged pain, until at last he cried out to those around his bedside, it's the desert in the morning, it's death's evening in the afternoon, it's false prophet at night. Ah, well, he said, it's the desert with Christ, it's death's evening with Christ, it's gold water with Christ, and that's better than the pleasures of sin for a thief. That's faithfulness.

That's triumphant faith. To go to Calvary with Christ, to suffer with Christ and for Christ's sake, is better than the pleasures of sin for a thief. Calvary.

That's how it feels with sin. I remember coming on one occasion to a certain place in Melbourne with my brother Mr. Beck, some of us, a real hallelujah man, and we got to the end of this manse where I was to stay, and as he put them down, ministers said, oh come in, come in Mr. Beck, come in for a while, and he came in and he came in singing, Calvary covers it all, Calvary covers it all. He don't know, I don't know what you call it, but whatever it is, he's got it all right.

He's got it. Badness, bummer, jealousy, jealousy. If you're prepared to come to Calvary, sincerely, hold up.

It's painful. And then I come to a place and you come to a place of propitiation, but unless there is propitiation, there's no pardon. What does propitiation mean first you say? It's a place where the sinner is appeased for.

Explained. Made painful. You come to a place where Christ has been made a propitiation, an appeasement for you.

For me. Where Christ is an explanation for your sins. Where Christ is a mercy to you.

Where God alone will give you mercy. Where you bow before Christ. You know it was in the midst of that Calvary drama, in all the horror and sadness, in all the storm of rage that surrounded those crosses, that Jesus heard the crying, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

Matter of fact, the robber. A robber. He's crying out.

Make it back. The scepter of the family I say unto thee today, shalt thou do with me, and God will forgive him. God will cover him.

How will he cover it all? Oh, you say, preacher, I'm not a robber. You're not a robber. You sure? No, you say.

I'm not a preacher. You sure of that? Will a man rob God? That's what the prophet asked. Think it out.

Did you ever rob God, beloved of Revah? Did you ever come into a holy place, and as a place of prayer, lightly rushing in and out of it? Did you ever rob God of his worship? That is, holy worship. Did you ever rob God of service? Him only shalt thou serve, and do your own service. Did you ever rob God of love? Answer me.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul. No, like me, you've robbed him of love. You've robbed him of obedience.

Walk before me and be thou perfect, he said. You haven't walked before him uprightly in perfection. You've robbed him of obedience many a time.

You had an idea it was his will. You had an idea that would please him, but you didn't do it. You've let the power of Christ join you, but now you refuse to rob him.

Oh, how many other things. Time and talents. We've robbed him of.

And as the prophet well said, you're a curse, you're a curse. Be ever of me. All this whole nation, a curse.

A curse isn't a nice thing to come upon one. And I tell you, the human race, dear friends, is under the curse. Until Calvary removes the curse.

And when Jesus went to Calvary, the moral of it was this, that he gave his reverence. He gave his devotion for our lack of devotion. He gave his obedience for our disobedience.

He gave his divine service for our disservice. He gave his loyalty for our disloyalty. He gave his infinite love for our lovelessness.

He gave his love for our deadly sins. He gave his blood for our badness. So that the curse might be removed.

And he, as a propitiation, could expiate for the curse. It's the emergency for every prodigal penitent. Oh, how well has one great saint written the words, death and the curse.

We are now tough. All Christ was full for thee. But thou hast rained the last darn drop.

It is still now, for me, that stripper cup. Love granted us. Now blessings drop.

That when you come to pass. Have you been pardoned your sins? Has the curse been removed? Have you honestly come to Calvary as a prodigal? Has one acknowledged him? God's been merciful to me, a sinner. We received a pure reward of our deeds.

But, gee, it's the year 1756. That's a good way back. And yet men were just as vain then as today.

And here's a poor sensitive fellow. He lost his mother when he was seven years of age. And he was sent to a harsh school.

The bullies were holding him. And bullied him. And held over him.

As sick as it were. They slapped him constantly. And the poor fellow, in fray of health.

Dreaded and feared every day at school. Entered into melancholy. Melancholy.

And into deep depression. In the darkness. He was always in sin.

Oh my sin. Oh sin. My sin.

And then his mind collapsed. And in the goodness of God. He went into Dr. Cotton's private mental asylum.

And Dr. Cotton tried to help him. Got him more or less up out of his depression. And still there was a shadow.

And then one day after breakfast. In 1756. He opened the bible that he'd been flinging across the room.

In his tantrums. And his anger. And he opened it just at random.

And read these words in Romans 3, 24, 25. Being justified. Relieved.

By his grace. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God.

Christ Jesus. Whom God. Has set forth to be a provocation.

Emergency. An expiation. Through faith in his blood.

He declared his righteousness. For the remission of sins of the past. Through the forbearance of God.

And he tells us. The clouds rose. And the sunlight shined through upon them.

And I saw the sufficiency of the atonement. I said this made pardon in Christ's blood. Immediately.

I believed that I received the gospel. And William Calper was born again. In a mental asylum.

He used to say afterwards. Sure. I was the only man ever saved in a madhouse.

And the grand heart was saved so splendidly. That he wrote some hymns that we will never forget. There is a fountain filled with blood.

Long from Emmanuel's grave. And sinners plunged beneath that blood. Lose all their guilt.

1756. And when I go back to that portion in Romans. Another great writer Dr. Dalman said.

That's the very foundation of the Christian faith. And Calvin declared it. It was one of the richest acts.

It was his act to come upon someone as a priest. Propitiated. Met the Lord.

Fulfilled it. Made himself a mercy suit for poor William Calper. I wonder if you're comfortable with mercy suits.

Some of you don't even think you want mercy. I want to tell you dear friends. You would pity yourself.

You would pour out your tears over yourself. You would come to God saying. Oh have pity upon me.

I'm just a poor helpless kind of thing. And I never really bothered about the gospel much. But I am depending on your pity that won't save you my dear.

You've got to come to a mercy suit for this age. You've got to seek God's mercy at Calvary. Calvary where his son was put forth as a propitiator.

A mercy suit. A propitiator. An exegete.

He's got the moral things to do. Have you come? Well then I'll tell you something else. If you'd like to observe you'll find.

It's a place of peace and compassion. Peace and compassion. He has made peace therefore through the blood of his cross.

He has made peace through the blood of his cross. Oh peace is a precious thing you know. Peace of harmony.

To feel things forgiven. To feel that you've got a place of clear dimensions in the sky. To feel that God is favourable to you.

Oh that's peace. That's why the ancient Eliphaz said to Job Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace. Get to know God and be at peace.

Now did I do that? Said Job. I can't. If I plunge my hand in snow water and wash them they'll be never so clean yet.

Yet he was a boy. Oh for some days there could lay between God and man sightings. And then we begin to sing you know.

Really sing from the heart. After supper, after the broken bread and the poured out wine they sang a hymn. After Calvary comes Resurrection.

And Pentecost. Psalms of victory. People do like singing.

The Englishmen love singing a song about England. Thy land, my land, west land, west land, England. I remember going up the channel in 1949 on a ship and a number of English people were going back.

They couldn't stand Australia. They'd been out here and they were just laughing and looking and then they saw the coastline. And England would be free.

Yeah, they love the songs of England. But the Scotsman wasn't so impressed about that at all. He liked to sing of the souls of young, long, Englishmen though they'd be much simpler, poorer, enslaved folks.

But the Irishman had no time for that. He's not just concerned about his age folks. Do you think that when the mountains of mourn roll down to the sea that satisfies you? And then when you come to Australia and swell.

I don't know, I've satisfied them. I think that me waltzing Matilda's only thing that satisfies them. They ought to get something better.

But the Christian. Oh, the Christian sings that to Calvary. The Christian sings the highest songs of praise at Calvary.

When I surveyed the wondrous cross of Lord John What's at hand? Wasn't it Matthew Arnold at ten in the morning of his death? That's a grand hymn. None better. Rock of ages left for me In the cross of Christ Beneath the cross of Jesus It is that song.

The band in pain Came right up to the place called Calvary With a great burden on his heart But when he looked up and saw the crowd And the three shining figures The burden rolled away And tumbled down and down And disappeared into the sepulchre Very did he carry my sins up Wars, peace with God And when you come You better profess That for the world That you own the crucified That you're on the side of the crucified Why, that's what happened at Calvary, dear friends. I mean, they were all against him, you know. The vast majority had howled into the cross The vast majority sneered at him three times They said, if thou be the Son of God If, if Thou be the Christ They were against him But there were a few folks That made their stand at Calvary Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night At last Comes to Jesus by day With a hundred pounds Joseph of Adam appears To be the vital man I was in Northern Ireland Carefree and determined That she'd never back And then I saw the waves Lashing over them The experience when she went to I then immediately departed Then she said And then went to He was wiping out the curse Of infinite mercy

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