

Ford at Southside-st.louis 02 the Cross

by Stan Ford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of focusing on Jesus Christ and not being distracted by the world's possessions.

Duration: 56:09

Scripture: Matthew 27:37, Mark 15:31, Mark 15:39, John 9:35, John 15:13, John 19:23, John 19:28

Topics: "The Cross", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the 15th chapter of Mark and reads a verse about the centurion who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and declared him to be the Son of God. The preacher emphasizes the significance of this declaration and suggests that the story of Calvary is not just a historical event but has relevance even today. He describes the soldiers who were present at the crucifixion, noting their greed for worldly possessions and their cowardice. The preacher also mentions the soldiers' act of casting lots for Jesus' garments, highlighting their callousness and lack of reverence.

Transcript

I think every time I visit your country, it's not long before someone says to me, Mr. Ford, what's the difference between America and England? Well, I'll tell you one difference. We're a bit smaller than I said we really are. But, of course, there are a number of things that always strike me.

For instance, November the 11th. Some years ago I found myself down in Waynesboro. I think it might have been the last time I was here with you, 11 years ago, I'm not quite sure.

But I found myself in Waynesboro over the 11th of November, and I suppose being an Englishman, they asked if I would speak at the United... well, I'm going to call it the Armistice Day service. And, of course, I readily accepted. It was held in one of the large chapels there, and I went along prepared to speak at the British Armistice Day service.

I found out I was the only one with a black tie. And I found out that there was one vast difference, that the 11th of November with you is a celebration of victory, and with us it's a mourning for the dead. I found out that when I arrived at the church, there was being a procession through the streets led by girls with all sorts of queer things.

And I thought, wow, 11th of November. You know, if you were in England on the 11th of November, and you were strange to what was happening, I'm sure there are a number of questions you would ask. You would stand by the side of the road, and you would see marching to the cenotaph from hamlets and villages and towns a contingent of men, the hind-muffled drunk, but right in the front their number gets smaller and smaller and smaller every year.

Right in the front of the marching folk to the cenotaph, you would see a company of old people, some on sticks, some even being pushed there now in their chairs. And you would say as you looked at them, the great rows of ribbons across their chest. Who are they? Who are they that they shall need the muffled drums, that they shall need the marching bands, that they shall need the contingent of hundreds of men who at the first and last wars have fought? Who are they? I'd let the Jew and say, well, you see, on them there hangs a story.

The older men here will remember. It was the First World War. And they've crossed that little stretch of water that we know as the English Channel.

They've crossed that stretch of water, a contingent of men. And when Kaiser heard that they'd crossed the water, with a sneer upon his lips, he turned to his generals and said, Prisoners, contend to the line. Prisoners, contend to the line.

You ask me who they are? They're the old contemptibles. For a name of fame in my country has become a name of fame. A name that was used in religion.

Prisoners, contend to the line is a name that makes the brave man have his blood run faster in his veins, and desires even old folk to stand upright and march behind the drums. For prisoners, contend to the line has become the oldest and greatest regiment of our land. You must forgive me tonight, that if you and I had gone back through the years, and in the day of the Lord Jesus, we would have heard someone speak at the cross, we would have seen strong men turn pale, and fine women shudder.

For the Bible has said, If there was a means of death that made men shudder, it was crucifixion. If there was a means of death that made men scream, it was crucifixion. But listen.

A name of shame has become a name of fame. That which made men and women long ago fear and grieve, today we dare say, God forbid that I shall glory, save in the cross. Just as might in my land a name of shame has become a name of fame, so in the word of God a name of shame.

God forbid that we won't let a hang-up upon a tree has become a name of fame. Tonight, in a moment or two, I want to talk to you about the cross. I want to talk to you about that which above all else I would glory in.

But I want to talk to you not just at the cross, but at the man at the cross. For we have a lowly old hymn in the Redemption Hymn Book that we sometimes sing, that others who will have the cross of the cross. The Christ of the cross is mighty.

And I want to talk about men's attitude to the cross, but mostly to the Christ of the cross. And so I'm going to read from two portions of the word of God. Again, let me repeat, if you have your Bible and care to turn with me, please do so.

Or you may have your Bible and yet would much rather that I just read the scripture to you. Feel quite at liberty, please, just to listen or to turn, whatever you wish. I'm going to read if I may from the 19th of John, and then we will read from the 15th of Mark.

The 19th of John, verse 28. I'm sorry, verse 23. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts to every soldier a part, and also his coat.

Now the coat was without seam woven from the top to the ends. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rent it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be. That the scripture might be fulfilled, which sayeth, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vestures they did cast lots.

These things therefore the soldiers did. Verse 28. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I first.

Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon this of him, and put it to his mouth. And when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. And he bowed his head, and gave up the guts.

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, for that Sabbath day was a high day, they thought, Pilate, that their legs might be broken, that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came the light, blood, and water.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth, and he saith true, that ye might believe. Now I want to turn over to the fifteenth chapter of Mark, if I may be permitted, please. In the fifteenth chapter of Mark, and I want to read, if I may, just one verse.

Verse thirty-nine, And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he saw by night, and gave up the ghosts, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. Now I repeat that. Truly this man was the Son of God.

Now may the Lord just add his blessing to the reading of his own precious Word. I wonder if you would join me, please, in a word of prayer, before we just consider the message together this evening. Shall we all pray? O God and Father, our hearts are strangely moved within us when we think of one who has taken the base things of this world to confound the things that are wise, and the weak things to confound the things that are mighty.

We thank thee for the one that's taken a name of shame and made it a name of fame. We bless thee that one that has taken death, and through it brought to men and women life. The one that entered into darkness, that we might receive light.

The one who was rejected, that we might be accepted. Tonight, as we think a little more of him, may it please thee to speak to our hearts for his namesake. Amen.

You will have noticed this evening that in the portion of the Word of God from which we read in the nineteenth chapter of John, and in the portion from which we read in the fifteenth chapter of Mark, the writers were very careful to tell us the story not just of the Christ who hung upon a cross, but of the

soldiers that encircled that cross. And with your permission tonight, and I trust in some measure with the help of God, I want to talk with you about the people that encircled the cross. They're verbally so spiritual that you sing over here so often, but ask a question, as you know, a very plaintive question.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? May I repeat that? Were you there, or how many times have you heard it sung, were you there when they crucified my Lord? And I have little doubt that many of you in this service would say, but what do you mean, Mr. Preacher, was I there? It was not my spittle that was mingled with the spittle that ran down his face. It was not my lips that prayed words of rebuke and held them at it. It was not my face that was clenched as my face.

What do you mean, was I there? Oh, please, don't let's argue tonight about terms. I think every one of us, if we're honest, know what I mean. You know as well as I know that those that encircled the cross, whoever they may have been, are those that in some measure represent every one of us here.

And though I can spoke of the high priest, I'm not going to. And though I can spoke indeed of other religious leaders that were there at the cross, I'm not going to. And though I can spoke of the very women, of the women who sat at the foot of the cross, I'm not going to.

But I'm going to take three classes of soldiers that were there at the cross, and as we think of these soldiers, I wonder if I may ask you, sir, would you think of me, please? Or would you think of me, please? Into which of the categories do you fall? First, as I think of those soldiers, the bad part of soldier, it seems to me, I would say are callous people. There would be that. There are soldiers who are callous people.

Could you tell me of anything more callous than this? That they are under the very shadow of the death of the Lord Jesus. They're under the very shadow of one who dines with a crown of thorns on his brow, and nails with his hands and feet. They're under the very shadow of the cross.

There were men that took their dogs and sat down and gaveled. Callous enough that they stood there. Callous enough that they spoke to one another as he dined.

But can you think of anything more callous? That under the very shadow of the cross they should take their dogs and gavel. But then, I think you will grasp me, that as we think of the story of the cross, there must only be callous people there. But I wish I could think of a word stronger, but I can't.

Why, do you understand what I mean? Do you know the burden of my heart? That there must only be callous people there. That there were contemptible people there. Sir, what would you tell me is the most contemptible thing a person can do? Madam, what would you think is the most contemptible thing a person can do? Would you agree with me in this? That the most contemptible thing anyone can do is to desecrate the dead body of a person.

Oh, we are living in a day when there are men and women that will do all sorts of things for a living, folk. But could a man think lower than this, that when someone is dead he will take his knife and desecrate that body? Do you remember what we read when those soldiers came? They came to break the legs of those that were on the cross, and they came to the two thieves and broke their legs to hasten their death. But when they came to Jesus, this is what we read, they saw that he was dead.

They were all ready, and one took his spear, and into the side of one that was dead already, he plunged that spear. Could anything be more contemptible than that? May all praise God for this. Oh, bless God, that as I look at the stories we have read, I read the story of talisman, I read the story of confessional men,

but oh, bless God, I read the story of conversion.

Did we not read, in that wonderful fifteenth chapter of Mark, when the centurion heard that he spoke by that, he said, Surely this was the Son of God. My Bible says, Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the cross, is born of God. The Savior himself, when he looked into the face of a man born blind, who spoke here the story to him, said to the man, Believest thou on the Son of God? And here was one who said, Surely this was the Son of God.

Oh, sir, madam, very courteously I trust, for above all else I would be courteous. Very courteously could I ask you this evening, into which of these three groups do you fall? Talisman? Indifference? Contemptible? Both the better. Why don't you look at the story? At least I want to keep my ear to Scripture.

Look, I have but one desire in being with you, maybe two desires. I have the first desire that I might introduce you to Jesus Christ, my Savior. That's my first desire.

But my second desire is this, that I might preach the Word of God to you. I'm not concerned with anything else. I'm not concerned with what men think or men say.

I'm concerned with what the Bible says. And so I want to keep my ear to the Word of God. As I look at this story, as I say to myself, Here are men who were so talent that under the very shadow of the cross they would take their dice and toss them, I say to myself, but why? Why do men, why do men become so callous as this? Why are women so callous as this? Please.

I believe their sons and daughters are still alive today. I believe there are men and women equally as callous today. Why were they so callous? Well, now, my Bible leads me in no doubt.

My Bible tells me there were three reasons that these people were callous. First of all, they wanted the world's possessions. May I repeat that? They wanted the world's possessions.

You see, the Lord Jesus had very little of this world's goods. I know there are questions to be answered, and I know not the answer to them. You have every right to come to me and say that if Jesus was born of no estate in a manger, if his mother, when she offered the sacrifice for the purification of herself after she'd given birth to a child, what happened to the gold and frankincense and myrrh that the wise men bought? I mean, gold is worth something in the markets of men, and myrrh is one of the most precious of things, and frankincense? Why, it was worth very, very much.

What happened to the gold and frankincense and myrrh? If she could only offer her pigeons for the purification of herself after the birth of her child. And I don't know what happened to the gold and frankincense and myrrh. I only remind you, of course, that despite what is popular opinion, or popular tradition, I only remind you that the Bible tells us that those wise men did not come at Christmas time.

They did not come to a stable. It says they came to a house, and they did not come to a baby. It says when they saw the young child.

So, even after the order of ordinary men, the gold and frankincense and myrrh would have been given long after the eight-day period which was necessary before she went to offer her sacrifice for her purification. And I only know that immediately after the wise men presented their gold and frankincense and myrrh, that Joseph and Mary took the young child and fled for two years. Maybe it was God's provision for them while they were down in Egypt.

The Bible doesn't tell me. I don't know. But this I do know.

And as Jesus walked in and out amongst men and women, he bore our sins. But more than this, the Bible says he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. And where men knew poverty, Christ knew poverty.

Where men knew suffering, Christ knew suffering. Where men left, Christ worked. Where men was misunderstood, Christ was misunderstood.

Or where men died, Christ died. He bore our griefs. He carried our sorrows.

But there was one thing they saw in poverty. There was one thing that Jesus did have at the end of his journey. It was the only thing.

During his life, the Bible could say that foxes and bulls and the frogs of the air had their nests, but the Son of Man had nowhere for their nests. There was nothing he had. At the end of his journey, he possessed one thing that was useful in the markets of men.

It was a garment. It was woven from top to bottom. It was woven throughout, the Scripture says, without a seam.

It was as calm as there was one body at the market. Those soldiers stripped him, and upon his shoulders they placed a robe of barley. And there they went.

They took his garments and they divided it one to another. But when they came to his house of garments, they said, We won't wear it. We won't care.

It's worth too much. We'll toss dice for it. And there were men and women who wanted the world's possessions.

They wanted the fine garment. They wanted something that could be sold for money. Maybe the story of Calvary is not so old-fashioned, huh? Maybe it's not just a story of 2,000 years ago.

But come on, let's be honest. If there is one thing above all else that has turned men's eyes away from Christ, it's a lack of the world's possessions. We think sometimes time for pleasure, time for business, but the place to crucify, not a place that he could enter in the heart for which he died.

And there are men and women today who are preoccupied with making wealth, preoccupied with providing good things for themselves, preoccupied with this world's goals. They take their eyes away from Jesus. I heard someone say something very true, just two weeks ago.

In his life, I heard a dear brother referring to some people that lived in the very district in which he lived. And this is what he said. Our good friend Mr. Brand, some of you know him.

Our good friend Mr. Brand, there in North Atlanta Bible Chapel. Speaking of support from the doctors at him, he said, Do you know something? They've got a \$90,000 home, house, a \$90,000 house, and a \$10,000 home. Oh, I thought that was very true.

But God so occupied with his world's goods, that the great treasures of God, the great blessings of God, they took off. They took their eyes away from the greatest seed of God's love, that mortal man never takes upon. But they wanted the world's possessions.

And by the way, plenty of people in the Bible like that. Remember the tenth of March? The Bible said he was rich. The Bible said he was young.

The Bible said he was a ruler. Well, I say to you young folk, what is it you want in life? Do you say to yourself, I know what I'd like in life. I'd like to live well.

Well, he had it. And by the way, most folk that get well, not everyone mind you, but most folk that get well, they get it when they reach an age that they can't endure it. Isn't that right? You know what happens in their life? And when eventually they've got it, then they've got to start spending it out.

Doctors, especially in America, will not help them. They're always there. They don't belong.

But here was a man who was rich when he was young. He could enjoy it. And listen, he was a ruler.

There are people who think the only thing that matters in life is to get well. The thing that matters in life is that you have health and strength. You have all that.

There are people who think the thing that matters in life is to have power. Well, if only I could say that this man is only a hero. Well, would that man come in your car? Well, that's what this young man had.

Rich, young ruler. But there was one thing he didn't have. He didn't have salvation.

And Jesus looked at him, and the young man ran and fell on his face before the Lord and said, Good Lord, how ignorant people can become, can't they? You know, they can have the greatest education that their rulers. They can have the greatest wealth that their rich. They can have the greatest health that their young.

And being so ignorant of the simplest things in life. Good master, what must I do to inherit? You don't do anything to inherit. You're getting the family.

I haven't got anything, but just a little bungalow that's, you know, head over heels with a mortgage. But if I was to die tomorrow, the little bit I have got, my children would get, not because they've done anything, but because they're my children. You inherit when you own the family.

And listen, in a Jewish family, that's stronger than in a Gentile family. Under the law of Moses, you couldn't even sell your inheritance. You had to leave it.

Do you remember the story of Naboth? Yes. And the young man, the ruler, he hadn't learned the simplest things. What must I do to inherit? He hadn't learned that if you want to inherit, you'd better get in the family.

You'd better be born again. And Jesus looked at him and spoke to him about the law, and he said, I deserve these things for my youth. And Jesus looked him on in love, and he said, one thing thou lackest, thou shall whatsoever thou hast not give to the poor, and can't take up the cross in thy name.

And he went away. He grieved at that day, for he was rich. Jesus put his finger right on the very question.

He put his finger on the corpse that he had before the God. He said, get rid of that corpse. And he went away grieved.

For a time had I asked him, where are you in the cross? Are you around the cross with those that toss their dice because you want the world's possessions? You've never trusted Jesus Christ because you know that Christ will make a claim on your life, and he will, he will. I have never, never, never subscribed to this modern sort of preaching that says trust Jesus and everything in the garden will be lovely. Oh, listen my friend.

If trusting Jesus Christ meant that you would lose everything you've got down here, you're still over-trusting. Not only beyond God, but for the glory of God, you're still over-trusting. And I can't speak for you.

I only know as far as I'm concerned that trusting Jesus Christ cost me my livelihood. It cost me the way I earn my bread and butter. It cost me almost everything by hand.

I look around and I see some Christians playing with the world. And my heart moves. It cost me how I earned my bread and butter, my living, when I trusted the Savior.

And can I tell you this? I thank God that ever I trusted him. I bless God that ever I said yes to him. For better turn your eyes upon a Christ of the cross and live! And have the world's possessions and perish.

For what so impresseth a man as to claim the whole world? Do it his own soul. But there was another reason, they think, that they turned their eyes away from Christ. Not only because they wanted the world's possessions for the innocent, because they wanted the world's pleasures.

Or they were tossing their debts. Oh, we'd better have some gambling. Now, don't let's get away from this.

The Christian church will get to know all this. The Christian church will get to know all this. The gambling they know all this.

Before someone can win, someone has to lose. That's what gambling's all about. Before someone can win, someone has to lose.

And that's it all. And the Christian church will get to know all this. Do you know the first gambler in the Bible? They called his name Adam.

God said, the day you eat their heart, you'll surely die. And old Adam took a chance with God. He said, I'm a gambler.

See whatever it's like. And he did what God said he mustn't do. He took a chance with God.

But listen, he lost. He lost. But the tragedy is this, that he became the father of a great family of gamblers.

And right down through the agony of poverty, you can see them. Men and women that took a chance with God. There was a lot who pitched his tents towards Sodom and Gomorrah.

That's what happened then. But it wasn't long before he got into Sodom and Gomorrah. Listen, you young folk.

It wasn't long before Sodom and Gomorrah brought it to him. He lost. He took a chance with God.

And he lost. He lost his wife. He lost some of his children, his son-in-laws, and his grandchildren.

He lost his name and he lost his character. He almost lost his life. And if it wasn't for a verse in the New Testament, I would have told you he'd lost his soul as well.

But the New Testament tells me he hadn't, so I mustn't say it. But it's only the mercy of God that enables me to say he didn't lose his soul. He took a chance with God.

Oh friend, don't take a chance with God. These people tossed their dice. There they couldn't turn their eyes upon the Christ.

The greatest sin of God's love. The greatest manifestation of God's mercy. And the world's treasures took their eyes off him.

Things took their eyes off him. Possessions. And I believe this.

I don't know how far you would go with me in this, but I believe this, sir. I believe that if sin has slain its prisons, pleasure has slain its captive persons. Most of them were going to take one pleasure.

Except that it is that it takes our eyes off the most important thing of all. But there was one other thing. Look at it.

Callous. Callous because they wanted the world's possessions. Callous because they wanted the world's popularity.

I'm sorry, the world's pleasures. Callous because they wanted the world's popularity. This is what we read.

These things the soldiers did. These things the soldiers, we're all thieves, the soldiers did. Now, if any of you men are familiar with tossing dice, you know this, don't you? That you don't have two people toss dice at the same time, do you? It's one man that tosses his dice.

And you think the other man may not try, but he's ready to show. One man tosses his dice. But these things the soldiers did.

Is not the Bible telling us this? But there they gathered around that god, and there they took their dice. There they began to toss them. And maybe one of them began to turn his head upon the one on the cross.

And the other one said, Because they wanted the world's popularity. There wasn't one of them prepared to turn and say, What a foolish thing to do under this, under this. You men won't mind me speaking to you.

I'd rather speak to men than anyone else I know. Listen, you men. Come on, let's face it up.

Men! Is it not a fact that there are thousands of men and women in St. Louis and all this? Thousands of men who haven't trusted Christ because they're frightened of what their neighbors will say. Frightened of what the man who works on the bench by their side will say. Frightened indeed of what the man that works in the office will say.

Frightened of what the fellow in the store will say. But it isn't, oh no, please, please. It's not that they wouldn't trust the Savior.

It's just that they're not prepared to face the ritual of their friends. Nor them. He wanted the world's popularity.

He wanted to go to the rest. He wanted to make time with the others. And they turned their eyes from Christ.

Oh, friend, we used to sing an old hymn in the Sancti movie hymn book. We don't sing it very often today, but let me quote it to you. My old companions, fare thee well.

I will not go with thee to hell. I think it makes sense. I do.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Tell us, men. I say, contemptible men? No, no, I don't believe there are any of them here. I don't believe such a person would be here.

But you know and I know that there are such persons today. I repeat, could you think of anything more contemptible than one should carve and drive a spear into the hide of one that was dead already? How contemptible. I wonder why he did it.

Now, I don't know. The Bible doesn't tell me. It tells me he said it.

It doesn't tell me why. He didn't do it to hasten his death. He was dead already.

He knew he was dead. The Bible says he was dead. Why did he do it? Now, you may think this is a fascination and a trick, and I may be wrong.

I don't think I am, but maybe I'm wrong. But if history has told me anything, history has told me this, that if there were a people, if there are a people that are hated, it was and is the Jewish people. Still today.

In the time of the Romans, you may read Josephus, the Jewish historian, you may read any of the profound historians, and you know this is true, you young folks still in high school that are doing something to that history, you know. But if the Romans conquered a people that would continually have thorn in their flesh, that people, you may look at the Roman Empire and relax. You may trace it, as you know, there has been three Roman Empires.

You may trace it in whatever area it went, even when they came over and conquered them, those original folks who lived in their land were not a thorn in the flesh of the Romans, anywhere near as much as the Jews were. And here was a soldier. He was there to put down the Jews.

He was there to keep them under his hand. He was there to prove the power of Rome. Can I imagine? Did the man have a wealth away in Rome? Was he separated from his family and his loved ones? Had he grown the stone that he had? Had he grown the head of the people? Because there were Jews who were put down under the hand of the Jews.

He stood there looking across and read the King of the Jews. He could read it. You see, it was written in Latin, the language of power.

It was written in Hebrew, the language of religion. It was written in Greek, the language of love. He could read it, the King of the Jews.

And did he that day look at the Christ inside of him, the King of the Jews? Oh, so you're right, the other Jews. In other words, because someone else had done him evil, he took it out on Christ. Because someone else had done him evil, he took it out on Christ.

And I can't think of anything more contemptible than that. And yet I see that every day of my life. I see that every day of my life.

You ask the person concerning the claims of the Saviour. You ask them if they will trust the Lord. And do you know what many of them will say? They'll look at you and say, have me become a Christian? I am a man who calls himself a Christian.

Yes. And because someone else has done something evil, they take it out on Christ. May I use a silly illustration that I may have used the last time I was with you.

I don't know. If I didn't, forgive me, I shouldn't. But when my daughter was just a wee little child, she used to think she could play the piano.

Now, she was the only one who thought, because we'd never had a piano. But if she could get into a house where there was a piano, my little girl used to sit down at the piano and bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. What would you have thought if one day I found myself in a home where there was a piano, and my little girl sat down at the piano, and I noticed that there on the piano was a piece of music written by Mr. Who wrote music? Did he write music? Oh, that was a man we had yesterday.

I'm sorry I'm too late. Mr. Chauvin. How about that? Where are you, thief? A piece of music written by Mr. Chauvin.

And I took it and I put it in front of my little girl and I said, Janet, would you play that for me, please? You know, she would have looked at it as though she were Paris. And she would have said, yes, daddy, I'll play it for you. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang.

Now, in the name of common sense, would I have the right to turn to my wife and say, did you hear that, Nick? I thought Chauvin could write music. The jolly fellow can't write a thing. Bang, bang, bang, bang.

Would I have the right to judge Mr. Chauvin's music by my little girl standing on the piano? Sir, neither have you the right to judge my savior by someone else sitting down to heavenly music and sometimes making discord, but at least trying. Nick, you can't judge Christmas by what someone else has done. And that soldier looked and read the King of the Jews and he said, I'll show you what I did.

And he took some of the old sundial. He took an old old toast. Hello.

Friends, come on, I'm telling you, you old crusty little scumbag. So why are you here to come and blame me that Christ has done you, to make me foolish? Yet because someone else who calls himself a Christian was gone, you take it out on the saints. You'll forgive me.

What you know I don't ask you to forgive me because I'm going to say it when you don't forgive me. How contemptible. How contemptible to take it out on Christ when someone else has done you.

Were you then? Oh goodness. Oh thank God. Oh bless God tonight.

There were no holy talents men there. I'm a contemptible man there but hallelujah there was a converted man there. As he looked at the cross.

No, no, he didn't look at the dice. No, no, he didn't look at the garments. No, no, he didn't look even at the faces of his friends.

When he saw his own pride out he looked at Christ. He didn't look at him and see in him that which represented all the things that he owned. He looked at him and saw him in his agony and heard him in his tragedy.

And he said surely this was the Son of God. It does doesn't it? Oh please it does doesn't it? It poses a tremendous question doesn't it? That if Jesus Christ was the Son of God what else would he do in death? I mean believe me if he is dying whatever it is he's dying. I said the other night.

As many of you know it is my joy and I spend I suppose three months of every year among undergraduates in Cambridge. And over the course of the year if there are questions that are asked and so many of them are so difficult that if there are questions that are asked there is always one question that's asked. And right at the top of the list of questions I get asked by these young men so filled with academic knowledge that every time they open their mouth they show my ignorance.

But if there's one question they do ask me a thing. And for it doesn't matter. How can one man die for the sins of millions? How can one man die for the sins of millions? Especially when that man died before I was even born.

How can one man die for the sins of millions? Does it make sense? Mathematically it's ridiculous. Is that what some of you young folks are asking? Listen there's nothing wrong with asking that. Oh you young folks let me say this to you.

Let me say this to you from the depth of my heart. If you have questions don't block them out. Ask them! Ask them! Don't you ever allow anyone to tell you you mustn't think.

Even if your thinking leads you into pathways that folks are not pleased with. Don't you allow anyone to tell you you mustn't think. Don't you ever bottle up your questions with your thinking.

For you remember though you may not know the answer there is an answer to them. Whenever I get asked that question I look at them and I say with a shrug on my shoulder saying, I've nothing to say to that question. Because one man can't die for the sins of millions.

One man can not die for the sins of millions! Of course he can't! But one God can! Surely this was the summit goal. I must ask you even in imagination to come further with me as I close. There were soldiers and Roman soldiers.

There were of course for the Passover feast when this thing happened on the eve of the Passover. They no doubt would be camping on the hillside that overlooks Jerusalem. I can see them that night, it's cold night.

There's a fire and as I look I see a man and he nestles in his warmth. What a God that man. It is.

He's got a God! That's all he's got. I must pretend that I'm away from the company of others for such men don't have friends. Away from the company of others I see another man with a face that has a style of life and I say that man's not got a garment, that man's got a gross.

But I look again and I know not where he was. Maybe separated from his men for he was a centurion. And as I look at him I see no garment in which he huddles to keep himself warm.

I see no gross upon his face that tells of his holiness. But I look at him and he's got glory. He's got glory that day for that day he perceived the grace of God.

That day he said this is the Son of God. Tonight I want to ask you may I sing please may I were as you've been when they crucified my Lord if you were what would you have got of it? A garment that will perish with the moths. A garment that will be with me in time and with me in eternity or because of the cross.

Have you trusted that Saviour? And can you say Christ this is me the hope of the morning. The answer's yours. May I repeat my text of last night.

What will you do then with Jesus who is called the cross? I want to in closing we can sing together please. When I surveyed

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