

## **John 19:25-30, “Human history is ‘finished’ with me.”**

In today’s message we see Jesus’ death on the cross. Sometimes we experience life events that make us question, “God, are you there?” Certainly those watching the death of Christ would have been experiencing deep and troubling emotions ... Jesus Himself wondered if God had taken notice of His suffering, Psalm 22:1, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me ... ?”

Wait, Psalm 22 is in the Old Testament, written hundreds of years before the death of Jesus ... what’s going on here? In Mark and Matthew we know that Jesus utters these same words with a deep groaning, Matthew 27:46 (HCSB), “About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lemá sabachtháni?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” That’s raw emotion and desperation in plain view.

So, if you ever faced a crisis and desperately cried out to God, feeling abandoned and hurt ... you have good company ... Jesus understands that completely.

I take comfort in knowing that the death of Jesus and His emotional outburst was consistent with God’s plan and purpose for His life. We want life to be sweet and whole, wonderful and joyous ... but we’re realists and we know that the opposite is often true, our experiences are sour and empty, routine and draining.

I want you to know God’s plan and purpose can triumph when life hurts and you feel desperate. That is one of the many messages of hope I hear in the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection. And that message rings clear also in the Christmas story: taxes, travel, pregnancy, no room in the inn, Herod’s crusade against the child, their fleeing as refugees to Egypt. There’s a lot of “ouch” in the first Christmas.

So, today let’s tie together the “finished work of Christ on the Cross” to the Christmas story, and we’ll do that by looking at the four angelic appearances in the Christmas story: 1. To Mary, 2. To Joseph, 3. To Zechariah (who’s that!?), and 4. The Shepherds.

First, our primary passage, John 19:23-30 ...

John 19:23-24, <sup>23</sup> When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

<sup>24</sup> So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it. This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing." So that is what they did.

- Psalm 22:16, My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. (Romans would not 'invent' crucifixion for another 300 years!)
- Psalm 22:18, They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing.

John 19:25-27, Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.

<sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son."

<sup>27</sup> And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

- Psalm 22:17, I can count all my bones. My enemies stare at me and gloat.
- Imagine counting your child's ribs at the cross ... that is one of the clearest pictures of the "sin problem" Jesus died to fix.

John 19:28, Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty."

- Psalm 22:14-15, My life is poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, melting within me. <sup>15</sup> My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead.

John 19:29, A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips.

- Psalm 69:3, 21, I am exhausted from crying for help; my throat is parched. My eyes are swollen with weeping, waiting for my God to help me ... they offer me sour wine for my thirst.

John 19:30, When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

- Jesus didn't "die young, before His time."
- Jesus died when nothing was left on His "bucket list." What was on Jesus' bucket list? The Christmas angels tell us ...

## Four Angelic Christmas Visitations

### A. Angels to Zechariah: The Lord!

Luke 1:17, He (John the Baptist) will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the **coming of the Lord**. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."

### B. Angels to Mary: Son of God and King of Israel!

Luke 1:26-38

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee,

<sup>27</sup> to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

<sup>28</sup> Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

<sup>29</sup> Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

<sup>30</sup> "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!

<sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.

<sup>32</sup> He will be very great and will be called the **Son of the Most High**. The Lord God will give him the **throne of his ancestor David**.

<sup>33</sup> And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

<sup>34</sup> Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

<sup>35</sup> The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.

<sup>36</sup> What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she's now in her sixth month.

<sup>37</sup> For nothing is impossible with God."

<sup>38</sup> Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

### **C. Angel to Joseph: A savior!**

Matthew 1:20, the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, **for he will save his people from their sins.**”

### **D. Angels to Shepherds: Savior, Messiah, and Lord!**

Luke 2:8-11, <sup>8</sup>That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, <sup>10</sup> but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup> The **Savior**—yes, the **Messiah**, the **Lord**—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

**Main Point:** Luke 1:37, “For nothing is impossible with God.” God began Jesus’ story with the impossible, and now the story is finished impossibly (Mary is standing there at the cross watching her Son die, I wonder if she remembered these words from the Angel spoken 33 years earlier?) ... and impossibly, Jesus is resurrected, and impossibly the Church is born, and now, we worship Him 2000 years later, hoping for God’s impossible plans for us to come true.

A closing prayer, “Dear God, we thank You that a Christmas faith is about us and our hopes and how Jesus can do the impossible as we put our faith in Him. Finish Your work within each of us! We declare You to be ‘Son of God,’ ‘King of Israel,’ ‘Savior,’ ‘Messiah,’ and ‘Lord.’ In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”