The veil of the temple rent in twain

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev D.G.Macdonald

[0:00] We're going to turn back now to the passage that we read together in Luke's Gospel in chapter 23. I want us to read again at verse 44.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.
It was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. When I was a little boy, still not very big, but when I was a young boy, one of the dreaded tasks that I was given to do was to put the dogs in at night. And the reason I hated putting the dogs in at night was because the dog shed was over by the buyer, which was quite a distance from the house. And when you went out with the dog's tins with their food in it, to begin with, things were okay because you were near the light of the house.
[1:31] But the further you got away from the house, the darker it got. And I used to hate the dark. And you'd come near to the steading, and it would get darker and darker still.

And then when you went into the steading itself, it was almost, but not quite, pitch dark. And you faced the tyranny of your imaginations as to what was lurking behind these shadows, behind these bales of hay, what was round the corner.
And all these things used to scare me as a wee lad. I used to loathe it. But the truth be told, I've never experienced pitch darkness. There's always just a little light.
There was always a little of the moonlight. Sometimes more than others. But there was always just a little light. I was speaking at one point to my father-in-law.
And it was a time a number of years ago when there was meant to be an eclipse of the sun. And I found it a wee bit disappointing because I thought during the eclipse of the sun that there would be pitch darkness, but it wasn't like that.
[2:49] But he recalled a time when he was at another part of the world where there was an eclipse of the sun and there was pitch darkness. And he said it was the most eerie experience.

It was something that was kind of disturbing because there was this stillness. There was this silence in the darkness. But he said the most eerie thing that you suddenly became aware that the birds had stopped singing.
They obviously were programmed to think that it was the middle of the night. And even although it was the middle of the day, the birds stopped singing.
In this passage of Scripture, we read about an extraordinary darkness that hit the earth when Christ was crucified.
We read about an eclipse of the sun that took place that resulted in the earth being shrouded in pitch darkness. It was a darkness that had hit the world like it had never been hit before and would never be hit again.
[4:04] And it lasted for three hours when the sun should have been at its brightest. At a moment when nobody expected it, suddenly there was a darkness that no one could fathom.

And it was an eclipse of the sun that rather than it being a physical phenomenon, was actually a spiritual phenomenon. It was a spiritual phenomenon that would shroud the whole land in this deep darkness of a most extraordinary nature.
And what I want us to do this morning is to consider something of this darkness that hit the world when Christ was crucified.
I want to suggest to you four things. First of all, that this darkness was the darkness of sadness. And then secondly, that this darkness was the darkness of sin.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:21:02

Then thirdly, that this darkness was the darkness of Satan. And then lastly, that this darkness was the darkness of suffering.
[5:18] First of all then, I want us to see that this darkness was the darkness of sadness. The Bible takes a holistic view of man.

It recognises that we are not just body, but we're body, mind and spirit. But it also takes a holistic view of the world. So that we see that the world is not just a physical entity, but a physical entity that is caught up in and affected by spiritual realms.
And this we see most clearly if we were to look at Paul's epistle to the Romans. Well, there in that epistle, Paul speaks of the creation in these terms.
He says, We know that the whole creation has been groaning in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
So here it is speaking of the physical entity that is being affected by the spiritual realms. So that the whole created order is groaning, almost as if in childbirth, waiting for the children of God to be revealed.
[6:53] Well, here in Luke chapter 23, we are reading about the whole created order going into a mourning, being affected by what it is witnessing happening to the Lord Jesus Christ.

John in his gospel tells us that Christ is the one who brought the whole created order into being. Through him, all things were made. Without him, nothing was made that has been made. Likewise, the writer to the Hebrews, he tells us that through Christ that God made the whole universe.
So he is the one who brought the created order into being. You turn to the book of Revelation, and there you get a glimpse of the praise that is given to this Christ creator in heaven itself.
And there we read of how those around the throne, they sing the praises of this creator Christ, and they say that he is worthy to receive glory and honor and power, for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
[8:12] Well, here creation does not witness Christ the creator being given the glory and the honor and the power that he is due.

But rather what creation witnesses is this, that on a tree that Christ made, he is nailed. That from the earth that he brought into being, he is suspended.
By the men that he created in his own image, he is mocked and crucified. And the created order is so sad that the treatment of the Lord and the creator, that she shrouds herself in darkness.
And the very birds would stop singing. The birds would have stopped singing at the moment that Jesus was crucified.
It is the sadness of creation. But also, I believe this darkness speaks of the sorrow, the sadness of the Father.
[9:15] No physical phenomenon happens simply by chance. And no physical phenomenon so full of spiritual significance and symbolism happens by chance.

This is a darkness sent by God. It was prophesied in the Old Testament. In the book of Amos, we read about this day.
Where God says, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and all your singing into weeping.
But then he goes on to describe this day. In these terms, he says, This day will be like that time mourning for an only son.
It will be a day of mourning for an only son. How God the Father had stressed his love for God the Son.
[10:18] This is my beloved son, he said. With him I am well pleased. This is my beloved son. Hear ye him.

And yet at this moment, the son of his love, the son of his pleasure, is being rejected, ridiculed, crucified. And the whole scene is something that grieves the Father.
It saddens the Father. And this darkness that comes across the earth expresses the grief, the sadness of the Father at this treatment that has been given to his son.
It is speaking of the sadness of the Father as he watches his beloved son being crucified on the cross of Calvary. It's the darkness of sadness.
But secondly, I want us to see that this is also the darkness of sin. Yesterday at the service, we were acknowledging something of the sovereignty of God and the sovereign grace of God.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:21:02

[11:29] But at the same time, recognising that man has been given the ability to make choices, to take decisions. This is very clear, even when we look back into the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve were put in the Garden. And there they were given a commandment, not to eat of the tree of knowledge, good and evil. And they were given the freedom to choose, whether to choose to obey the commandment of God or to disobey the commandment of God.
And of course, as we know, they chose to disobey. And they plummeted themselves and ourselves into sin. To the extent that now our wills are slaves to sin.
But yet we are still individuals that have the right of choice and the need to make decisions. In the passage that we read in Luke's Gospel, we read about how at the time of Christ, the people were faced with a very real and clear choice that they had to make with respect to Jesus.
And the choice was this, Barabbas or Jesus? Pilate was saying to them, I will release to you a prisoner.
[12:54] I will release to you the Lord Jesus. And they are saying, no, crucify him. We want Barabbas. Pilate then comes back to them again.

He's saying, but Jesus has done thing wrong. Who will I release to you? Will it be Jesus or Barabbas? And again, they're crying out for Barabbas. And they're saying of Jesus, crucify him. Crucify him. Not this man, but Barabbas. When Peter records this event when he's preaching on the day of Pentecost, this is what he says.
He says that God had glorified his servant Jesus, who you handed over to be killed. And you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.
You disowned the Holy and the Righteous One. And you asked for a murderer to be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. He's saying, you made the choice.
[13:55] And the choice was to murder the very author of life. And you chose Barabbas in his place. Now again, how does scripture interpret this choice?

Well, again, if we look to see what John says in his gospel. In John chapter 3, this is what John says. He says, this is the verdict.
He is saying that the verdict is this, that light has come into the world, but men love darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, does not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.
He is saying that this was the choice. It was the choice between darkness and light. And men chose darkness instead of light. So when Christ was crucified on the cross and the darkness came over the whole earth, what we were witnessing there is the choice of mankind.
This is the verdict. They chose darkness instead of light. They chose that darkness for themselves when they rejected Jesus and preferred Barabbas, the murderer.
[15:13] Do you know there is that rather disturbing account of the time when Judas was seated with Christ and the disciples in that upper room as they observed the Passover.

And Jesus is speaking to Judas and Judas, he tells Judas that what he has to do to go off and to do it quickly. And Judas, we're told, leaves the room and he goes outside.
And then there's just that wee sentence that says, and it was night. He went out into the darkness because that is what he chose.
He turned his back on the very light of life and he walked out into the darkness of sin. This is the darkness that struck the world when the world rejected Jesus Christ and crucified him on a cross.
It is the darkness that spoke of the sin that we had chosen rather than the Christ that God had sent.
It's the darkness of sadness.
[16:20] It's the darkness of sin. But thirdly, we see that it was the darkness of Satan. The darkness of Satan. Jesus described Satan, the devil, as the prince of this world.

And when speaking of the crucifixion, he said, the prince of this world is coming. He spoke of the crucifixion in terms of it being the devil's finest hour.
And you remember when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, that Jesus said to them, why? Why do you come? Why do you come out against me as a thief with swords and staves?
He said, every day I was with you in the temple courts and you didn't lay a hand on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness. Or if you like, this is your hour and the hour when darkness reigns.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:21:02

You see, throughout the life and the ministry of Jesus, the devil had made numerous attempts to destroy the Son of God.
[17:36] But each time, his efforts were thwarted. Each time, his efforts were frustrated. But now, this was to be the hour of the prince of this world.

This was to be the hour where darkness would apparently reign. This would be the hour when Christ would be crucified and the devil would rejoice.
The darkness that came across the earth, it spoke of the very power of darkness itself. It spoke of the rule and the reign of Satan.
It spoke of his character. It spoke of the kind of authority that he would wish to exert. And when we think of darkness, we think of a number of things.
We think of evil. We think of fear. We think of ignorance. We think of confusion. We think of everything that is horrible and disturbing.
[18:41] And when we see this darkness at this hour, then we're seeing the kind of reign that Satan would have. He would have a reign of evil, a reign of fear, a reign that was filled with ignorance and deceit, a reign of confusion, a reign that would be disturbing and horrible.

That is the kind of reign that he would have if given his way. He is the very prince of darkness itself.
This darkness, then, was the darkness of sadness.
It was the darkness of Satan. It was also the darkness of suffering. This darkness was not just witnessed by men, but experienced by Christ.
When we think of Christ's suffering on the cross, we often perhaps are tempted to think of his physical suffering. And indeed, we mustn't in any way belittle the physical suffering of Jesus.
We have a hint of it even in the Psalms when we read of that intense thirsting he endured. When we read of how he's saying, it's like, even my bones are sticking out and staring at me.
[19:57] When he speaks of his hands and his feet being pierced with his nails. When we think of the crown of thorns that was pushed into his head. When we think of the way in which he was beaten in all sorts of ways by the soldiers that surrounded him.

All these things, they speak of the most intense and awful physical suffering that the Lord had to endure. But the physical agony was nothing compared to the spiritual agony that Jesus had to go through.
Again, we sang in Psalm 22 that spoke something of the spiritual assault that was endured by Jesus. And the picture is of Jesus being surrounded by these wild bulls of Bashan.
Being surrounded by these vicious dogs that are snapping at his feet. And the picture is of the powers of darkness assaulting him. Of him being absolutely tormented and tyrannized by evil forces, by dark forces, by the devil and by his minions.
Where he has given no peace and no rest. Where he's being attacked from all sides by the very powers of darkness themselves. There is this intense and grotesque spiritual assault upon the Lord Jesus Christ when he is hanging there on the cross of Calvary.
[21:16] The spiritual assault is awful and agonizing. But there is something even worse than that. It is the spiritual, if you like, abandonment. When Jesus hung upon the cross, he was abandoned.

He was abandoned by men. His disciples had fled. Even bold and brave Peter who said, Lord, to prison and to death for you.
I will never leave. Even if the others forsake you, I will never leave. To prison and to death, Lord. And yet, he went in flight. There was an angel.
There was an angel there strengthening Jesus. But you come to the cross of Calvary and there is no word of any angel sent from heaven to give Jesus any support or any strength.
But the worst thing of all for the Christ, for the Son of the Father's love was this, that the light of God's face was obscured.
[22:18] It was eclipsed. To the point that Jesus cried out on the cross, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

The face of the Father, which he had looked upon from all eternity, the light of the Father's love that had shone upon him, was eclipsed.
And he couldn't see it. And for him it was darkness, the most awful spiritual darkness that came over Jesus because he was the bearer of our sins.
What was Jesus suffering here? He was suffering hell because hell is described in Scripture as outer darkness.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:21:02

And that is exactly the darkness that was being experienced by our Christ here. You look at the cross and you see every single ingredient of hell present.
[23:24] You see the suffering. You see the thirsting. You see the separation. You see the darkness. It's all there because Jesus was there as our substitute, as the one who would bear our sins, and therefore as the one who was enduring our hell and experiencing every part of it for you, for me.

this was the darkness of suffering that belonged to the souls of men and women who were under the wrath and the curse of God.
But it was the darkness that Jesus experienced in our place. The darkness of suffering. Now normally, darkness is something that we fear, something that we dread.
But this darkness, this darkness experienced by the Lord Jesus, this darkness of sadness, this darkness of Satan, this darkness of suffering, this darkness is a darkness for which we ought to give thanks to God.
because it is the darkness that is the precursor to freedom and it is the darkness that is the precursor to fellowship.
[24:48] Do you remember in the Old Testament, in the story of the Exodus, the children of Israel were in bondage. They were under the tyrannical and cruel rule of Pharaoh and Pharaoh is unwilling to let them go.

God sends Moses and Moses goes and he says, God says, let my people go and Pharaoh refuses time and time again. And so God sends plagues upon the land of Egypt.
One plague after another and yet each time Pharaoh's heart is hardened and he will not let the people go. But then we read that this final plague comes.
The plague of the slaughtering of the firstborn. And after that plague Pharaoh's resolve is broken and the people of God are set free.
They are let go and they begin their journey in the wilderness to go to the promised land. So the tenth and the final plague was the slaughtering of the firstborn.
[25:57] But what was the ninth plague? What was the plague that came before the slaughtering of the firstborn? It was the plague of darkness.

Darkness hit Egypt. Then there was the slaughter of the firstborn. Then there was freedom from bondage. Look at the cross of Calvary.
What do we see? We see darkness. We see the slaughter of the firstborn, the only begotten Son of God. And then we see freedom.
We see freedom from bondage. Because on the cross of Calvary Jesus was making mockery of the very powers of darkness.
Through his death he was destroying him who had the very power of death. That is the devil. We read again in John's gospel that the darkness could not overcome the light.
[27:04] But rather it was the light who conquered the darkness. It was Jesus who experienced the darkness, who died the death of the firstborn and did so in order to set the people of God free.

He has released us. He has released us from the power of Satan, from the slavery of sin. He has delivered us from the powers of darkness.
He has delivered us even from the suffering of hell because he has taken my hell. He has taken what I deserve and therefore he has set me free.
And so this day we give thanks for the darkness experienced by Christ because through that darkness we have come to experience the liberty of the light of life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
We experience freedom, freedom from fear so that we can know joy that's unspeakable and peace that passes understanding.
[28:08] Darkness was the precursor to freedom but it was also the precursor to fellowship. It was the precursor to fellowship for Christ himself.

There was darkness that covered the earth from the sixth hour to the ninth hour. And then we're told that Jesus cried out with a loud voice and he said Father into thy hands I commit my spirit.
And having said thus he gave up the ghost. Do you see again the order of events here? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Cried out in the midst of the darkness of this experience. But then Jesus came through that darkness and he cried in a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:21:02

And he gave up the ghost. darkness is what preceded that restored fellowship between Father and Son.
[29:28] Darkness is what preceded Jesus seeing again that light of love shining from the face of the Father. Darkness is what preceded Jesus entering once more into that great and glorious joy communion with his Father in heaven.

Now just as that darkness was the precursor for fellowship in the experience of Christ, so also for us. What does the word tell us?
The word tells us that our sins have separated us from our God. our sins have eclipsed God out of our lives.
Our sins has made sure that we are walking in darkness, in the darkness of our own ignorance, and in the darkness of the deceit of the devil.
But Jesus, Jesus has taken our darkness away. And through what Jesus experienced on the cross, then we, we can see the face of the Father, and we can enter into fellowship with the Father.
[30:51] Because in Jesus dealing with our sins, he has dealt with the source of the separation, and therefore he has restored the fellowship that our hearts crave for.

This is what Jesus gives to us. Freedom. Absolute freedom and fellowship. Fellowship with God. Fellowship with our Father. Fellowship with the one who made us, and the one whose image we bear, the one to whom we belong.
Today is your heart filled with a sense of thankfulness for this darkness that was experienced by Christ. Is your heart filled with a sense of thankfulness for all that he endured for you, so that today you and I could know freedom, freedom from sin and from Satan, and that you and I could know fellowship, fellowship with our Christ, and fellowship with our God through him.
may God bless to us these few thoughts in his own word. Let us pray. Lord God, we give thanks for the suffering of our Christ, the suffering that we are about to remember and celebrate.
[32:22] We know, God, that we can scarcely understand all that he endured for the sake of our souls. We but dabble in the experience that he went through in the cross of Calvary.

But Lord, although we do not understand it, we thank you for it, for when we look at Jesus and the suffering that he endured, Lord, there we find our hope, there we find our life, there we find our soul salvation.
And Lord God, we pray, therefore, that even now on this day, and especially as we observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that our eyes would be fixed firmly upon the Christ that died for us on the cross of Calvary, and that we would anew appreciate the freedom that we have in Christ.
We ask, O God, that we could anew appreciate the fellowship that we enjoy through Christ. And we ask, Father, that with all these blessings filling our hearts, that we would anew commit our lives to Christ.
Hear the prayers that we offer to you, for we offer them in the name of Christ, and for his sake.
Amen. Amen. We're now going to sing together in Psalm 36.
[33:58] Psalm 36. And we're going to sing verses 5 to 9. Psalm 36, verses 5 to 9.

Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great, thy judgments deep as floods. We'll sing to verse 9 where it says, Because of life, the fountain pure remains alone with thee, and in that purest light of thine, we clearly light shall see.
Verses 5 to 9 of Psalm 36. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the hands that you■■■.
Thy doth■ Pham ■■ navigating the gates hant dh recept■■, as the sacrifices havewl ■■■■ the■ good with source.
Thine nd thine hant end cannot command me that thineéner be ■ has thine erfahren And I thank you.
[35:45] The rest of thy heart shall be well satisfied.

From rivers of thy pleasure come, we'll drink to them provide.
Because of life the heart of anger remains alone with thee.
And in the purest light of life, we clear it like the sea.
In a short while, we're going to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
[36:59] But before we do that, it is our custom always to make clear who it is that should take part in the Lord's Supper and who it is that should not.

And in some ways, we often overcomplicate this because it really is quite simple. So, if you are a Christian, if you're trusting in Jesus, you should take part and you should remember the Lord's

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:21:02

death till he comes.
And if you're not, then you shouldn't. But perhaps just to help us a little, we could think of the very words of Christ when he commanded us to observe the sacrament.
He said, do this in remembrance of me. Do this in remembrance of me. And in that command, I think we can see who it is that the Lord intended to take part in the Lord's Supper.
It is those who know him. You cannot remember somebody that you do not know and have never met.
[38:26] Yesterday, we were visiting an elderly gentleman who was part of this congregation. And that gentleman was asking your ministers if they remembered a certain individual.

And then he said, no, no, of course, he died during the war. Now, of course, they did not remember him because they did not know him. They could not have known him.
They could not have met him because that man had died before they were born. You can only remember somebody that you have met and somebody that you have known.
And therefore, when Jesus says, do this in remembrance of me, we can only do that if we have met Jesus. If we have come to know Jesus.
We can only remember him if that is true for us. But also, when Jesus says, do this in remembrance of me, he is giving to us a command.
[39:30] And therefore, those who will come to his table to remember him are not just those who know him, but those who are submitted to him as Lord.

Jesus says, do this in remembrance of me. Now, if our hearts are submitted to Christ as our Lord, we will hear this not as a request, but as a command.
He is saying, I, as your Lord and as your Master, command you to do this in remembrance of me. And therefore, we come and we do it out of obedience.
We do it because the Lord told us to do it. So if you know Christ and if you are submitted to Christ as your Lord, then your place is at the table of the Lord.
But I think there is one other thing here too. When Jesus says, do this in remembrance of me, he is speaking to those who know him.
[40:40] He is speaking to those who are submitted to him. But he is also speaking to those who love him. If you love me, says Jesus, you will keep my commandments.

We go to the table, not just because we want to obey Christ, but because we love Christ.
Because we love him. Do you remember when Peter met with Jesus after the resurrection? And Peter, you'll remember, had made a right mess of things.
But Jesus only had one question for Peter. And it wasn't, Peter, what went wrong? Why did you deny me three times in the courtyard of the high priest?
Peter, how is it that a man like you, with cursing and swearing, denied that you ever knew me? What happened to the promise to prison and to death, Lord?
[41:41] That wasn't the questions that Jesus had for Peter. It was one question. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?

Do you love me? Not just once, but three times. Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me? When Jesus says, do this in remembrance of me, in many ways what he is saying is, do you love me?
Do you know me? Are you submitted to me? And do you love me enough to do what I ask you to do? Who should come to the table?
Those who know Christ. Those who are submitted to Christ. Those who love Christ. If you do not know him. If you are not submitted to him.
If you do not love him. Then you shouldn't come to the table. It will mean nothing to you. But if you do. Then come. With joy and thankfulness in your hearts.
[42:49] For that is where you should be. Do this. In remembrance. Of me. Do this.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:21:02