

Hi, my name is Dave DeMasters. I am the Pastor of Congregational Care and Counseling here at West End Assembly of God. Happy Friday. In Matthew Chapter 27, Jesus says these words in verse 46. He says, Eloi Eloi, lema sabachthani. I know that's crazy language, right? What it literally means is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? On this particular Friday, Jesus experienced arguably the darkest moment of his entire human existence. He'd been hanging on the cross and at this juncture, the scripture records for us that he experienced abandonment from God the Father that is a deep, dark valley of the soul. I don't know if you've ever experienced this kind of pain, but I know that I have. I think back, I've been in ministry maybe 20 years, 25 years, something like that, and I walked into the deepest valley I had ever experienced to this point in my life. It was awful. I couldn't sense the presence of God. I didn't know where he was. I didn't know what he was doing. I didn't understand where he had gone. If he had. It's just as though all of a sudden there was a vacuum spiritually around me. This is what Jesus was experiencing at this moment on this Good Friday moment. We call it good because it's good for us, but it certainly wasn't good for him.

Maybe you've experienced this abandonment as well. That feeling when you're like in outer space and there's no sound, there's no oxygen. There's nothing.

If you've ever walked in that valley, Jesus knows. He has experienced this. In fact, the Bible tells us that Jesus has experienced all things that we as humans have experienced, that he's touched with that. That he is a man who is acquainted with sorrows, the scripture says. He's experienced our grief. And so in this moment when we read this in Matthew, we know that this is what it's like for him. It's what it's like for us. And that we experience that abandonment he knows exactly what that is. My discovery, as I walked through this, this time in my life, these days and months of feeling all alone. My discovery was God was really there the whole time. I just couldn't sense him. I couldn't feel his presence. I didn't understand what was happening and I don't know if you're a parent, if you're not, you've certainly been a kid, and I know for me, when I think back to my children's lives, there were times when I would sneak into their bedroom at night and I would just stand beside their bed and I would watch them sleep. I'd hear that cadence of their breathing. I would see the piece that was upon them. They had no idea I was there. I just stood and hovered and watched.

This is what God does for us when we're feeling abandonment. It's not that we're abandoned when we're feeling all alone. It's not that we are alone. It's just that we can't experience his presence in that moment. But he's there hovering just like I would hover over my children and watch them sleep. If you happen to be in a dark season of the soul today, recognize that on this day, this Good Friday day that we celebrate thousands of years ago, Jesus felt that abandonment. He knows that pain and he's with you today, right where you are, right with what you're experiencing. You're not alone. I started this moment with a something in Matthew 27 and I want to end it in Matthew 28 literally one page over the last words of the gospel of Matthew. Jesus says this for Lo, I am with you always.

Always. On this Good Friday. Take a moment.

Read through Mark Chapter 15. It's a great passage of scripture just for your reading to see what Jesus went through and understand that when he was hanging on the cross, he was thinking about you and me. That's why he was there. We will never be alone. Happy, Good Friday everyone.