

Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?

Matthew 27:46-56

In the last moments before Jesus was crucified on the cross, he said, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, why have you forsaken me?" This moment, recorded in the Bible, reflects Jesus' feelings of abandonment and suffering.

Reflection Question: Have you ever felt abandoned by God before? How does it make you feel to know Jesus felt the same?

Jesus cried out to God, but nothing changed. In fact, then, it got worse. They still ridiculed and hurt him: "Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him.'"

Reflection Question:

- 1. Have you ever been ridiculed and treated unkindly by others during a difficult trial? How did it affect you?*
- 2. What does Jesus' prayer mean to you, considering He knew the promise was around the corner, He wasn't forsaken, and that He would be risen from death?*
- 3. Would you feel comfortable with such a vulnerable prayer, like Jesus', in front of mockers/critics?*

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4. *If you didn't care what people thought, what is something that would be easier for you to trust God with?*

After they gave Jesus a disgusting drink and mocked His prayer, something happened: In verse 50: "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit."

Then, "At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split, and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'"

The situation involved a prayer that wasn't immediately answered, things appeared worst, but then completion came.

Reflect Question: *Do you believe that when things seem hardest and God feels furthest away, breakthrough is around the corner? Have you experienced this in a past situation?*

Key notes:

- *It's normal for believers to experience trials and hardships, which may cause them to feel God has abandoned them.*
- *Being close to God doesn't mean you don't have real and painful emotions. Remember, Jesus experienced everything we did, yet He didn't sin.*
- *Knowing who God is becomes vital in times of intense anguish. It gives us something to anchor our faith as the storms rock us back and forth.*
- *Often, living for God means doing things differently, and it will cause others to judge and mislabel us. However, we must acknowledge our identity as Christ did and believe we're pure and connected to God despite the accusations of others.*