

The Great Judgment - Billy Graham

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the ultimate expression of His love and redemption for humanity, and it holds the key to overcoming loneliness and sin.

Duration: 36:33

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-41, Matthew 27:46, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8, Romans 10:13

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, Billy Graham focuses on the last 24 hours of Jesus' life, particularly the scene in Gethsemane. He emphasizes the significance of this period as the darkest in the history of the world. Graham highlights the terribleness of sin and the need for salvation through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. He also emphasizes the amazing love of God, who sent His Son to die for sinners. Graham concludes by emphasizing the spiritual suffering that Jesus endured on the cross.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message for some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith and powerful sermons for modern preachers too. This week we have Billy Graham with his message, The Great Judgment.

Now Matthew the 26th chapter beginning at the 36th verse. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane and saith unto the disciples, sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death, tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed saying, O my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt.

I want you to see this picture tonight because the last 24 hours in the life of Christ was the darkest period in the history of the entire world. And here we find an incident in the last hours of the life of Christ that I want us to think about tonight and see what practical application we have in our own lives and the world in which we live. Many people write to me and they say we don't understand the gospel.

We don't understand what you mean by receiving Christ or being born again. But I think more people write to me and say this, they don't understand why Christ had to die on the cross in order for us to be saved.

They do not understand the dark hours of Gethsemane.

They do not understand why Christ voluntarily laid down his life. They do not understand why he endured the shame of the cross. They do not understand all the phrases in the Bible that talk about the blood.

Many times in the scriptures you find the phrase the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. And people revolt against that.

They don't like that. And they wonder why that's in the Bible and why so much stress is placed upon the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Well tonight I want us to see these last 24 hours in the life of Christ were the darkest in history and yet it was the darkness just before the dawn.

And I believe that history repeats itself. And when the world comes to that moment of despair, that moment when it's about to blow itself apart, that moment when it seems there is no solution, at that moment the sun will rise. The kingdom of God shall come.

Because we have the promise in the scripture that Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God is coming back to this earth again. He is going to set up His kingdom. And then shall the prayer be answered that He prayed in the Lord's prayer, Thy kingdom come.

His kingdom shall rule. But before the triumph, before the crown, before the kingdom, before the victory, there had to come the suffering. There had to come the cross.

And before you can share in Christ's victory, before you can have a new life here and now, before you can go to heaven, before you can claim the promise that we shall someday reign with Christ, you too must come to that same cross. You too must endure the humility of repentance of sin. You too must come in simple faith and stand at the foot of that cross and receive the Savior who is willing to go to the cross.

I want you to see on this night before He died, He has had the last supper with His disciples in the upper room. And they've gone now to the Mount of Olives at the foot of the mount. And now they're in a garden that is called Gethsemane.

And Jesus leaves eight of His disciples on the outskirts of the garden. And He takes three with Him, Peter, James, and John. And He goes a little further into the garden and He tells these three disciples to watch and pray.

And then He goes about a stone's throw further along and falls prostrate on the ground and begins the agonizing prayer. And before He was finished, the Bible says, He was sweating drops of blood. What agony! What a prayer! Christ must have prayed that night.

Many times in Scripture you find Christ praying all night. And if Jesus Christ had to pray all night, what about us in 1958, with our race problem, with our problem of communism, with the problem of crime that is getting worse with every passing day, with all the social problems that we face in the world, and the personal problems, and the problem of sin. We Americans are not praying.

We're not calling upon God. We give lip service to God, but our hearts are far from Him. Why when the President of the United States gave a proclamation for a day of prayer the other day, you didn't read much about it.

Very few churches observed it. Very few people spend any time in prayer, on the day of prayer, when the President said we need to call on God. The people didn't call on God.

We couldn't call ourselves a Christian nation tonight. There are Christians living in America and Christian influences have been felt in this country, but we today are a heathen, pagan country. We're away from God.

We have plenty of religion. We have beautiful churches, but our hearts are far from God. We are not spending time in prayer, the blackest hour in history since the last 24 hours of the life of Christ.

We are living in today, living on the very brink of hell itself, living on the brink of annihilation, and we're not praying. We're not calling upon God, and Jesus prayed and agonized until sweat, sweat blood drops came out from His perspiration. That night, Jesus prayed a mysterious prayer, an unusual prayer, a strange prayer.

He said, O God, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but Thine be done. What did he mean by that prayer? Let this cup pass from me. A cup of medicine is offered to a child, and he shrinks back.

Then at the bidding of his father, he takes it. That night, a bitter cup was offered to Jesus, and he shrank from it. Why? I want you to see it tonight.

Always the cross had been before Christ since the day he was at his baptism. At the temptation, the marriage of Cana, when he said, my hour has not come, when the crowd wanted to make him a king, at the Mount of Transfiguration, when he talked to Elijah and Moses, he knew that he must die. He had taught his disciples that he must go to the cross.

He had read in the Old Testament scriptures about the suffering that the Messiah must endure. The shadow of the cross was before him all the time. He knew that he had to go to the cross to pay for our sins if we were to be saved.

But here was the final hour, and the cup of suffering was bitter. And in order for us to understand the chemical formula of the mixture of the cup that night, I want us to look into it deeply for a moment. I want us to see it and analyze it.

And I want us to see how much Christ endured that we might be forgiven of sin, that we might go to heaven, that we might have some hope of the solution of our problems. First, the first element in that cup was physical pain. Physical pain! Oh, men have died terrible deaths before.

Men have been thrown into boiling water. Men have been burned at the stake. Other men have died and suffered physical pain.

But the death of the cross was something even worse than any of that. The death of the cross is said to be the worst possible torture that a man can endure. Because first they would strip a man to the waist.

Then they would tie his hands together and bend him over and take long leather thongs with lead pellets or steel pellets embedded in the leather thongs, and they would beat him across the back until his back was in ribbon. And many times the lash of those thongs would come around his face and take his eyes out by the socket, even tear his teeth out. And often death followed just the scourging and the flogging that

were given by great muscular men.

Jesus endured that kind of flogging for you and for me. Then they took a crown of thorns, sharp thorns, and placed on his brow. And his face bled as they jerked his beard off.

Then they spat in his face until he was covered from head to foot with the spittle of the people. Hatred, prejudice, intolerance, vehemence, the human heart against Christ. Christ wasn't killed by Rome or Israel.

The Bible tells us that Christ was crucified by you and me. My sins and your sins crucified Christ. We had a part in it.

All the hatred of mankind. We've seen in the past few days what hatred can do. We've seen some men with sticks of dynamite blowing up synagogues just to express their hate.

May God have mercy upon them. The human heart is expressed in that cross. Almost saddest as they flogged him, as they beat him, as they spit on him, as they put a crown of thorns on him.

And then they gave him a 250 pound cross to carry. And he stumbles along the road with that cross until Simon of Cyrene had to come and help him carry the cross. And I'm certain today in heaven Simon is thrilled and proud of the fact that he helped Jesus carry the cross.

Have you helped Jesus carry the cross? Or were you one of the ones putting the nails in his hands? But you say, Billy, I would never put a nail in Jesus' hand. I would never pick up a flog and flog him. Wouldn't you? You did it today.

The sin that you committed today helped crucify Christ. Because those people were our representatives. We were expressing ourselves in them.

You and I helped crucify Jesus. He was dying for our sins. Then they took him to Golgotha's Mount and they put spikes in his hands.

They tore his hands and his feet. He never uttered a sound. The pain, the thirst, his tongue was swollen double.

And he hung hour upon hour on that terrible cross. And then at the end, many times when a person was dying on a cross, the ravenous birds, the vultures, would come with their iron-like beaks and pick at him while he was still alive. That was the cross.

And that night, the night before he died, Jesus was on his knees. Before God and saying, oh God, if it's possible to save Billy Graham, if it's possible to save Jim Jones, if it's possible to save men and women some other way, without me having to endure that pain, oh God, find it. But there was another suffering.

There was the suffering which was the loneliness that he suffered, because Jesus went to the cross alone. No one else could go with him. He was the Son of God.

He was the only one in the universe that could bear all of our sins, because the Lamb, he was the Paschal Lamb that Passover season. And the Lamb had to be without blemish. And he was the Paschal Lamb being slain from the foundation of the world for us.

He alone had in his body and in his soul the capacity to bear our sins, because you see, we'd sinned against God, we'd rebelled against God, and we deserve death, and we deserve judgment, and we deserve hell. But Jesus said, I'll take the judgment, I'll take the hell, and I'll take the suffering. And he went to that cross alone, because only he could suffer.

Only he could be offered as a sacrifice that would be pleasing to God, and would reconcile God and man together. So he endured it alone. Judas was betraying him for 30 pieces of silver, about \$21.

You've betrayed him today. The lie you told betrayed Jesus. The lustful thought that you had, the immoral deed that you did, the cheating that you did in business, all of that betrayed Jesus.

How many times we've betrayed him? We were a part of that betrayal, and we're just as guilty as Judas. And we will go to the same place as Judas went, unless we repent of our sin and come to Jesus Christ, and ask him to forgive us. Jesus died alone.

There he is alone, hanging on the cross for our sins. There are many types of loneliness. There's the loneliness of solitude.

You've been alone when all you could hear was the thunder of the surf alongside the ocean on some faraway beach. I've stood on a lonely beach in India, and I didn't see a person for miles. The most beautiful beaches in the world, I think, are along the coral strands of India.

And I've heard only the beating against the surf, against the rocks. Loneliness. Admiral Byrd wrote in his book, *Alone*, how he spent five months in the loneliness and darkness of the South Pole.

Louis Zambrini, a friend of ours in California, spent 45 days alone on a life raft. The loneliness, not knowing at any moment when you might be pulled down by a shark, or a Japanese plane would come over and machine-gun you. *Alone*.

Yes, there is that type of loneliness. We know about that. But there are other types of loneliness.

There's the loneliness of society. There's the poor creature that is living in a tenement house in New York tonight, watching this telecast. You never receive a letter.

You never hear a word of encouragement. You never know the handclasp of a friend. Or there's the wealthy society leader whose money has bought everything but happiness and joy.

Or there's the country girl in New York or Los Angeles tonight, who is seeking fame and fortune in the big city and who's been disillusioned and disappointed. And now she's lonely. There's no loneliness like the loneliness in a crowd.

And some of you living in the midst of the big city are lonely tonight. There's an emptiness in your heart. I want to tell you something.

You give your life to Christ tonight, and He can become your friend that sticketh closer than a brother. He can be with you in your loneliness. And then there's the loneliness of suffering.

Some of you are watching from hospital beds right now, from hospitals all over America, and you're lonely lying there. They're friends, perhaps, in the water, the room with you. But you've been suffering.

A lady gave her life to Christ some time ago, and she said, I've been crippled for five years with arthritis, and I've suffered. What a terrible suffering I've had. And she said, I have spent many a day alone, but never a lonely day.

Give your life to Christ, and you'll never have another lonely day. Because you see, Jesus has also suffered. He knows what it means to suffer.

And in suffering, He understands your suffering, and He can come and put His hand on your brow and comfort you and be there by your side during those lonely hours of suffering. And then there's the loneliness of sorrow. You've been in the sick room, and you've seen a loved one snatched from you.

You couldn't do anything about it. And your heart has been crushed by sorrow. There's disappointment in your life.

Maybe your husband's walked out on you. Maybe your boyfriend has left you. And your heart is crushed and broken and bleeding tonight.

But Jesus also suffered. He knows. He stood at the friend of His, His friend Lazarus and wept when Lazarus died.

He knows what it means to have a crushing sorrow. He can be there with you right now. He can wipe those tears away and give you a joy and a peace in your heart and take away that loneliness.

And then there's the loneliness of character. A man may find himself in a community or a society where he has to take a stand alone on some moral issue. And it's not easy to stand alone.

Moses had to stand alone. Elijah on Mount Carmel had to stand alone. Everybody in the country was against Elijah.

He was the only man that stood for God. And you know we that know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior are in a small minority in the world. And we're going to be standing more and more alone.

And some of us someday may have to pay with our blood and our life for our faith in Jesus Christ. And you're standing alone in your office. You are the only one that's a Christian.

You're the only one that is trying to live for Christ on the high school campus. You're the only one in your class. You're the only one in your community trying to live for God.

And sometimes you get discouraged and you feel lonely. Well remember that almost everybody God ever used knew those hours of loneliness. The loneliness of character.

And then there is the loneliness of sin. And that's the worst of all. The Bible says when Judas betrayed Jesus on that last night at the supper he left the meeting of the disciples and he went out because it was night.

You remember when you were young and your conscience was sensitive. And if you told a lie your conscience spoke to you. But now it's become hardened and dulled.

And you know the remorse of many years of sin. There are many of you sitting at a bar right now. You wish your life were different.

You wish that you weren't chained by the habits of sin tonight. You'd like to be free. But you can't.

You've tried. It's impossible. The loneliness of sin.

And the older you get the more lonely you'll be. Because you see away from God there's nothing but loneliness and remorse. Go ahead and continue for a while.

The Bible says there's pleasure in sin for a season. You can get away with it for a while. But I want to tell you one thing.

A man told me one day said, I'm not afraid of going to hell. He said there'll be a lot of other people down there. But listen.

The Bible indicates that hell is a lonely place. You won't see anybody else there. You won't even see the devil.

A lot of people have an idea that hell is a place where the devil is standing in a furnace and giving the orders or sitting in a big office running hell. That's not the picture at all. The picture is one of separation from God and blackness and night and darkness and loneliness.

You'll be all alone. You won't see your husband. You won't see your wife.

You won't see your friends. You'll be alone. The loneliness of sin.

Sin pays wages. And it crushes your personality. It crushes your life.

And it crushes your soul. And it ends up in hell. Turn to Christ tonight from your sins.

Let him free you. Let Christ come in. Then heaven is going to be a place of fellowship where your loved ones and friends will be.

Heaven will be a glorious world of fellowship and friendship. There'll be no loneliness in heaven. The Bible says there'll be no night there.

What a hope we have. Those of us that know Jesus Christ as our Savior. Yes, the Bible says Christ suffered alone.

I have trodden the winepress alone. And of the people there was none with me, said Jesus. Thirdly, the third element in this bitter cup was the mental anguish.

Jesus had studied Isaiah the prophet. Jesus knew that he had to suffer. He knew something about the afflictions of the next day, that night in the garden.

He knew what was going to take place. And mentally he was suffering such anguish as he thought about the suffering of the next day. And we have thousands of people in America that are suffering mentally.

We have thousands of psychological problems. We have thousands of people in our mental institutions. We have thousands of people today that are confused mentally.

I want to tell you that Jesus can touch your mind if you let him come in. Because thousands of our mental problems are a result of spiritual separation from God or they're a result of idolatry. They're a result of

putting other things first before God and that causes mental unbalance many times.

Give your life to Christ. Put Christ first and I guarantee to you that he can handle many of the mental problems and psychological problems and psychopathic cases that we face today in this country. There are thousands of people that are suffering mentally.

Down here in the South there are thousands of people that are suffering anguish at this particular time. It's not just a southern problem. It's a world problem.

It's the problem on Cyprus. It's the problem in the Middle East. It's the problem in New York.

It's the problem in Chicago. It's the problem in the Far East. It's the problem in India.

It's not just a southern problem. And thousands of people are searching their souls and searching their conscience and their minds are tortured and bewildered by what is the right thing in a complicated situation. Mental problems, I tell you, Christ is the answer.

Come to Christ. Come at the foot of his cross and let him touch your mind and your heart and relax your soul in your heart. Then we shall know love for our fellow man that knows no bounds and we shall love our neighbors as ourselves.

There are thousands of people that want to obey the law but they don't know what the law is. The federal government says one thing, the state government says another, and they're confused. And there's a tremendous confusion in the problem because it's a constitutional problem as well as a race problem.

And it's all confused and many people are making emotional statements at the moment, flag-waving statements, hysterical statements. Would to God that all of us could come to the cross and see in Christ a solution of all the problems that bewilder us and confuse us. That may not be your problem.

There may be some other problem in your life but you need Jesus, you need Christ, the country needs Christ. And then, fourthly, the fourth element in this bitter cup that Jesus was about to drink was the cup of the anguish of soul. All others, the physical pain, the loneliness of its shame, and the mental anguish was nothing compared to the spiritual suffering that Jesus suffered on the cross that day.

And that night he was thinking about that. And his suffering was wrapped up in one little word, S-I-N, sin. Because that next day Jesus was going to be guilty for the first time of murder, and robbery, and adultery, and lying, and covetousness, and idolatry.

Because he was going to become guilty of your sins and my sins. And a cloud was going to pass between him and God. A cloud for the first time, and his pure righteous soul was going to be filled with sin.

Your sins were going to be laid on him. The scripture says that God had laid on him the iniquity of us all. The Bible says he was made to be sin for us who knew no sin.

He had never known sin, but he was made to be sin. How his soul must have shuddered. How his soul must have been shaken.

How Jesus must have looked with horror. How he slumped from that. And he said, Oh God, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me.

Oh God, I don't want to have to drink this cup. If there's any other way to save men. If there's any other way for the world to be saved.

If there is any other way. Oh God, suppose a man could work for his salvation. But the Bible says you can't work for.

The Bible says, for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. You can work your fingers to the bone doing good works, but that will not save your soul.

You are not saved by works. Suppose a man could pay for it. Suppose you had a billion dollars tonight.

Suppose you were the richest man in the world, and you gave it all to charity, or you gave it all to God. Would you go to heaven? Not unless you'd come to the cross. Because you see, if you could have bought your way, or if you could have worked your way, or if you could have schemed your way to heaven, Jesus would have never gone to the cross.

That night, God would have said, Jesus, you don't have to go to the cross. But God could not say that to his son. There was no other way.

If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. If it be possible, oh God, let this cup pass from me tonight. I don't want to have to drink it unless I have to.

But there was no other way. And if I could tell you another way of salvation that was easier, I would tell you. I'm here in Charlotte, North Carolina.

This is my home. This is where I was born. This is where I was reared.

I'm proud of this city. I love this great state of North Carolina. From the mountains to the sea, no more beautiful place in the world to live.

And I would not be guilty of betraying my neighbors and my friends. I tell you tonight, after studying this book for 20 years, there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved except the name of Jesus. There is no other way of salvation except at the foot of the cross.

And when I look at that cross tonight, I see four things. I see first the terribleness of sin. I know that I'm a sinner.

When I look at Christ dying in my place on the cross and realize the things that I've done and that it was my sins that nailed Him there, I must cry out to God, Oh God, I am a sinner. And then the second thing I see is the amazing love of God. But God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

You rebelled against God. You've sinned against God. You've done things that you know you shouldn't have done.

You've helped even crucify Jesus. But in spite of it, God loves you. And on the cross there is written in gigantic letters in neon fire, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

There is the love of God. And if you have any doubt concerning the love of God, look at the cross. It was there that He died for us.

Thirdly, in that cross I find my complete redemption. Christ bowed His head and said, It's finished. I can't add anything to it.

I can't take anything away. It's there in the cross. And if I'm ever to get to heaven, I'll have to come to the cross.

If I'm ever to have sins forgiven, I'll have to come to the cross. And I want to ask you tonight, have you been to the cross? Are you sure that you've had this encounter with God at the cross? You may be a member of the church. You may live a moral life.

You may be a decent person. I don't know who you are, what you are. It doesn't make any difference what race you come from, what your nationality background is, what state you live in, how rich or how poor, how educated or uneducated.

You have to come to the cross. You say, but Billy that's foolish. Do you mean to say I can't be accepted by God unless I come to the cross? That's right.

And the Bible says the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish. God said you'd say it's foolish. You may be a PhD in the university, but if you're ever to have peace of soul with God, you'll have to come like a little child to the foot of the cross.

You won't understand it intellectually. You never will. You'll never understand the atonement all the way.

You'll never be able to make it all out. But you come in simple childlike faith and give your life to Christ. You may be the biggest businessman in North Carolina.

You may be a society leader. You may be a union official. You may be a laboring man.

Whoever you are, whatever you are, you'll have to come through the same gate into the kingdom. And Jesus said it's a narrow gate and the gate is the cross. And if you are not sure that you've been there renouncing your sin and receiving Christ, you've come tonight.

Because I do not see how any person could resist the love of God. Many people ask me, what is the unpardonable sin? I'll tell you the sin that God cannot pardon. Any man or woman that rejects or resists his son, Jesus Christ, who died, that's the unpardonable sin.

There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. There is no other way. And I tell you, my beloved friends of this great nation, there is only one way of forgiveness and redemption and salvation, and that's in the cross.

And I'm asking you to come to the cross tonight. I'm asking you to come by faith and say, oh God, I have sinned. Oh God, I'm sorry for the things I've done.

I come and by faith receive thy son, Jesus Christ. Don't neglect it. Don't put it off till another night.

You may never have another moment quite like this tonight. I'm going to ask all of you in this building to get up out of your seat right now, hundreds of you. Just get up now and come and stand right here in front and say tonight, I want Christ.

I will identify myself with him at the cross. I'm ready to turn from my sins. I'm ready to give myself to Christ.

I want him to fill my life. I want him to help solve my problems and forgive my sins and lift my burdens. I want him to come in and be closer than a brother.

I want him to come in and help me and forgive me and cleanse me. I'm willing to come and meet him at the cross. God says I want to meet you.

I want to help you, but I'll only meet you and help you one place and that's the cross. And it may look foolish to say get up out of your seat and come. Don't ask me how it happens.

I only know when a man comes to Christ he can never be the same again. I only know that his life is changed if he comes to the cross. And I'm going to ask you to come right now, hundreds of you all over the building.

Just get up out of your seat at this moment, every head bowed, every eye closed. And after you've all come, we're going to have a moment of prayer and a verse of scripture. And if you're with friends or relatives, they'll wait.

If you've come in a delegation, they'll wait on you. And you at home, right where you are, can receive Christ right in your living room as hundreds of people are going to come here to give their lives to Christ as they have every night this week here in Charlotte. Now you come, quickly.

All over the building. Just get up right now. Come, hundreds of you.

That's it. God bless you. Many people are coming from all over this building to give their lives to Christ.

Right there, you can give your life to him. It's so simple that many people stumble over it. They make it complicated.

You bow your head right in your room, right now. Just bow your head. And just quietly say in your heart, I give my life to Christ.

Then go to church tomorrow morning. Go tell the minister at the church what you've done. Tell him you want the fellowship in the church.

And then write to me, Billy Graham, here in Charlotte, North Carolina, and we'll send to you the same literature that we send or we give to these people that are coming forward here tonight. You've been listening to the From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons series. This week you heard Billy Graham with his message, The Great Judgment.

Tune in next week to hear A.W. Tozer talk about girding up your mind on From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons.

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