

At the moment of Jesus death, a bunch of strange things happened. We would say that these things were not a coincidence. Rather, they were telling us that God was present and letting us know some important information. As we talk about these miracles of Lent, we want to stress that God never does a miracle, simply to do a miracle. He doesn't do a miracle just to do something impressive. He doesn't have to remind himself of the magnificent one He is. Miracles are signs to us. On Ash Wednesday we looked at the miraculous darkness that covered the earth from 12:00 to 3:00 P.M. on Good Friday. This darkness spoke about judgment. Judgment against sin. Judgment against Jesus, the light of the world. It became our judgment, because Jesus became sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Then we heard about the miraculous ripping of the temple curtain. This was clear sign of the access to God we now gain through Jesus. We can now come before God and not be afraid. Covered in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, God now looks at us as his dear children. Last week, we looked at the earthquake. We learned how at Mt. Sinai when the earth shook, it was showing that God is dead serious about his commandments being kept, and when his people do not follow his commandments, he comes down with judgment against them. But, Jesus came to stop the destruction that follows the earthquake of God's anger for sin. The Father has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus. We now stand on solid ground before God. Oneday, we will be taken from this shakeable world to the unshakeable kingdom of heaven.

Now we want to take a look at another miracle. The rocks split. You might think that the rocks split should go together with the earthquake. When the earthquake took place, the rocks split open. It was a result of the earthquake. That might have been. However, have you ever considered that when we talk of earthquakes today, what's the big news. Its not about the rocks splitting, which is really the fizzes, the cliffs, the earth splitting open, that occurs after an earthquake. But usually when we talk of earthquakes, we talk of the damage that is done. The damage to property. Isn't it interesting that this earthquake which was big enough to split the earth, that there was no property damage anywhere. No damage to homes, Roman Roads. The only damage that is done, is done to creation.

Sin has not only affected human beings, but it has also affected creation. Paul says in Romans, "Creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it. God subjected it to frustration. Creation can't always do what it wants to do. Creation hopes it will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God." Creation is groaning. God's creation suffers under the curse of sin. God told Adam and Eve that the ground will bear thorns and thistles. Isn't it interesting, that while God is saving the world, people, it appears that He chooses not to do damage to people. But if anything is damaged, its his own creation. That may be an interesting side light.

But I think that the crux of these rocks splitting can be seen with what happened on Palm Sunday. When the Pharisees told Jesus that his disciples were causing a ruckus and to shut-up them up, Jesus said to them, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.' " The question is, what would the stones cry out? There is no place to hide. When God cracks open the very crust of the earth, there is no place to hide. We know that ourselves. We can't hide from God. He is everywhere. Have you ever really thought of what that means? In the book of Isaiah, it tells us that men will flee to caves in

the rock and to holes in the ground to escape from the dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.. As if somehow we can be safe by hiding in the rocks, in the belly of the earth. Sort of like where bury our nuclear waste. Are we really safe when we try to hide in the cave, from the wrath of God for sin. No, absolutely not. But where do we try to hide from God?

There is an interesting passage in Amos Chapter 9, which says, I saw the Lord standing by the altar and he said, "Strike the tops of the pillars so that the thresholds shake. Bring them down on the heads of all the people; those who are left I will kill with the sword. No one will get away, none will escape. Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them. Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them. I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good."

The wrath of God for sin is real. And it is righteous. And there is no place to hide. You can try to hide from God all you want, but someday He is going to find you. It seems to me that when Jesus died and God split the rocks, He was making sure that people realized there is no place to hide.

So where do we try to hide? Where do we try to hide the reality of our own sinfulness before God? Do we try to hide in our own self-righteousness? I think I've done pretty good. I've tried. I treat people fairly. Or do we try to hide from God by molding him into who we think He should be? This I like about God, this I like about God, but this I don't like about God. So that can't be the way it really is. And we fashion a God that we can live with, rather than a God who really is.

Do we try to hide from God by blaming others for our problems? Well if so and so wouldn't be like this, I wouldn't have to be like this. And so work to justify our own sinfulness. Or we blame our upbringing or our past. Well, that's the way God created me. WE can blame God. Where do we try to hide from God? In our own desires, in putting on that facad. Our own accomplishments. Look at all the things I have done. God can easily split those rocks of denial open right above our heads. Or do we try to hide from God in our own thoughts, about this is how life ought to be, rather than listening to the truth of his Word, that tells us this is how it is. Or do we try to hide from God in our own busyness. God, I have so much on my plate. I just can't handle it all. So God, you will just take a back seat. I'll get serious about you later on. Or do we try to hide from God in own fears, and our ideas of what's fair and what's not.

Maybe you can add all your own little things in there, if you are willing to examine yourselves, honestly and openly. Where do we hide from God?

The wrath of God is real. And it is coming against all those fail to see Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That's why the rocks split at Jesus death. The rocks splitting is not only the message you can't hide from God. But also, the reality is because of Jesus death there is no need to hide from God. No need. John writes, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all unrighteousness."

You see there is reality. There is no need to hide before God when you stand beneath that cross of Jesus Christ. There is no need to pretend you are anything but what

you are, a damnable sinner. Because in Jesus, your sins have found forgiveness. The worst thing we can do is to claim we have no sin, says John, because then we deceive ourselves, the truth does not dwell within us. But if we are willing to confess our sins, , not just mouth a confession from a book, but take a good hard look at ourselves, then we know that God is faithful and just and will forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And if we are purified from our sins, that means the wrath of God is nothing for us to fear. Because in Jesus, the wrath has been taken away. He drank that cup of wrath for us.

Do you see why the cross is so important? It reveals to us the priorities. Paul says, “Christ died for the ungodly, when we were God’s enemies. God took the initiative. He didn’t wait to come looking for us when we were cowering under the rocks fearing his final wrath. He didn’t wait until we bettered ourselves. Sinners, ungodly, enemies, that’s when Jesus died for us. No need to hide from God anymore. No place to hide, but the good news is there is no reason to hide.

One day soon, God will crack the rocks again when Jesus returns. Many will try to hide, but God will find them. They will face a destruction far worse than a rock being split apart. They will face separation from God in hell. But we will stand tall that day unafraid. Because our Savior, Jesus, suffered the wrath for our sins. We are forgiven, redeemed and restored. There is no need for us to hide. Thanks Jesus, for keeping us safe in that final disaster. Amen.