

Faith Lutheran Church

Good Friday
April 10, 2020



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Let us begin our time together on this Good Friday with a Call to Worship from Psalm 22:

Call to Worship (From Psalm 22)

¹My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? ²O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. ³Yet You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴In You our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and You delivered them. ⁵To You they cried, and were saved; in You they trusted, and were not put to shame. ²⁸For dominion belongs to the Lord, and He rules over the nations.

Prayer

Almighty God, look with loving mercy on Your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given over to the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

Introduction

In the Gospels, preceding the portion I will share next, Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples, all except one. Judas, the one to betray Jesus, brought soldiers to Jesus to have Him arrested. Jesus was taken before the high priest.

In the time to follow, Peter, one of the disciples, when asked of his involvement and relationship with Jesus, fulfilled what Jesus had told him, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny Me three times.”

Judas, the betrayer, tried to return his reward to the chief priests and the elders in the temple for turning in Jesus. Rejected, he turned away, threw down the thirty pieces of silver and left; and he went and hanged himself.

Jesus was then taken from Caiaphas to Pilate. While Pilate was questioning Jesus, he asked Him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about Me?” ³⁵ Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed You over to me. What have You done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If My kingdom were from this world, My followers would be fighting to keep Me from being handed over to the Jewish opposition. But as it is, My kingdom is not from here.” ³⁷ Pilate asked him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice.” ³⁸ Pilate asked him, “What is truth?” (John 18:33b-38)

Finding no charges that could be used against Him, Pilate asked the crowd, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” The crowd shouted, “Barabbas.”

Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let Him be crucified!” (Matthew 27:22)

The Holy Gospel according to John: 19:16b-42

So they took Jesus;¹⁷ and carrying the cross by Himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.¹⁸ There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”²⁰ Many of the Jewish people read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.²¹ Then the chief priests of the Jewish opposition said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took His tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

“They divided my clothes among themselves,

and for my clothing they cast lots.”

²⁵ And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing beside her, He said to His mother, “Woman, here is your son.”²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, He said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.”²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So, they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to His mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the wine, He said, “It is finished.” Then He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, the religious leaders did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So, they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed.³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him.

³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.³⁵ (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.)³⁶ These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of His bones shall be broken.”³⁷ And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

³⁸ After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jewish opposition, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed His body.³⁹ Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom.⁴¹ Now there was a garden in the place where He was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid.⁴² And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

A Brief Meditation

Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not from this world. If My kingdom were from this world, My followers would be fighting to keep Me from being handed over to the Jewish opposition. But as it is, My kingdom is not from here.”

Is it possible that, IF Jesus WERE of this world, He and His disciples would have used force for establishing and keeping power? IF Jesus WERE of this world, would His disciples have done everything in their power, including violence, to keep Him from being handed over to the Jewish opposition?

Isn't that how WE usually settle scores or how we treat others? Violence is often used to demonstrate supreme power over others. This happens in our families, our work places, schools, government bodies, and throughout the world.

Violence can be actual physical violence or emotional affliction of pain. It can be keeping the poor – poor by not providing a fair living wage or assistance that is needed because they don't meet certain requirements set by those with plenty. It can be hoarding supplies during a crisis which prevents many from having what they need for nourishment and supply. We use violence even when we don't realize we are using violence.

This isn't Christ-like. This is not the Christ-like way we should live.

Jesus proclaims He is not of this world. He will not defend Himself through violence. He will not establish His claims by violence. Through violence is NOT how Jesus will share the love of God.

“What is truth?” Pilate asked.

The truth is that God is love. We hear this in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.” God gives us unconditional love. God loves the best of us. God even loves the not-so-best of us.

In this time of world-wide crisis, when Christians around the world are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ, we can still hear the Word of God and hold one another in prayer. We can still be nice to one another and help one another. We can still be Christ-like to one another.

While Jesus hung on the cross, He prayed to His Father, our Father, our God, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

We continually ask God to forgive us. Christ died for our sins. Let us forgive one another's sins as well. Amen.

Prayer

Eternal God, Your Son cried out in anguish from the cross, and You delivered Him. Do not hide Your face from those who cry out to You. By His death and resurrection bring life where there is death: feed the hungry, strengthen the weak, and break the chains of oppression, that all people may rejoice in Your saving deeds through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Our Lord's Prayer

And now, may we join in praying Our Lord's Prayer,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

A Moment of Silence

Please share in a moment of silence.

This is Pastor Melinda Vandersys. Peace be with you on this Good Friday. Amen.