
Sermon Notes

October 1, 2023

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Crucified... Dead... Buried... Descended Galatians 3:13-14

Familiar Facts

- ❖ Facts with which we have had a long acquaintance can be easy to gloss over quickly
 - many have known about the cross of Christ since childhood, through Sunday School, films and songs
 - the cross is the dominant symbol of Christianity, sometimes worn as jewelry, made into tattoos and prominently displayed in Christian houses of worship
- ❖ However, there may well be more to the words: crucified, dead, and buried than most of us have ever stopped to ponder

Blessings and Curses

- ❖ Paul connects the cross with the pattern of curses and blessings that OT believers lived under as part of the old covenant
 - blessings for those who are faithful and obedient to the stipulations of that covenant
 - curses are promised for those who are disobedient and for each and every violation of the law
 - Deuteronomy 27 & 28

- ❖ To be blessed by God was the greatest aspiration of OT Jewish believers
 - a unique quality of happiness that is inseparably related to living in the presence of God, enjoying God's favor and having God's face shine upon you (Nu 6:24-26)
 - this kind of godly preservation and protection along with His grace and peace lie at the heart of the fullness and completeness that is wrapped up in the Hebrew word, *shalom*
- ❖ To be cursed by God is to have His face turned away from you
 - to be cut off from the presence of God and from the benefits of being in fellowship with Him
 - to be set outside the camp, as lepers and other unclean persons were, was to be cursed
- ❖ Sin causes separation from God
 - Adam and Eve: intimate fellowship is forsaken, they are driven out of the Garden, life in a perfect, privileged place is forfeited
 - later, the sins of the whole nation are symbolically laid on a scapegoat and the scapegoat is driven out of the camp into the wilderness

Crucified

- ❖ *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--*
 - on the cross, Jesus was cursed as God the Father turned His face away from God the Son
 - the intimacy enjoyed between the Father and Son was broken: *My God, my God why have You forsaken me?*

- Jesus took the curse we deserve on Himself
- but Jesus didn't just BEAR the curse, He BECAME the curse (*cf.* 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Jesus is crucified “outside the camp” by “unclean” Gentiles
- ❖ On the cross, Jesus not only **OFFERS** the perfect sacrifice but He, Himself **IS** the sacrifice

Dead

- ❖ Confessing Jesus' death reminds us of the inseparable connection between sin and death
 - Adam & Eve: *On the day that you eat of it, you will surely die*
 - *the soul that sins shall die* (Ezekiel 18:4)
 - *the wages of sin are death* (Rom 6:23)
- ❖ In the death of Jesus, the judgment of the first Adam and all his descendants is transferred to the second Adam
 - the life of Jesus, the second Adam, is given to we who are descendants of the first Adam
 - the death that those who belong to Christ undergo is in no way a payment for their sin... it is a transfer from living in sin to living in a sin-free, eternal environment

Buried

- ❖ From the moment of Jesus' incarnation, Jesus descends a ladder of humiliation (Philippians 2:6-8)
- ❖ With the burial of Jesus, a turn around process begins
 - now, Jesus will move inexorably toward His exaltation and coronation (Philippians 2:9-11)

- Jesus' body is treated with honor and respect by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Luke 23:50-53)
- in fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus is buried in a rich man's grave (Matthew 27:57)
- that God's Messiah receives a dignified burial signifies the end of his humiliation and begins His exaltation

Descended Into Hell

- ❖ Where was Jesus during the three days between His crucifixion and His resurrection"?
 - it is important for us not to go beyond what we are told in Scripture as we contemplate this question
 - however, Scripture does give some clues that shed light on the mystery this question addresses (1 Peter 3:18-20)
- ❖ *Spirits in prison*
 - *Sheol... Hades*
 - OT and NT words for the temporary place of the dead
 - confusion arises when the word *Hades* is translated from Latin into English, by the word *Hell*
 - in contrast, the Bible describes Hell (*Ghenna*) as the place of eternal torment for the devil and his angels as well as for all who reject Christ as Savior
- ❖ While Jesus' physical body rested in the grave in observance of the Sabbath following His work of New Creation
 - Jesus' spirit goes to Sheol and preaches to the spirits of all the dead who are waiting there
 - Jesus then takes the souls of those who have died in faith believing in Him to Paradise (Eph 4:8-10)