

Good Friday  
April 10, 2020

## It is Finished

We begin our Good Friday service with a prophetic word from Isaiah chapter 53; who spoke about the coming Messiah. But he did not do it in ways of flowery speech and what a great King he would be or how he would restore a nation. No, he speaks very plainly about what the Messiah really was going to do. Isaiah writes: "Who has believed what he has heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or Majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted he had he opened not his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. And as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off, out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. And they made his grave with the wicked with the rich man in his death; although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days. The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors. Yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Tonight, as we consider this Good Friday, the next to the last day of Holy Week, we're going to walk through the words of Christ from the cross. Following each word, we will have a quick devotional a meditational. And then I encourage you if you are reading this sermon to take a moment to consider what Jesus said from the cross and then pray about it and pray about how it will affect your life. And so, we begin with the first word from the cross which is found in Luke chapter 23 verses 26 to 34. "And as they led him away they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus; and there followed him a great multitude of the people in of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming when they will see blessed are the barren and the wounds that never bore

and the breasts that never nursed. Then they will begin to say to the mountains fallenness into the Hills cover us. For if they do these things when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry? Two others were who were criminals were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called the skull, there they crucified him and the criminals; one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. I'll tell you something, those soldiers knew exactly what they were doing. They were crucifying the king of the Jews. The inscription written by Pilate said it. It was nailed to the cross above Jesus's head. Why were they killing the king of the Jews? Because someone who claimed to be King, without the authority of Caesar, was defying Caesar and was defying the Roman Empire. The penalty of that, well course it's death. But the religious leaders were also there, and they also knew exactly what they were doing. They totally believe their own doctrine that God had picked them to be the leaders of Israel and that they would be the ones who would crown the Messiah, that they would lead his Coronation. They would rule with him and they would be the ones who give him with the power. And of course, Jesus was not open to this, because he claimed to be God. And that, in itself, is blasphemy. Both the soldiers and the religious leaders knew exactly what they were doing and why they were doing it. But what they did not know, was that Jesus really was the son of God; really is the promised Savior and to kill him, not just an innocent man, but the son of God; well now that deserves the exact judgment that they were carrying out on Jesus. That is a death sentence. That is hell. And this is what Jesus is praying, "Father forgive them, they don't know they are on a path to hell. When Jesus dies, there's an earthquake and the sun has gone out. Was the centurion, who led those soldiers, who came to see but truly this was the son of God. It's my prayer that he was forgiven and those with him and that we see them in heaven someday. But as we stop and we meditate on this, I'd like you to think about that. I'd like you to think about Jesus, he was being killed, executed by people who knew exactly what they were doing; but they were wrong-minded. How often have we been the victim of someone who was wrong minded, who has hurt us, who has caused us pain? For someone who is just ignorant of God's word, may we also join Jesus in saying "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And maybe just maybe they will see a little bit of Jesus in us.

Let's pray.

Almighty God, your son forgave those who to us would seem unforgivable, and Father we pray that you would now fill us with your Spirit, so that we may walk in the footsteps of your Son. And that we might offer forgiveness to those who we consider unforgivable. In our Savior's name.

**Personal reflection or meditation**

Our second word from the cross comes from Luke chapter 23 verses 35 to 43. And the people stood by watching but the ruler scoffed at him saying he saved others let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one. The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, if you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. There was also an inscription over him, "this is the king of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged, railed at him saying, 'are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us.' But the other rebuked him saying, 'do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?' And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the do reward of our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong. And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And he said to him, 'Truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise.' That second statement from the cross, is an incredibly powerful doctrinal statement. Why? Well first off, he hadn't done anything to get forgiveness. That is that criminal who was being crucified, he hadn't done anything to deserve forgiveness. He was dying because of his actions. But we see that as he has watched Jesus, he had seen Jesus pray for forgiveness for those who were killing him, it clicks in his mind. He must be the Messiah. And he put his faith in Christ. When he says, remember me when you come into your Kingdom, it's an acknowledgement that he sees Jesus as the Christ. He puts his faith in him, and it's then that Jesus says, 'truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise.' It's a huge doctrinal statement because we also have done nothing to deserve forgiveness. But like that criminal on the cross, if we acknowledge that we're sinners, and we acknowledge that Christ is the one who takes away our sin, forgiveness is ours. When does that forgiveness start? Today. Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. Forgiveness came to that criminal that day. And that day he was going to be going to heaven. You know, we can take tremendous comfort in that word today. There are many out there who claimed that when we die, that's the end of life. There are those within the Christian faith that will say, well you go into a time of soul sleep. That is not what Jesus says. He tells that criminal, 'today you will be with me in paradise.' It was a phenomenal thing to say because crucifixion usually took days or up to a week for a person to die. At this point in time, they've been on the cross for just an hour or two. For Jesus to say today you'll be with me in paradise, we also see Christ's omniscience. He knows that because of the Passover, the Jews would ask for the Romans to break the legs of these criminals and they would die. But as we look at it, now think of those who you love, those who have passed away. Maybe it's grandparents, aunt, uncle, maybe a husband, maybe a wife. But if they like that thief on the cross, put their faith in Christ; that very day that their eyes closed in death their spiritual eyes opened to see their Savior welcoming them into heaven.

Almighty God, we pray that your Spirit would give us vision. Vision and faith to look to Jesus as the only Savior; and that he would give us that comfort of knowing that all those who put their faith, hope and trust in him open their eyes to paradise, open their eyes to see their Savior. And may we to look forward to that day where we will be rejoined with them, and with our Savior for all eternity. In our Savior's name, Amen.

**Personal reflection or meditation**

Our third word from the cross comes from John chapter 19 verses 25 to 27.

But standing by the cross of Jesus, where his mother and his mother's sister Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loves standing nearby he said to his mother, "woman behold your son. Then he said to the disciple, "behold your mother." And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. How often has it been said, or you have heard someone say, 'you don't understand, your emotions got the better of you, or my emotions got the better of me? Or someone says, you know I was just feeling bad, I wasn't feeling too good, or they say, I had a bad day. You know, when people say things like that, they usually are saying it to justify sin. And now here we have Jesus, on the cross, talk about a bad day. This is an agonizing death that is really beyond our understanding I believe. When they put those nails through the hands, or actually right at the base of the hand, through the wrist they did so to hit the ulnar nerve. This would cause unbelievable pain. The feet were put one on top of another and then the nail was driven through the heel bones. Again, unbelievable pain, but it was done this way on purpose. With your arms spread out on the cross, and with your feet down they put you with your legs bent so that you would be sliding down the cross. And when you do that as your arms go above your head, your shoulder blades begin to push in and it crushes your lungs, so you can't breathe. So, you have to push down on your feet which are nailed through the heel bone to raise your body up, so you can breathe. Wow! Unbelievable and in that, you don't hear Jesus saying well you don't understand my emotions got the better of me I wasn't feeling too good I was just having a bad day. No, he doesn't sin, in fact he follows the third or fourth commandment depending on the numbering you use; honor your father and mother. It was the job of the eldest son to care for the family in the absence of father, mother or both. And in this case Joseph has died, there is his mother standing there and he does what is right. He takes care of his mother. He honors her and follows the commandment. May we do that which is righteous too. Oh, Almighty God, when we look at your Son, forgive us for not understanding the pain and the agony He was in. But Father, we thank you for His steadfast love for His mother and for Your Word. And we pray now, that again through the power of Your Holy Spirit, that we too would desire to do that which is right. And not just desire, it but no matter how bad of a day we're having, or how poorly we are feeling, that we would follow through and do that which is righteous.

In our Savior's Name, Amen.

**Personal reflection or meditation**

The fourth word from the cross, comes from Matthew chapter 27 versus 45 through 49 where we read: Now from the 6th hour there was darkness over all the land until the 9th hour. And about the 9th hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, "Eli, Eli, Lema Sabchthani?" That is, my God my God why have you forsaken me? And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "this man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "wait let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." At the beginning of John's gospel, we read that "In the beginning was the word the word was with God the word was God he was with God from the beginning and through him all things were made that were made." Here is Jesus, the eternal son of God. Always with his Father, and this is the first time in eternity, the first time ever, that God the Father and God the Son are separated. Why? Because of sin. All of the sin of the world has been cast on Jesus and God does not accept sin. Let me repeat that for this generation that wants to say oh God is a god of love and he loves everyone regardless of their sin. God does not accept sin. He takes in so seriously, that when all the sin of the world was put on His Son, He abandoned Him for the first time ever in all eternity. Jesus was experiencing the beginning of hell, where God is not. Is it any wonder then, when we read in John chapter 17, before his betrayal, in his arrest, when Jesus is praying his high priestly prayer; he begins in a prayer for himself? And what is His prayer for Himself? That He'll be restored to His Father. He knew what was coming. His prayer is basically, 'Dad, can I come home?' He knew that on the cross, He wasn't going to be welcomed. He knew He was going to be separated from God the Father. What anguish that must be! He had never experienced it in eternity. So, is it any wonder He cries out, "my God my God why have you forsaken me?" We, like Jesus, see heaven as our home, as our true residence, may the thought of not being in heaven greatly trouble us and may we like Jesus desire to go home and to be with Him and with our heavenly Father for all eternity. Almighty God, when we see Jesus on the cross, separated from you, it is because of us. We have sinned and He took our sin. He took our place. He took your judgment on Himself. He was separated from you, so that we might never be separated from you. Oh, heavenly Father, forgive us for our sins. Forgive us for the death of your Son. And Lord, help us to forgive others. And Lord to share Your true forgiveness with others so that they too may join us in our heavenly home.

In our Savior's Name, Amen.

**Personal reflection or meditation**

The fifth word comes from John 19 verses 28 to 29. After this Jesus knowing that all was now finished said to fulfill scripture, "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. I thirst, we see Jesus, the true man, experiencing physical anguish. He was thirsty and at the same time, I believe he was also thirsting to come to an end, to bring his ministry to an end; so that he could start living the new cup of the covenant that which he had shared with his disciples and he shares with us in the Lord's supper. You see, when Jesus sat down to that Passover meal with his disciples, he was giving us a foretaste of what was to come. When we see him saying I thirst, it is my prayer that we also thirst. Thirst for his presence, thirst for his forgiveness, thirst for our heavenly home. Almighty God, again we pray that your Holy Spirit would open our eyes to see the wonder of what you have done for us in the Lord's supper; where Christ tells us 'this is my body,' this is my blood.' Where Saint Paul tells us that if we eat and drink in an unworthy manner, we eat and drink to our own condemnation. Why would that be, unless Jesus is truly coming to us, communing with us every time? Oh Lord may we thirst for that time of communion, and may we thirst for the eternal communion that we will share with Him and paradise. In His name, Amen.

### **Personal reflection or meditation**

Our sixth word comes from John chapter 19 verse 30. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said it is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Last night we look at the first of the three great, three-word sayings from the Bible. The first is "and God said" Here is the second great three-word quote. "It is finished." This begs the question, what is it? And that simple two letter word it is huge. It is everything! Everything for our Salvation. Christ had fulfilled all righteousness he had fulfilled the penalty of all UN righteousness and as a result he says, "it is finished." We can't and we shouldn't even dare try to add to that. There is no 'I must this, or you must this.' No, He did it all. Our salvation comes because Christ finished the work of our salvation. Almighty, Eternal, God; forgive us for the times where we think that we can please you, that we can earn our way to heaven. Help us to see there is only one way to heaven, and that is through Jesus. Help us to see our true nature. We are sinful humans, in need of that Savior. And we pray Lord, that your Spirit would give us the wisdom and the power, to not take any glory for our salvation but to give You and Your Son all the glory, for what you have done on our behalf. In our Savior's name, Amen.

The 7th and final word from the cross comes from Luke 23 verses 44 to 46. It was now about the 6th hour and there was darkness over the whole land until the 9th hour; while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus calling out, with a loud voice said, Father into your hands I commit my spirit. And having said this he breathed his last. What a profound grouping of verses. The sun's light failed. Why? Because the light of the world, through whom all things were made, his light was failing. He was dying. The curtain of the temple was torn in two. What curtain is this? It was a curtain between the holy place where the priest would go and pray, and offer there their offerings of incense, and the most holy place where the Ark of the covenant was. It was called that curtain of separation, the curtain of sin. It was sin that blocked the priest from going before God and blocked us from going to God. But the temple curtain tears. Why? No more, the Lord is now open, God is open to us. Then we see Jesus calling out, Father into your hands I commit my spirit and dying. What is He really saying? I trust you God. I put my life in your hands. I'm going to die. You alone can save me, and we know what's coming. God answers. May we be lights in this world, showing the way to the open door through Christ. And may we trust Him to deliver us from sin, death and the evil one. Almighty Eternal God, just as your Son put Himself into your hands, we pray that we too we put ourselves into your hands that You would hold us that you would protect us that you would guide us and that you would deliver us. In our Savior's Name, Amen.

### **Personal reflection or meditation**

Jesus died. What happened afterwards? our final reading comes from John 19 verses 38 to 42. After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took away his body Nicodemus also who earlier had come to Jesus by night came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about 75 pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it with linen cloth with the spices as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So, because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

And as we bring this service to a close, we would normally at this time have a single candle lit in the sanctuary we would take it out for one minute, leaving the sanctuary in total darkness. And then we would bring it back in symbolizing Jesus dying, but Jesus rising. But the Bible also tells us something about burial, and we end our service tonight with this one verse. I ask you to ponder and think about how it really says a whole lot about our baptism. Romans 6 verse 4 "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life.