

JESUS OF NAZARETH
GOOD FRIDAY: SIN DEFEATED!
MATTHEW 27:24-61
4-10-20

All = bold sections – read together

Leader = regular font – leader reads (choose or rotate leaders)

Sung together = italics

Welcome

Today is the dark day of the Christian year: a day when the lights are dimmed and the sky feels overcast even if it isn't: a day when disciples of Jesus feel as if a heavy veil is drawn over heart and mind. An inexplicably sad day.

We are invited to accompany Jesus through this dark day: to be witnesses to his suffering, to keep silence before his cry of anguish. In our imaginations, let us trudge through Jerusalem, until we come to the place of the cross: and then, let us not turn our faces away.

In this dark day lie all the sorrows and sins of a humanity that strives for high success, yet comes up against human limitations, and falls to the ground in despair. A humanity whose peace plans give way to guns, and whose political promises become papers in filing cabinets.

Here is a day marked by the sinfulness of the world. However, it is not a day to wallow in misery, or to indulge in morbid thoughts about the crucifixion. It is a somber, holy day when we remember how it was for Jesus, and find at the foot of the Jesus a place to lay down ours and the world's sorrow.

On dark days it is hard to see clearly, difficult to understand things that aren't clear. Yet all we are asked to do today is to be present to the sacred story as it is retold, and to the inexplicable, mysterious, wondrous transaction that was, and still is taking place.

We will let God's Word tell the story. Psalm 22, Psalm 88, Isaiah 53 and Matthew 27 invite us into drama of redemption through a suffering servant, Jesus Christ, the Father's only Son.

Today we lament.

May we know without being overwhelmed, our sinfulness and need for our loving Savior Jesus Christ.

Call to Worship

On this day we remember Jesus our Savior who loved us and gave himself for us. Let us draw near in full assurance of God's forever mercy and love.

We give our thanks and praise to Jesus Christ who carries our sorrows, heals our wounds, and saves us from sin and death.

Reading: Isaiah 53 –

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—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet 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 and with a 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.

Song: Lord Have Mercy -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjPrIVKlvsM>

Jesus, I've forgotten the words that You have spoken.

Promises that burned within my heart have now grown dim.

With a doubting heart I follow the paths of earthly wisdom.

Forgive me for my unbelief. Renew the fire again.

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy on me.

I have built an altar where I worship things of men.

I have taken journeys that have drawn me far from You.

Now I am returning to Your mercies ever flowing.

Pardon my transgressions. Help me love You again.

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy on me.

I have longed to know You and Your tender mercies

Like a river of forgiveness ever flowing without end

I bow my heart before You in the goodness of Your presence

Your grace forever shining

Like a beacon in the night.

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy on me.

Psalm of Lament: Psalm 22:1-19 (this is the Psalm that Jesus directly quotes from the cross)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you



are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s womb you have been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

Song: How Deep The Father’s Love -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iw01L-gfmN4>

*How deep the Father’s love for us, how vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss – the Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory.*

*Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life – I know that it is finished.*

*I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart – His wounds have paid my ransom.*

Meditation: Psalm 88

(Note: This is a dark and heavy Psalm and unlike the other Psalms, offer no comforting words other than the opening words. Yet, the Psalmist remains steadfast in not turning away from God despite the great difficulties of his life. He knows how deep the Father’s love is. He knows that God is sovereign over evil as well as good. May we acknowledge and comfort those experiencing the darkness of life. While Good Friday is the darkest day in history, Easter is just around the corner.)

O LORD, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry!

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am a man who has no strength, like one set loose among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.



You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape; my eye grows dim through sorrow.

Every day I call upon you, O LORD; I spread out my hands to you. Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon? Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

But I, O LORD, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. O LORD, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.

Your wrath has swept over me; your dreadful assaults destroy me. They surround me like a flood all day long; they close in on me together. You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness.

Centering Prayer – Enter right into prayer....

God of mystery and wonder, because we know the ending of the story, it's tempting for us to ignore the darkness of this day. It's tempting for us to go about our business as usual. It's tempting for us to move too quickly to the dawn of light on Easter morning.

But give us courage and strength on this day to live for a while in the darkness, to set aside comfort and pleasure, to feel the darkness in which so many of your children dwell, the darkness into which your son Jesus entered.

As we reflect on the death of Christ, remind us of frailty. As we cringe at the suffering of Christ, make us mindful of suffering throughout the world. As we witness the death of Christ, bring us back full circle to the beginning of Lent, to the wisdom of Ash Wednesday: the awareness of our mortality and the mortality of those we love.

Gracious God, deep in the human heart is an unquenchable trust that life does not end with death. Like a seed which is buried in order to bring forth life, Christ goes to the tomb to usher in new life. We trust that we too will be raised to new life, in this world, here and now, and in the glorious hope of what lies beyond physical death.

We trust that the whole world will be born anew, that your kingdom is coming as a new heaven and a new earth. On this day of darkness, it is for this kingdom that we boldly pray....

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed by your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heave.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptations but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen!

Reading: Read Matthew 27:24-61.

Picture yourself witnessing this scene unfold.

What do you hear?

What do you see?

What do you feel?

Gospel Meditation:

The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:20 summarizes what Jesus just accomplished with his death:

For our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus lived the perfect life we could not and suffered the wrath of God against sin on our behalf so that we would not. Our unrighteousness became his. His righteousness then becomes ours by grace through faith and through the applying work of the Holy Spirit. We become righteous in God's eyes only by being united with Christ and thereby being declared "not guilty" because Jesus willingly became "guilty" for us. This is the great exchange of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sin is defeated and forgiveness is made possible in and only through Jesus Christ.

Think about and share your thoughts on how we are like:

Barabbas...

The Two Robbers...

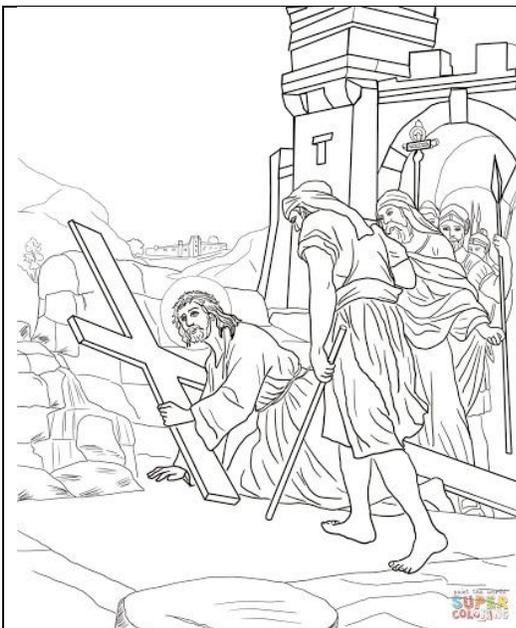
The Centurion...

Simon of Cyrene...

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph?

Bottom Line: Sin is defeated and we are forgiven because of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We are not forgiven because we deserve it or earn it or because of anything we have done. It is all loving grace! This is why we live lives of deepest gratitude towards Jesus! May we never underestimate, never underappreciate, never under-appropriate the amazing grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Youth:



What do you wonder about Jesus dying on the cross?

How does this story make you feel?

Why is this "good news" for you?



Communion Meditation: 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Take some time to meditate on these two gospel truths that the death of Jesus teaches us:

Cheer up! You are far worse than you know!

Cheer Up! You are far more loved than you can imagine!

Song: When I Survey The Wondrous Cross -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tkx8WAYcYAc>

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
See from his dead, his hands,
His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Where the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my fire, my all.*

Closing Prayer (adapted from re-Worship)

Holy God, we are caught in the tension of light and shadow, death and resurrection. You spoke the world into being, you illuminated the universe by your very speech, then filled the void with life. Indeed, you have filled the void of darkness and death, the empty promises of the abyss, with new life and new creation. We look to you in the space between the world and the Kingdom, longing for the fulfillment of your word in the work of the Holy Spirit and the reign of Christ, our Creator and King.

Lord Jesus, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross so that your chosen people will experience the forgiveness of sins. Clothe us in your Spirit, that we, stretching out our hands in loving service for others, may give credible and coherent witness of you and your kingdom; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign, One God forever! Amen!