

Good Friday

St. John Lutheran

March 29, 2024

Sermon

Good Friday - 2024

Imagine you're there as Jesus is crucified. Listen for the voices. What do you hear?

The Jewish leaders seem to be the most fired up. Not against the Romans for killing one of their own, but against Jesus. **“He saved others, ... but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him if he wants him, for he said: “I am the Son of God.”** The trials are over, the sentence they wanted is being executed, but they're still hating, sarcastically demanding Jesus provide evidence to prove his claims.

Then there are the soldiers: **“If you're the king of the Jews, save yourself.”** And people just passing by: **“You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God?”** Even the criminals on the crosses next to Jesus: **“Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”**

So many different voices, but they all swell into one diabolical chorus: “If you're really who you say you are - prove it!”

Today we hear the echoes. “God, if you're really there, if you really care, prove it! God, look at all the evil around us, look at all the hurt in the world; if you really care about us, why don't you stop it! God, if you really want me to believe, answer my prayer (my way), give me a sign, fix me, fix this mess of a world I'm in.” The voices come from all around us. Some speak in hatred, determined to fight against a God they can't stand or understand. Some mouth off just to have fun at our expense. Some voices sound skeptical doubting Christianity's claims. Some voices sound desperate, somehow hoping their complaint would convince God to prove himself. Just like that first Good Friday, people today continue to put God on trial demanding to see the evidence they want.

You hear those voices. How do they affect you? Do they make you angry? - “How dare you!” Or leave you frustrated? - “You just don't understand.” Or, maybe, do those voices ever get you wondering if they're right? Or wishing that Jesus would step in and prove himself and prove you right?

What did Jesus do with those voices? He let his Father answer. He let his Father answer with darkness; he let his Father answer by shaking the earth. He let his Father answer and He listened to the voice of his Father. He listened to the voice of his Father at his baptism - **“You are my Son whom I love, with you I am well-pleased.”** He listened to the voice of his Father from before all time - **“You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”** And he listened to the voice of his Father saying things more hurtful than anything anyone in the crowd around him said. He listened as his Father called him guilty, and cursed him as guilty, and turned his back on him as guilty. Jesus listened to his Father, and it hurt: **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?!”** Jesus knew why. He had listened to the voice of his Father. God was cursing him, crushing him - as one of us, in place of us - for the way we question God, judge God, turn

on God. Why? So that taking our place as guilty and paying for our sin, he can call you and me forgiven, forgiven and right for life with God. Because Jesus had listened to the voice of his Father instead of just listening to the voices of the world, Jesus knew why. And because Jesus listened to the voice of his Father, Jesus knew what his Father had for him after **“It is finished.”** Jesus knew he could look forward to Easter and forever.

So what did Jesus do with those voices he heard all around him? He added his own. Not another voice of anger - “I’ll show you!” Not another voice demanding - “If you think you’re so smart, so right, prove it; prove your way is better than my way.” No, Jesus added a voice of grace - as the soldiers are pounding the nails into his hands and feet - **“Father, forgive them.”** A voice of concern for his mother making sure she’s taken care of. A voice of grace and hope for the thief who repented - **“Today you will be with me in paradise.”** A voice of confidence and trust - just before he died - **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”**

When the world around you is demanding proof, when your hurting heart is looking for proof, listen to the voice of your Father, listen to the voice of Jesus, and there the Spirit will give you all the proof you need. Amen.

Good Friday

March 29, 2024

WE WELCOME OUR GUESTS and pray that all who are with us today are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns and by an encouraging and warm welcome. Our worship service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ: forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven. The notes below may be helpful for your worship and time with us today. If you have questions, please ask! We are blessed to have you with us!

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church, celebrating the Lord's Supper only with those who are united with us in faith and teaching. In this sacrament we give public confession of our doctrinal unity and fellowship; therefore, we invite visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us in the sacrament. We ask our fellow Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice and refrain from the Lord's Supper at this time. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us for worship. Children's worship bulletins and "church bags" (with paper, colors, and Bible story books) are available from an usher. Baby noises can be beautiful to our Savior who said, "Let the little children come to me." If children are crying loudly, our nursery and Gathering Area (back of the church) are audio-equipped and available for you and your young children. After the children regain their composure, come back so we can all worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

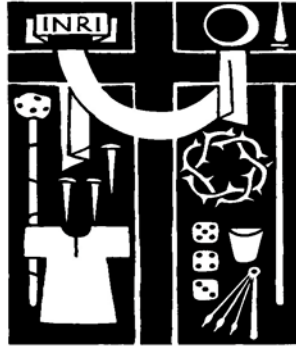
Large Print Service Folders are available from an usher.

Hearing Assistance for those with hearing aids is provided through our *Hearing Loop*. More information is available from an usher.

A *wheelchair lift* is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.

Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.



Our service this evening is a Tenebrae service, a service of shadows and darkness, reminding us of the darkness of our sin and guilt, the darkness of the world's hate and anger against God, and, yes, the darkness of God's curse on our sin, charged against Jesus.

In a Tenebrae service, candles are extinguished and lights are dimmed to impress on us the utter darkness and loneliness, the horrible curse that Jesus faced on the cross. As you hear of Jesus' burial and the service closes, expect to hear the *strepitus*. (In various Tenebrae traditions, the sharp, loud noise of the *strepitus* stands for the earth shaking and rocks breaking at Jesus' death, the stone rolled in front of Jesus' tomb, or the rending of Christ's tomb on Easter morning.) As the seventh candle is removed we are reminded of Jesus' death; as it returns we are reminded that he lives with the Father. As the service draws to a close, see the sign of hope - in the darkness, a light still burns - Easter is coming!

After the service, the congregation may remain for prayer and meditation before leaving quietly. If you wish to speak to the pastor, he will be available in the parking lot, weather permitting.

PIANO AND ORGAN MEDITATION

"Lenten Hymn Selections"

Valerie Floeter

"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"

Michael Burkhardt

"Passion Chorale"

John Carter

"Meditation on Three Lenten Hymn Tunes"

Charles Callahan

OPENING HYMN

“Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle”
Hymn 419

Please stand

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, in humble awe, in reverent silence, and in solemn trembling, your people have gathered around your cross to remember your death.

O Christ, friend of sinners, have mercy on us; O Christ, Savior and Redeemer, have mercy on us; O Christ, only hope of a lost world, have mercy on us.

At your cross let us see all the ugliness, horror, and misery that sin, death, and Satan brought into the world and that you willingly took on yourself. Open our eyes to see that we deserved the death and torments of hell that you suffered for us.

But open our eyes also to see that by your death you destroyed death, by your sacrifice you reconciled us with your Father, and by the blood you shed you purchased us to belong to you forever.

Help us believe that we are worth that much to you. Fill us with joy and peace in believing that we are truly free from condemnation and forgiven by your Father. Help us dedicate our lives in thankful love to you, who gave yourself for us.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Hear us, O Lamb of God, who bore all sin for us. Amen.

Please be seated

The first candle is extinguished.

RESPONSE

"A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth"
Hymn 422

LESSON OF ANGUISH AND HOPE

Psalm Prayer - Psalm 22

Father, when your Son hung on the cross, he cried out to you in agony and grief. You gave him the strength to endure so that death might be destroyed and life restored. Have mercy on us all our days and preserve us in true faith unto life everlasting; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.


PSALM 22

Refrain



Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Psalm tone



My God, my God, why have you for `saken me?*

Why are you so far from `saving me?

I am a worm and `not a man,*
scorned by men and despised by the `people.

All who see me `mock me;*,
they hurl insults, shaking `their heads

"He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD `rescue him.*
Let him deliver him, since he de`lights in him." *Refrain*

Refrain

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Psalm tone

My strength is dried up, and my tongue sticks
to the roof of my mouth;*
you lay me in the dust of death.

A band of evil men has encircled me,*
they have pierced my hands and my feet.

They divide my garments among them*
and cast lots for my clothing.

But you, O LORD, be not far off;*
O my Strength, come quickly to help me.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain

The second candle is extinguished.

Please stand

LESSON OF FULFILLMENT

Jesus Crucified*

Please sit

The third candle is extinguished.

CHOIR

"Lamb of God"
Hymn 550

*Your only Son, no sin to hide, but you have sent him from your side
to walk upon this guilty sod, and to become the Lamb of God.*

Refrain

*O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God, I love the holy Lamb of God!
O wash me in his precious blood, my Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.*

*Your gift of love they crucified, they laughed and scorned him as he died:
the humble King they named a fraud and sacrificed the Lamb of God. Refrain*

*I was so lost, I should have died, but you have brought me to your side
to be led by your staff and rod, and to be called a lamb of God. Refrain*

SERMON

Matthew 27:38-54
Pew Bible, p. 988

Evidence

HYMN

"Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted"
Hymn 430

The fourth candle is extinguished.

BIDDING PRAYER

The *bidding prayer* is an ancient form of prayer in which a minister bids
or invites the congregation to pray.

M: Let us pray for the whole Church, that our gracious Father would defend her
from the devil and keep her faithful to her Lord.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you have revealed your saving name to the
world through Jesus Christ our Lord. Protect us from the assaults of the evil one,
and help us remain faithful to your Word so that in every adversity we may
stand firm in our faith and give ourselves fully to our Savior's work, through
Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for those who serve in the public ministry and for all people of God.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you rule over all things for the good of your people. Preserve us from divisive spirits and false teachers. Give your servants the grace to proclaim Christ joyfully in word and deed so that all who hear them may come to know their Savior better and be strengthened for their lives of service, through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

M: Let us pray for those who are being instructed in the Word, that they remain firm in the simple faith of Baptism.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you make us your own dear children by the washing of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit. Give strength to all who are buried with Christ in Baptism, that each day they may die to sin and rise again to live new and holy lives, through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

M: Let us pray for our earthly government, our rulers, and all who are in authority.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you have established earthly government to keep a measure of order in this dying world and to protect us from the disorder of sin. Give to all rulers the wisdom to govern well and to all citizens the desire to obey them, so that we may live peaceful lives in all godliness and holiness, through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

M: Let us pray that our gracious Father would protect us and our communities from the many earthly calamities that threaten us.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, on all sides we are surrounded by danger from wars and famine, from disease and pestilence, with the devil begrudging us every minute of our lives. Protect us from all these miseries so that your name may still be glorified in them and so that we may safely pass through them to your heavenly kingdom, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for those who are outside the Church, that they may come to know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, your Son was lifted up on the cross so that he might draw all people to himself. Through the proclamation of your Word, mercifully gather from the nations a people that are your very own, that we may join together around your throne in glory to praise and thank you forever, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for our enemies and for all those who hate us.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, no one can harm us without grieving you, whose name we bear. We ask that you would change the hearts of those who work against us and who hate us without reason. Give them repentance and faith so that they may be glad with us and find joy in your love, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for all who suffer under cross and trial:

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you sent your Son into the world to bear our griefs and to carry our sorrows. Help those who are suffering for your name's sake and who are struggling against temptation, that they may not be overwhelmed with sadness but find relief in your grace, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask in the words he himself has taught us.

THE 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.



RESPONSE

"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"
Hymn 429 (st. 5)

Sung by the congregation

5 What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank you,
dear - est Friend, for this, your dy - ing sor - row,
your pit - y with - out end? O make me yours for -
ev - er, and keep me strong and true; Lord, let me
nev - er, nev - er out - live my love for you.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

LESSON

Jesus Buried*

The sixth candle is extinguished.

The seventh candle is removed.

**A TIME OF SILENCE FOR MEDITATION
THE STREPITUS**

The seventh candle is returned.

CLOSING HYMN
Sung by the choir

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”
Hymn 429 (st. 7)

*Lord, be my consolation, my shield when I must die;
Remind me of your passion when my last hour draws nigh.
My eyes will then behold you, upon your cross will dwell;
My heart will then enfold you – who dies in faith dies well!*

***This year our Passion History lessons are from a compilation of the four Gospels.**

*The congregation may remain for prayer and meditation before leaving silently.
If you wish to speak to the pastor, he will be available in the parking lot, weather permitting.*

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OFFERING (Please fill out friendship pads on pews)

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan
this code with your mobile device.*



Service Participants

Preacher and Presiding Minister
Organist
Choir Director
Choir

Pastor Kevin Raddatz
Mrs. Beth Rockwell
Dr. Tim Samelson
St. John Senior Choir

We welcome you to come and worship with us again.

Easter Sunday Services at 9:00 & 11:00am

*We also invite you to join us for Easter Food, Fun, & Fellowship,
Sunday at 10:00am.*

Acknowledgements

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