

Sermon for Good Friday

Date: April 19, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Gospel Reading: John 19:16-30



Sermon Text: John 19:16-30

Sermon Title: 'Good?'

Hymns:

LSB 425 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

LSB 440 – Jesus, I Will Ponder Now

LSB 450 – O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

LSB 451 – Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

LSB 456 – Were You There (Verses 1-3)

Liturgy:

Special: Chief Service



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Text: John 19:16-30

Pilate delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called “the place of a skull,” which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”

Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see whose it shall be.”

This was to fulfill the Scripture which says:

“They divided my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things.

Standing by the cross of Jesus, were 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 loved, 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. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the 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. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

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Grace to you, and peace, in Jesus' Holy Name. Amen.

We are here on this dark, somber, day. A day of conviction in self-reflection of our sinfulness and the endless failures we bring before our God, often unknowingly, but all too often defiantly knowing our sin and not caring about the pain it causes our Lord. As we pause to peer into our own hearts and minds we might, and certainly should, feel unworthy to approach God's Sacred throne, or to even be present in this hallowed hall where His name is proclaimed and honored and where His presents falls upon us.



How can we stand? How can we enter this place? How can we not fall to our knees in the deepest sorrow, grief, pain and terror. It was on this very night, on this very Friday that Jesus, God's own dear beloved Son, was executed by torture, nailed to posts because of our contempt or Him. How dare we enter this place. How dare we display the tool of His execution. How dare we celebrate such a vial act! How dare we! How could we?!

The answer is found in the word 'Good.' How can we, we the ones who brought death on Jesus, call this of all days Good Friday? We should call it: Hate Friday, Traitor's Friday, Death Friday. Are we so stricken with ignorance and arrogance that we would actually call this, of all days, 'Good?' Who do you think you are sitting here this evening?! Who do you think you are basking is the spectacle of death like a roman fan in the Colosseum laughing as animals rip people asunder.



Is that who we are? Is that what this night is about? Is that why we call this night 'Good?' No.

You know you better than I do. You know you're not worthy to be here, just like I know I have no business being up here talking to you on this day. Yet, here we are. Why? Because of one word, 'Good.'

I'm sure you know God is good. I'm sure you know Jesus lived good life, and that He was a good man and a good teacher. I'm sure you know that the work the Holy Spirit does is good. I'm sure you know that even you on a good day might have some good. 'Good' is a good word. Why does it bring us here to this place we so certainly do not deserve to be? Why do we call this day 'Good?'

We call this day 'Good' because this is the day when it happened. This is the day when the mightiest of all battles ensued; when a behemoth of powers clashed across the Universe and the epicenter of it all was right here on our little blue ball floating in space. This is the day when it happened.



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Jesus was born and held by a wooded manger as He became Emmanuel, a Hebrew word that means, “God with us.’ God walking among us. God! ... walking next to us.



You know what’s most crazy about that? We didn't recognize Him.¹ He made us, He created us, He called us ‘His own’ and we didn’t notice He was here.² He taught us for years and we didn’t hear Him.



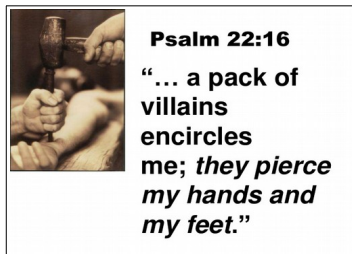
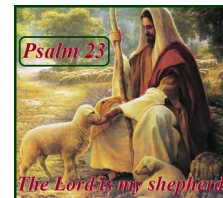
... and now He has graduated from a wooden manger to a wooden cross, that holds Him again. Both confined Him. Both held Him in place. Both were intended to prevent Him from leaving. Both were put in place in submission to His will. He endured both because He wanted to, not because we told Him to.³ That was always the plan.⁴



God is good all the time. All the time God is good. ...but that is not why this day is called ‘Good.’ This day is called ‘Good’ because on this very day, so very long ago, our Holy Sovereign Lord, in accordance with His will, His plan, and His purpose allowed Himself have nails driven through Him to pin Him to that cross.

...and even there, even there, still He taught. Even there He still proclaimed Himself as the One who had come to save. Even there rejected by God the Father, held in contempt by Satan and all the powers of Hell, and held in disdain by us He reminded all those who are watching of a song. A song! We haven’t given that song much for a name. We call it ‘Psalm 22.’ Could a more inglorious name be given to such a prominent portion Scripture?

‘Psalm 22.’ Perhaps some of you have read it. You probably did and then moved on. On to that good Psalm ‘Psalm 23.’ “The Lord is my Shepherd, I Shall not want...” That’s the good one right? Those two Psalms are put side by side on purpose ‘Psalm 22’ reigns supreme because ‘Psalm 22’ describes the day. This day. This day that we call ‘Good.’

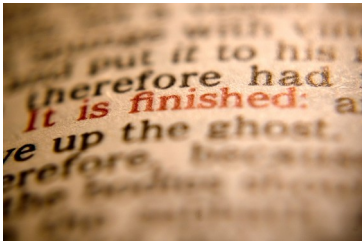


“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?!” A cry in anguish and pain, in terror and utter abandonment? Yes, but more than that it is the opening words of ‘Psalm 22.’

“I thirst.” Look to the exact middle of ‘Psalm 22’ and you see a man dying, suffering, from desperate thirst. A body wretched and torn by thirst. He’s quoting the song. That song we call ‘Psalm 22.’

- 1 John 1:10
- 2 John 1:11
- 3 Matthew 26:53
- 4 Ephesians 1:4

That song's final words are "He has finished it." What are Jesus' words? Three simple words. Three little word. Three almost meaningless words. ...unless you know what they mean. "It is finished!"



...and as those words are uttered Satan howls in horror, as a shock wave of power rips across the universe the epicenter of it all was right here on our little blue ball floating in space. On this very day that we call 'Good.'



We call this day 'Good' and so we should because today is truly good. On this day the war ended. Your condemnation was commuted. Heaven became you true home. Sunday will spell that out. Sunday will show the awesome power of our Lord...

...but we're not quite there yet. Right now Jesus, our brother, is pinned to posts. We are here to remember this day. The day when He made us 'good' and declared us worthy to be here in this place this very night.

Amen.

