

Good Friday Virtual Service 2020
First Presbyterian Church
Rouses Point NY Champlain NY
Rev. Lori Danielson- Pastor -- Organist Sally Goddard

Prayer of Preparation:

Heavenly Father, as we gather in worship this night, help us to understand the mystery of your love, and Christ's sacrifice for our sakes. Then send us out into the world as witnesses of your love and grace.

Call to Worship

L: We gather to remember Christ's suffering and death.

P: We come to give thanks to God for his love and mercy.

L: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

P: Surely, Jesus has borne our grief and carried our sorrows.

Prayer of Confession:

Heavenly Father, we pray you graciously to behold your children for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and to suffer death upon the cross. Into His hands of deliverance we commit our sins, and confess:

That we have not kept our eyes fixed upon his saving cross, nor listened with undivided attention to your voice. We confess we do not love you fully, nor love others as you command. In your mercy hear our prayer, forgive us, and cleanse us with the blood of Christ, in whose name we gather and pray. Amen

Assurance of Pardon

Old Testament: Isaiah 53:1-10

New Testament: Hebrews 10:11-23

Good Friday Meditation: "The Power of the Cross"

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I CAME ACROSS THE FOLLOWING STORY, WRITTEN BY A MINISTER OF A CHURCH IN OKLAHOMA.

THE ACTION TAKES PLACE, ON A BATTLEFIELD DURING THE KOREAN WAR:

IN THE MIDST OF HEATED COMBAT, A SOLDIER ON THE FRONT LINES JUMPED INTO A FOXHOLE FOR SHELTER, AS A HAIL STORM OF ENEMY FIRE SHOT OVERHEAD.

AFTER HE HAD CROUCHED DOWN AS LOW AS HE COULD HE FELT SOMETHING POKE HIM FROM OUT OF THE DIRT.

HE PULLED OUT A SMALL METAL CROSS. A FEW MINUTES LATER ANOTHER MAN DOVE INTO THE HOLE NEXT TO HIM.

LOOKING AT THE NEW ARRIVAL THE FIRST SOLDIER NOTICED THE CROSS PIN ON HIS HAT, SIGNIFYING HE WAS A CHAPLAIN.

THE SOLDIER IMMEDIATELY HELD UP THE CROSS HE FOUND IN FRONT OF THE CHAPLAIN DEMANDING TO KNOW: "HOW DO YOU MAKE THIS WORK?"

IT MAY SOUND LIKE A HUMOROUS STORY, BUT THE QUESTION IS A SERIOUS ONE, PERHAPS EVEN MORE SO WHEN WE ARE IN A KIND OF "FOX HOLE", AT HOME IN THE MIDST OF THIS VIRAL ATTACK.

UNFORTUNATELY THE PROMISE AND POWER OF THE CROSS OR A CRUCIFIX IS NOT IN BODILY OR OTHER PHYSICAL PROTECTION.

THE CROSS IS NOT A MEANT TO BE SEEN OR USED AS A GOOD LUCK CHARM IN THE WAY PEOPLE USE A RABBIT'S FOOT, A LUCKY PENNY, A FOUR LEAF CLOVER, OR ANY SIMILAR ITEM USED IN DIFFERENT CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD.

THE CROSS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH LUCK IN ANY WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM.

THE WORKINGS OF CHRIST'S CROSS ARE FAR MORE COMPLEX AND MIRACULOUS THAN ANY KIND OF CHARM.

THE KEY TO UNLOCKING THE POWER OF THE CROSS IS NOT IN HUMAN HANDS, BUT RATHER IN THE HANDS AND WILL OF GOD.

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH TOUCHES UPON THIS POWER AND ITS KEY WHEN HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF GOD.

ON ONE LEVEL, THIS SERVANT WAS UNDERSTOOD AS THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

BUT CHRISTIANS HAVE ALSO INTERPRETED THIS OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGE, AND OTHERS LIKE IT, TO ULTIMATELY BE A REFERENCE TO JESUS AS THE CHRIST.

IT WAS ON THE CROSS JESUS WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, CRUSHED FOR OUR INIQUITIES, AND UPON HIM WAS LAID THE PUNISHMENT THAT MAKES US WHOLE. FOR BY HIS BRUISES, WE ARE HEALED.

THE CROSS OF THE RISEN CHRIST WORKS TO HEAL US WHEN WE ADMIT THAT WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY.

WE MUST ADMIT AND REGRET THAT WE HAVE SINNED, INSTEAD OF REMAINING FAITHFUL TO GOD.

JOHN 11:50 REMINDS US WHY JESUS DIED FOR US. IN IT THE HIGH PRIEST SAYS TO THE COUNCIL ABOUT JESUS:

“YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, THAT IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO HAVE ONE MAN DIE FOR THE PEOPLE RATHER THAN TO HAVE THE WHOLE NATION DESTROYED.”

THIS STATEMENT WAS TRUER THAT HE REALIZED, NOT JUST FOR THE JEWISH NATION BUT EVERY NATION AND RACE AND PEOPLE.

INDEED ONE MAN DID DIE FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD, NOT JUST ANY ONE, BUT JESUS OF NAZARETH, GOD INCARNATE.

THUS THE CROSS WORKS TO CALL US TO REPENTANCE BECAUSE BY IT WE ARE REMINDED JESUS DIED FOR OUR SAKES.

COURAGEOUSLY, THE MASTER STOOD BEFORE THOSE WHO CAME TO ARREST HIM AND ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE ARRESTED, AND THEN PUNISHED FOR THE SIN OF THE WORLD.

JESUS WAS MOCKED BY OTHERS. THE BODY OF CHRIST WAS BOUND AND BEATEN, WOUNDED, BRUISED, AND BROKEN.

HE DIED ON THE CROSS THAT THE WORLD, THAT WE, MIGHT BE SAVED THROUGH HIM.

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION TRANSFORMED THE CROSS FROM A WEAPON OF DEATH TO A SIGN OF NEW LIFE.

THE AUTHOR OF THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS ALLUDES TO THIS TRUTH WHEN HE REMINDS THE CHURCH ABOUT JESUS AND THE CROSS.

THE PASSAGE SPEAKS ABOUT THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST’S BLOOD, AND GOD’S PROMISE TO FORGIVE OUR SINS.

THEREFORE, SCRIPTURE TESTIFIES THAT THAT CROSS DOES NOT WORK AS A DIVINELY SENT GOOD LUCK CHARM, NOR IS IT A SHIELD PROTECTING FROM ALL HARM TO THE BODY OR MIND.

INSTEAD, THE POWER OF THE CROSS IS FOUND IN THE BODY OF CHRIST BROKEN UPON IT, AND THE RISEN CHRIST’S GLORIFIED BODY.

FOR JUST AS GOD RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD TO NEW LIFE, SO ALSO WILL GOD RAISE THOSE WHO CONFESS HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOR.

THIS NEW LIFE BEGINS WHILE WE ARE STILL ON EARTH, AND IS FULFILLED WHEN THE SOUL LEAVES THE MORTAL BODY BEHIND.

IN THIS WAY THE CROSS IS MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY CHARM, IT IS A SIGN POST TO SHOW PEOPLE THE WAY HOME TO GOD.

IT POINTS TO THE FAITHFULNESS, LOVE, MERCY, AND GRACE OF GOD.

THEREFORE, WE ARE INVITED TO APPROACH THE THRONE OF GOD IN ASSURANCE OUR HEARTS, OUR INNER BEING, IS CLEANSED BY THE BLOOD OF OUR SAVIOR.

LET US HOLD FAST, AS THE BIBLE SAYS, TO THE CONFESSION OF OUR HOPE, WITHOUT WAVERING, BECAUSE GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES.

ALL GLORY AND HONOR AND PRAISE BE TO GOD, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: GOOD FRIDAY INTERCESSIONS

JESUS WILLINGLY SUBMITTED TO SUFFER IN OUR PLACE. LET US PRAY TO GOD OUR FATHER, AND PLACE IN HIS HANDS THE SUFFERING OF THE WORLD. WE PRAY FOR THE CHURCH, THAT WE MAY BEAR OUR CROSS AND FOLLOW JESUS. THIS IS OUR PRAYER:

HAVE MERCY ON ALL PEOPLE, LORD.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED.. TEACH US TO BE SORRY FOR OUR SINS, AND FORGIVE US FOR JESUS' SAKE. THIS IS OUR PRAYER:

HAVE MERCY ON ALL PEOPLE, LORD.

WE PRAY FOR THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE END OF THE VIRUS THAT HAS INFECTED SO MANY PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD AND HAVE FORCED THE ISOLATION OF MANY. WE PRAY FOR COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THOSE WHO ARE AFRAID OR ANXIOUS, DEPRESSED FOR LONELY, AND FOR ALL WHO GRIEVE. THIS IS OUR PRAYER:

HAVE MERCY ON ALL PEOPLE, LORD.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR DYING. MAY THEY KNOW YOU ARE WITH THEM. AND MAY THOSE WHO DIE BE RECEIVED INTO YOUR KINGDOM. THIS IS OUR PRAYER:

HAVE MERCY ON ALL PEOPLE, LORD.

MAY WE MAY ALL COME TO KNOW JESUS AS OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR, AND MAY WE TRUST HE IS WITH US ALWAYS. THIS IS OUR PRAYER:

HAVE MERCY ON YOUR PEOPLE, LORD.

FATHER, MAY THE SUFFERING AND DEATH OF JESUS LIGHTEN THE BURDENS OF ALL THOSE WHO SUFFER. LEAD US IN THE WAY OF THE CROSS, SO THAT, AS WE SUFFER WITH JESUS, WE MAY RISE TO LIFE IN HIS GLORY, FOR HE LIVES AND REIGNS WITH YOU AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD, NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION