

First Presbyterian Church-Rouses Point

Pastor- Lori Danielson Organist-Sally Goddard
Order of Service Good Friday

Greeting

Prayer of Preparation:

Lord God, on this haunting holy day we come to the place of the skull, the place of the cross, the place of our salvation. In the face of such suffering, show us the face of our Savior. In the shadow of such evil, show us the light of your grace; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Call to Worship

L: On this Good Friday, we contemplate the good news of the cross:

P: How Christ our Lord stretched out his arms to embrace a world of suffering and sin; how our Lord stretched out his arms to save us.

L: Come and see the beloved Son of God. He is high and lifted up. Come and see the Ruler of the nations.

P: He is high and lifted up—upon a cross.

***Hymn “Ah ,Holy Jesus”**

Prayer of Confession:

L: The truth of God’s amazing love is this, Christ died for sinners. Let us therefore seek the grace God offers us through the death and resurrection of his Son.

P: O Lord, we confess we are unworthy of your grace for we are sinners, and yet we repent of our sin and seek forgiveness through Jesus. (SILENT PRAYER)

L: Help up to live repentant lives and so honor Jesus who died for us.

P: Free us, we pray, from the things of the past that prevent us from loving and serving you, for it is in Christ’s name we pray. Amen

Assurance of Pardon

***Gloria Patria:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, And to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: World without end. Amen, Amen.

Reading from Holy Scripture

Old Testament: Psalm 22:1-31

New Testament: John 19:16-20

Sermon “Why?”

Prayers of the People:

L: Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus the Prince of Peace, your Son, we pray for the Church and for the world. We pray for peace in Ukraine, in our nation, around the world, peace in our personal relationships, and in our own hearts.

P: We pray for all who are despised and rejected, the suffering and wounded, oppressed, ill, and afflicted. We pray for all who feel forsaken. We pray for those who are mocked and scorned, the subjects of insult and injury.

L: We pray for all who hunger and thirst, whose mouths are dry, whose bodies waste away. We pray for all who face the end of life, who lie in the dust of death.

P: We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, source of all healing and endless life. Amen.

Hymn: “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Closing Litany:

L: Christ Jesus was despised and rejected. We thought nothing of him. He was oppressed and afflicted.

P: We hid our faces from him. He bore our sickness and sin. We believed God was punishing him for his own sin.

L: We, like sheep, have gone astray. Yet he, like a lamb, was led to the slaughter. He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

P: Lamb of God, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, grant us peace. Amen

Benediction

TONIGHT, THE CHILDREN'S SERMON SERVES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION.

I HAVE A CROSS THAT SHOWS SOME OF THE MAIN EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JESUS. AT THE TOP IS A PICTURE OF HIS BIRTH, BELOW THAT HIS BAPTISM.

ON ONE SIDE OF THE CROSS WHERE HIS HANDS WERE NAILED IS JESUS IN A BOAT WITH HIS DISCIPLES, ON THE OTHER SIDE IT SHOWS JESUS HEALING SOMEONE.

BELOW THAT THERE IS A LOAF OF BREAD AND A GRAPE VINE. AND AT THE VERY BOTTOM IS JESUS CARRYING THE CROSS- REMINDING US ABOUT HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH.

THERE IS ONE MORE EVENT-THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ONE ON THIS CROSS AS WELL-BUT WE WILL NOT SPEAK ABOUT THAT UNTIL SUNDAY. INSTEAD, TONIGHT OUR FOCUS IS ON JESUS, THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB OF GOD, AS HE HANGS ON THE CROSS.

WHEN WE LOOK AT THE STORY OF JESUS' SUFFERING AND DEATH, DRAWING MEMORIES FROM ALL FOUR GOSPELS, WE GAIN A FULLER PICTURE OF THE MEANING OF THIS EVENT.

IN PARTICULAR THERE ARE WHAT ARE CALLED THE "SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS".

THESE ARE NOT SINGLE WORDS BUT THE KEY DECLARATIONS AND PRAYERS JESUS UTTERED WHILE DYING.

THEY ARE; "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING."

HIS PROMISE TO ONE OF THE MEN CRUCIFIED WITH HIM: "TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE."

JESUS SAID TO HIS MOTHER: "WOMAN BEHOLD YOUR SON" AND THEN GAVE HER INTO THE CARE OF ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES BY SAYING" BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER."

HE EXPRESSED HIS PHYSICAL NEEDS WHEN HE SAID "I THIRST".

HIS FINAL PRAYERS TO HIS FATHER WERE:" IT IS FINISHED" AND " FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT."

THEN THERE IS FOR MANY PEOPLE THE SAVIOR'S MOST TROUBLING UTTERANCE, WHICH WAS HIS CRY OF DESPAIR AS HE PRAYED ALOUD WORDS OF DISMAY: "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

IT IS IN THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW AND MARK WE HEAR JESUS CRY OUT A PRAYER THAT IS OFTEN CALLED THE 'CRY OF DERELICTION.'

YES, JESUS CRIED OUT FROM HIS ANGUISH ON THE CROSS THE OPENING WORDS OF PSALM 22. THIS BIBLE PASSAGE BEGINS WITH THE FIERCE CRY OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S DESPAIR.

THE PSALM IS ONE OF MANY IN THE PSALTER THAT EXPRESS THE SENSE OF OR THE FEAR OF BEING ABANDONED BY THE LORD GOD.

IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT JESUS WAS THINKING ABOUT PSALM 22 ON THE DAY OF HIS CONDEMNATION AND DEATH. THE

PSALMIST'S WORDS EXPRESS THE SAVIOR'S GREAT PAIN AND SORROW.

YET MINGLED THROUGHOUT ARE AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH, EVEN IN THE GOD WHO SEEMS TO HAVE GONE AWAY.

IT IS INDEED OUT OF PAST EXPERIENCE THAT THE SUPPLICANT HAS CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD, IN SPITE OF MOMENTARY DESERTION.

THIS PSALM HAS BEEN CALLED THE GREATEST OF THE PERSONAL LAMENTS IN THE ENTIRE PSALTER.

THE PSALM ALLUDES TO MANY OF THE VARIOUS KINDS OF SUFFERING A PERSON MAY BE CONFRONTED WITH IN LIFE.

AND IT ALSO SHOWS HOW A PERSON OF FAITH MAY CONFRONT GOD IN THE MIDST OF UNFAIR SUFFERING, MADE WORSE BY THE SENSE GOD DOES NOT CARE.

IN THE MIDST OF THE TERRIBLE AGONY JESUS FELT HIS FATHER HAD ABANDONED HIM WHILE HE WAS DYING.

PERHAPS HE FELT THAT WAY BECAUSE HE EXPERIENCED HIS FATHER WITHDRAW FROM HIM, SO AS TO ENABLE HIM TO DIE.

AND YET PSALM 22 AND JESUS' PRAYER FROM THE CROSS WERE ACTUALLY WORDS OF FAITH, RATHER THAN DOUBT.

THE CRY OF THE PSALMIST AND THE SAVIOR SHOW US THAT EVEN CRYING OUT TO GOD IN DISAPPOINTMENT OR DESPAIR IS AN ACT OF FAITH.

WE, THROUGH THE WORDS JESUS SPOKE FROM THE CROSS, WHEN HE QUOTED PSALM 22, ARE CALLED TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND EXAMINE THE HEIGHT AND DEPTH OF WHAT JESUS ENDURED BECAUSE OF OUR SINS.

IN FACT, MANY VERSES FOUND IN PSALM 22 REMIND US ABOUT THE DESCRIPTION OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION, FOUND IN THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

IT IS THE STORY OF GOD'S SON, JESUS OF NAZARETH, WHO ENTERED INTO OUR HUMANITY, TO SUFFER AND DIE FOR OUR SAKES.

AND SO, IN A SENSE, JESUS CRIES OUT TO HEAVEN NOT ONLY ON HIS OWN BEHALF, BUT ON OUR BEHALF AS WELL.

THROUGH HIS QUOTATION OF PSALM 22, JESUS ALSO DOES SOMETHING ELSE FOR US AS HE DIES IN OUR PLACE ON THE CROSS.

HE TEACHES HUMANITY HOW TO APPROACH GOD, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, WHEN WE ARE IN DESPAIR, PAIN, CONFUSION, LONELINESS, OR DYING.

BY FOLLOWING CHRIST'S EXAMPLE, WE LEARN THAT WE MAY BE COMPLETELY HONEST WITH GOD.

TOTAL HONESTY IS WHAT JESUS DEMONSTRATES AS HE SUFFERS AND DIES AND WONDERS WHY? WHY DID HIS FATHER FORSAKE HIM IN HIS TIME OF GREATEST NEED?

JAMES CARMODY REFLECTED ON THE MEANING OF THIS PSALM AS IT RELATES TO CHRIST'S EXPERIENCE, AND STATED:

“JESUS, BROUGHT BY HIS PASSION INTO THE DARKEST OF MOODS, WENT TO PSALM 22 -AND CAME AWAY ABLE TO SURRENDER HIS SPIRIT INTO THE HANDS OF HIS DIVINE FATHER.”

TRULY, THROUGH THE WORDS OF THE PSALM OUR SAVIOR SHOWS THAT TO ACCUSE GOD OF NOT CARING, OR TO COMPLAIN AGAINST GOD- ARE NOT SIGNS OF TOO LITTLE FAITH.

INSTEAD, THEY ARE ACTUALLY A SIGN OF HAVING FAITH ENOUGH TO APPROACH THE LORD AT ALL TIMES; FOR EVEN THE WORDS OF DESPAIR FOUND IN THE PSALM ARE BACKED BY HOPE THAT GOD IS LISTENING AND CARES.

SO THEN, MAY WE LEARN FROM JESUS TO CULTIVATE SUCH FAITH AND TRUST IN OUR OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, EVEN WHEN SUCH HONESTY MAY FRIGHTEN US.

MAY WE ALSO REMEMBER THAT JESUS WHO SUFFERED AND DIED FOR US, IS WITH US WHEN WE SUFFER, AND WHEN WE DIE.

LET US ALSO REMEMBER THE SAVIOR'S WORD'S "IT IS FINISHED", ALONG WITH THE FACT THAT EVEN WHEN JESUS WAS FINISHED, GOD, HIS FATHER WAS NOT.

MAY WE NEVER BE AFRAID TO CALL ON HIS NAME, AND NEVER DOUBT THE LORD WILL BE OUR COMPANION IN TIMES OF JOY, IN TIMES OF TROUBLE, AND ALWAYS.

MAY WE HAVE FAITH LIKE JESUS, SO THAT WE TOO MAY ECHO HIS LAST WORDS FROM THE CROSS ACCORDING TO LUKE 23:44-46

“IT WAS NOW ABOUT NOON, AND DARKNESS CAME OVER THE WHOLE LAND UNTIL THREE IN THE AFTERNOON, FOR THE SUN STOPPED SHINING.

AND THE CURTAIN OF THE TEMPLE WAS TORN IN TWO. JESUS CALLED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, "FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE BREATHED HIS LAST."

IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD WENT OUT, AND DARKNESS HAD SEEMED TO HAVE WON. AND YET WE KNOW THERE IS MORE TO THE STORY.

THEREFORE, MAY WE REMEMBER HOW WITH HIS DYING THOUGHTS AND BREATH, JESUS ENTRUSTED HIS LIFE AND DEATH TO GOD HIS FATHER.

AND MAY WE DO THE SAME FOR OURSELVES. AMEN