

Good Friday

John 18:1 - 19:42 (esp. John 19:26-30)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Introduction

We don't usually do a traditional *tre ore*, or three hour, service here at Grace. It usually takes place from noon to three. I think we'll have one next year during holy week just to enjoy an extra opportunity to actually gather together around the Word in person! During the *tre ore* service, it's traditional to meditate upon the seven words of Jesus upon the cross. They come from all four Gospel accounts of our Lord's Passion. Three of them come from the Gospel of John; our Gospel reading tonight. Let us meditate upon these three words from the cross.

Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου. Ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου. (v. 26-27)

Jesus says to Mary, "Woman, behold your son." And He says to the Apostle John, "Behold your mother." Jesus entrusts the earthly welfare of His mother to the beloved apostle, John. Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father and the first born Son of Mary. It is His duty to obey His Father and to provide for His mother.

Jesus is on the cross obeying the will of His Father perfectly by dying and paying the penalty for all your sin. God the Father desires that *not one* sinner should perish, but that all would repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sin. (2 Ptr 3:9) God the Son dies on the cross for your sin to make the forgiveness of your sin a reality! God the Holy Spirit delivers that forgiveness to you through faith!

Your faith is based on an historical event. Today you remember our Lord dying on the cross to save you. Unlike any other religious belief, yours is based on historical fact.

That means your faith is based on reality and not some esoteric belief system. Every year, the godless heathen try to prove that Good Friday and Easter didn't happen. They always fail and they always will.

Be of good cheer! Your God died for you on the cross and your sin is covered by His precious blood!

Jesus also obeyed His Father perfectly by living a righteous life. He was the spotless lamb because He is perfectly righteous! These words from the cross are another example of His righteousness.

The fourth commandment shows us our duty to take care of our parents as they get older. Jesus, as Mary's first born, is responsible for her wellbeing. Paul instructs us that "if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Tim 5:8) Jesus, in the midst of His agony, arranges for John to take care of his mother. He chooses the one Apostle that would actually live long enough to care for her. Even in the midst of His agony, our Lord exhibits perfect righteousness!

And that perfect righteousness is yours through faith! Covering your sin is one thing. But Jesus also gives you His righteousness so that you can call His Father your Father also!

Be of Good Cheer! You have a Father in heaven who loves you and cares for you!

Διψῶ (v. 28)

Jesus says, "I thirst." He said this to fulfill Scripture. Ever since man fell in the Garden, God promised a savior. He promised Satan in the garden, that a descendant of Eve would crush his head. (Gen 3:15)

Over and over again, God promised His savior. God promised Abraham that his Seed would bless all nations. (Gen 12:3) God promised Moses that a Prophet would come that His people would listen to! (Deut 18:15) God promised David that He would raise up an eternal King who would rule forever! (2 Sam 7:12-13)

Over and over again, God showed what would be required. The command to Abraham to sacrifice his son, his only son whom he loved, was a picture of God the Father and the sacrifice required of His only begotten Son, whom He loved. (Gen 22:1-14) The righteous judgment against Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt and the slaying of their firstborn showed what would happen to God's only begotten Son as a righteous judgment against sin. (Ex 12:29) The betrayal of Joseph by his brothers that God used to save His people from famine shows the betrayal of Jesus to death on a cross that God used to save His people from their sin.

Psalm 63:1 says, "O God, you are My God; earnestly I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Jesus thirsted for God His Father. Jesus thirsted to do His Father's will. Jesus ended up on a cross dying for His Father's will. His Father's will is your salvation.

Be of good cheer! Jesus fulfilled all the promises of Scripture. Jesus thirsted for righteousness and saves you from your sin!

Τετέλεσται (v. 30)

Jesus says at the last moment on the cross, "It is finished." Everything that Jesus came to do in His earthly ministry was accomplished. Everything that His Father commissioned Jesus to do was completed. "For God [in this way] loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him." (Jn 3:16-17)

Be of good cheer! It is finished!

Jesus has accomplished your salvation. As Lutherans, we say that justification through faith alone is the article of faith upon which the church stands or falls. (AC IV) “The righteousness of God has been manifested *apart* from the Law, although the Law and Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.” (Rm 3:21-22) Your righteousness is “apart from the law.” It is the free gift of God. You can add nothing to it. It is accomplished for you by Jesus.

When you believe that Jesus died on the cross for you to cover your sin, you have the free gift of salvation.

Be of good cheer! It is finished!

Conclusion

Good Friday is the worst and best day of the year! It is the worst day because of what it cost our Lord. It is the best day because of what it gives to you, that is, your salvation! Today is your independence day. Independence from your slavery to sin.

Be of good cheer!

In Jesus' name. Amen.