



Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon for Good Friday 2017

Jesus' Sacrifice

For you!



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach



• [The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Mt 27, 31-56:](#)

- **ESV** ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."
- ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.
- ³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads
- ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."
- ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying,
- ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.
- ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"
- ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.
- ⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.
- ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah."
- ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.
- ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."
- ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his (the) spirit.
- *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and give us a new heart which will hear Your Word of the Cross and keep it as the highest treasure of our Salvation. Amen.*

• Dear Beloved under the Cross of Christ!

- Not only did Jesus suffer physically inhumanely- Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry His cross for Him. That is how weak He was from all the floggings and beatings by the soldiers with a multi-lashed whip containing embedded pieces of bone and metal - Jesus also suffered from many insults, blasphemy and spitting.

- They crowned Him with a crown of thorns and put a reed in His hands and kneeling before Him, they mocked saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”
- That was also the reason stated for His death, “Jesus King of the Jews”. For the soldiers and for the Sanhedrin, the top Jewish council, Jesus was not a true king because of His utter weakness! According to them He had said, that He would destroy the temple and rebuilt it in three days. According to them, a person who claims something like this, should be able to at the least do something very basic, namely, save Himself! If He really was the Son of God, well then He needed to show them by coming down from the cross.
- Then they summarised their accusations at Him, by saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself!” ‘Save yourself!’ This is an important imperative that has a track record in the Passion of Christ. The first one to hear this remark was Judas, when he repented before the Pharisees and High-priests: “See to it yourself”. His repentance was thrown straight back at him. ‘Save yourself! What has this got to do with us’.
- Then it was Pilate who washed his hands and said, ‘see to it yourself’ and then he handed Jesus over to be crucified. And now here at the crucifixion of Jesus, Jesus is confronted with it: ‘Save yourself!’
- Matthew highlights the uniqueness of Christ’s Ministry which is so foreign to how the world “works”. Even today the world teaches, ‘if you cannot even help yourself, how can you help others?’ It makes total sense: If I can’t swim, how can I jump in and save someone else who is drowning?
- For the Sanhedrin salvation could only lie apart from the cross. A king who hangs on the cross cannot save his servants. Either He has to climb down himself from the cross, or if he is too weak, at least God would have to save His own Son. But, there was no help, neither did He help Himself nor did God intervene. Jesus seems to confirm this when He cried out, “My God, My God, for what reason have you forsaken me?” Some mistook it as a cry for Elijah to come and help Him.
- But, no help came. In the end Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and He yielded up the Spirit. This should remind us of Jesus’ heading of His sermon on the mount: Blessed are the poor in the Spirit! Jesus Himself had become poor in the Spirit. He became the absolute Least in the hands of the sinners! He didn’t

help Himself. He did not save Himself from the curse of the Cross, from that cursed Death.

- And yet, the veil of the temple was torn. The Holy of Holies, God's private chamber was opened for all! Tombs were opened. Death was conquered! Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, the very moment He gave up the Spirit. The centurion, a Roman soldier, and those with him were filled with awe and gave witness, that this was truly the Son of God! There was also a darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour over the whole of the land!
- So, God the Father did show up! Not to save His Son, but to save the lost children of humankind, through this sacrificial death of His Son. How could Jesus save us without saving Himself first? By becoming the sin-offering for the whole world. Sacrificial Love triumphs over love of the self. Helping others is more important than helping your self. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit did not only preach this, they practised this for your and my benefit.
- Jesus did not stay out of the barbaric hands of sinners, nor did He bow to the warped, claiming- to- be- pious leaders of, the highest religion! He suffered the full arsenal of pain inflicted by sharp objects and by sharp blasphemous words of people of all walks of life who shared a common principle of life, namely save yourself, see to it yourself.
- It is for these that Jesus suffered the ultimate torture and pain: To be forsaken by His Father. He only knew the Love of the Father. Never did anything come between Him and His Father. He was always fully united with His Father. They were One. Here on the Cross He was forsaken by His Father for your and for my sake, so that we cannot ever say it, without lying, that the Father has forsaken us! The Father has not forsaken you! This is the Way in which God loves the world.
- He saves the world through Death and Resurrection. Jesus' Death gives Life to us. Whoever is united with His ministry- that is what Baptism by water and the Spirit does with us- whoever is united with the Death of Christ receives eternal Life, because your sins have been forgiven. You have been saved by someone who did not care to save Himself before saving you. He saved you by sacrificing Himself, in both Body and Spirit!
- He did it conscientiously, willingly, knowingly. It was no accident. It was plan A of

God's Redemption. There was no depth of hell which He did not suffer. In other words, His redemption was a proper payment. He spared no work, no pain, no prayer, no torture even submitting Himself into the hands of sinners. There you have God's sacrificial Love nailed to the cross, for everyone to see and benefit of! He stayed right there, so that you may realise, there my sins are crucified! His wounds and scars are our wounds and scars, those we have received and those we have inflicted. They are not with you any more. He has taken them on Himself and they are crucified in God's eyes.

- There is no sin of yours that is a match against His Death! Do you really think that your sin outweighs the pain of God for forsaking His only-begotten Son? Jesus' Death outweighs by far all our sins!
- On the other hand some might ask, if this is the case, for what purpose do we then still have to suffer, if He has suffered for us, in this world? Answer: A lot of suffering has to do with lawlessness. If people don't adhere to traffic rules accidents will happen. We will also suffer in this world, because we follow Jesus. The world hates the Way of God's Redemption, because it exposes the utter weakness and evilness of our fallen self. No human being can save himself or herself.
- It is also not true that God justifies us but we then have to accomplish sanctification or holiness. Put differently: God saves us through Baptism, but then we have to do our part. Not even that is true. God has to justify us and sanctify us. He has to begin our salvation and bring it to fulfilment in us. Christ Jesus, and Him crucified is our justification and sanctification.
- Blessed are the poor in the Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God. This is true, because the One who speaks this Word, redeemed the poor in the Spirit. Your sins are forgiven! Thank you dearest Jesus. **Amen.**
- *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.** [Phil 4,7].*