



Free Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
in South Africa

Sermon- Good Friday (Proper B) 2018

Jesus suffers, is forsaken and dies, for you!



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach

- **The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Mark 15, 21-41:**
- **ESV 21** And they compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.
- **22** And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull).
- **23** And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.
- **24** And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.
- **25** And it was the third hour when they crucified him.
- **26** And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."
- **27** And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.
- **29** And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,
- **30** save yourself, and come down from the cross!"
- **31** So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself.
- **32** Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.
- **33** And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.
- **34** And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, for what reason have you forsaken me?"
- **35** And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah."
- **36** And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."
- **37** And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.
- **38** And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
- **39** And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"
- **40** There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.
- **41** When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.
- **Let us pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and our minds and our hearts and fill them with*

Word of the Cross which is the power that saves us. Amen.

• **Dear beloved of God!**

- Jesus, the Son of God, was weak. Too weak to carry His own cross! On His way to the Place of the Skull, a much defiled place, an unclean and unholy filthy place. No place for the Son of God. Rather a place for all those who believe in seeing is believing! All those who didn't see the Holy Scriptures being fulfilled by every small minute detail that happened that day.
- Jesus was suffering this humiliation, this curse, for those, for all those who didn't trust in the Will of God, for all who don't believe in all He has said and done, for all who are blind to even His existence. Jesus, Word of God become flesh, did not make use of His divine powers to save Himself in any way. Instead, He became weak, given into the hands of sinners, and they did with Him what they wanted. God the Father did not interfere. Jesus did not resist or retaliate.
- God became utterly weak in Christ Jesus, for you and for me. Yet, who wants a weak god, weak taken according to the standards of our common sense? As children we liked to boast about whose dad was stronger, fitter and maybe the best hero of all. Why did we do that? A strong dad was the more likely to help us when danger arrived. In the arms of a big strong dad we felt secure.
- The Gospel of Mark lays a finger on this, and throughout the Gospel shows us how the Pharisees and scribes, the intellectuals, the academics of Israel never outgrew their childish ideas of god. Constantly they were asking for signs. Now again, in this crucial hour, they didn't see what was happening [31-32]: *"So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.*
- If Jesus would have climbed down, punched up the Romans and would have set-up a new government in Jerusalem, by making use of divine power- that would have been something for the scribes and Pharisees to get excited about. That would have been up their alley. That would have been worthy political news far and wide. But, what then? Well, first of all, that would have gotten Rome all offensive, which means war

looming. But Jesus most certainly would have won the masses back onto His side.

• But, what about the dark human heart? What about the truth of believing is seeing if Jesus Himself would have acted against it. All would have been lost, for you and for me. That would have been a real dark Friday, although the world might have honoured and revered him. And so Jesus, instead of at least trying to look like a proper hero, drives the last nail into the coffin of seeing is believing, the religion of old Adam as He says [34]: *“My God, my God what did you have in mind that You have forsaken me?”* Jesus quoted from Psalm 22. In this regard we must take note that the word “why” could be a misleading translation, as in the original language it means the question pointing forward, what did you have in mind. Jesus was not questioning God’s doing. He was pointing forward. That is why He spoke it aloud for us to hear it and search for an answer in the future.

• This does not in any way relieve the forsakenness of Jesus. But, His forsakenness created a new world! A new dispensation, a new Testament, a new Covenant was fulfilled in Christ’s cursed death. His forsakenness reveals the highest point of God’s love towards us sinners. God’s Love towards us is a real deed of saving action! That is what a sacrament is. Jesus incarnation, suffering and death is the main sacrament of God. The payment was on God’s account! The heavenly Father forsakes His only-begotten Son so that we never ever need be forsaken from God.

• This is true for all people! Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. Yes, He has something to do with all people. He has something of them - their sins- and He has taken the guilt of all people’s sins on Himself! As sinners we are guilt driven, even in our modern and post-modern age. Secularists try very hard to remove most of the commandments of God out of the conscience of the communities, but in reality we see so many guilt-ridden people, not knowing what they are doing. We see them in action on Good Friday: They were mocking Him on the cross, playing with His words, asking Him to reveal Himself to them on their own terms, climb down from the cross.

• That’s deeply hidden guilt talking there. Blame it on others, so that I will feel and look a bit better. At least I can say, I was not on the side of the loser. These are the poor souls, these are the guilt ridden people whose guilt He consummated on

Himself! That's hate speaking, not love. He who had no guilt at all, was purest in love. He, whose conscience was clean, had the ability to allow himself to be sacrificed for those who were poor in Love. These people spoke for our old Adam, for our old self, who also much rather hates than loves, much rather retaliates than forgives, much rather wants to see to believe.

- But there was someone who got something of it that day, someone of whom one would never expected it, the centurion: *"Truly this man was the Son of God!"* What a confession at the right moment! A true miracle of God. A pagan's eyes are opened! He sees things differently. God has given Him the right insight.
- Jesus is the Son of God and Son of man and He died so that our mountain of genuine guilt before God was crucified on that day. And in Baptism this fact, the sacrament of God, the atoning action of God was given to us. He cut His new covenant with us. He took our sins and with them removed all guilt before God, so that there is no condemnation, no guilt before God.
- And when we henceforth sin, He continues to take our sins away and gives us a good conscience through the NT means of the Spirit which Jesus has installed, firmly grounded in the death of Christ, to wash us and sanctify us, to keep our consciences clean, so that the Love of God can begin to grow in us and overflow from us into our houses and into the communities. Everyday we may start over again. Every morning the grace of God is new, and we may tap into the power that comes from the Word of the Cross which turns our shameful and sinful existence into a solid hope for the future, irrespective of the turmoil that might be going on in the world. Nothing and nobody can take that certain fountain of forgiveness away from us.
- Therefore, we praise and give all honour to God by gladly receiving what He gives. It was a high price. For you and for me. Thank you, dearest Jesus, thank you, dearest Father in heaven, thank you, dearest Holy Spirit! *Amen.*
- *"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever." Amen.*