

4-15-22 Sermon #14 Good Friday

The Sunday School teacher was describing that when Lot's wife looked back at Sodom she turned into a pillar of salt, when Bobby interrupted. "My mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced, "and she turned into a telephone pole."

PRAY

"The Cross, Who am I"

Last Sunday was Palm Sunday and celebration was in the air. All the shouts of "Hosanna" rang through the streets and the crowd was calling out to Jesus. "Hosanna" - Save us now! During the week, I struggled with knowing for sure what message to deliver. I thought it would be appropriate to deliver a message about the cross because the cross is probably the most recognized emblem for Christians. Before the crucifixion, the cross was used to torture people but after, it's become a trademark.

Instead of talking about the cross, I'd like to continue the journey from Palm Sunday to Good Friday. If you'd like to turn to Matthew 27, we'll begin there. The chapter begins with Judas Hanging Himself **27 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. 2 So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.**

I don't picture this to be how we see the police handcuff someone and gently putting them in the back of a police car.

3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. 4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Many have seen Mel Gibson's "The passion of Christ" and I can't help but think about this movie.

6 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." 7 So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. 8 That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, 10 and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me." [a]

God orchestrated this long ago and I find it interesting that nobody wants this money.

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied. 12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" 14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

In Luke, it tells us that Jesus went back to Herod and then Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. Previously they were enemies but because of Christ, Herod and Pilate even became friends.

15 Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus [b] Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" 18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

It seems odd that Barabbas' first name was Jesus.

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

Her reasoning is interesting. "She suffered in a dream" so she insisted that Pilate stay out of it. I think we've all had nightmares that just shock us and wake us in the middle of the night. Was this what she meant or was it a different suffering?

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. 21 "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. 22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" 23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. **But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" 24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, **he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"****

This sounds a lot like us. If we can wash our hands of something, then we can blame others. Can we stand back and watch and not have any responsibility?

25 All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"

My, my!! This shocks me. They hated Christ so much and because of hate, they were willing to pass this down on their own children. They knew how much blood Jesus was going to shed. This is just brutal.

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

I find it interesting that Pilate did have to get involved.

In my research this week, I found this description of the whips they used.

Bits of lead and stone made the whip a brutal, slashing instrument of terror, ripping a man's back and legs to shreds, occasionally even tearing out an eye or slicing open an ear. Jesus was led like a sheep to the slaughter. It's also said that someone could only survive 39 lashes yet Jesus sustained more than that. Then they forced Him to carry his own cross, the beam rubbed Jesus' shoulders raw. Prior to the crucifixion, He suffered hunger and cold. He suffered loneliness. He suffered grief and pain. But most importantly He suffered for our sins, receiving the wrath for sin that we deserve.

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

To have an entire crowd do this to someone is horrible. Jesus was totally exhausted and couldn't go any further.

32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33 They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). 34 There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

One commentary said that this mixture would have lessened the pain and that's why Jesus refused it.

35 When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

It's so said that they didn't hurt Him enough physically, now they need to mock Him and prove that Jesus wasn't who He said He was.

38 Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" 41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

This is still one of the biggest arguments today. Unless people can intellectually come to terms with anything, they won't believe it. Why is it so hard to believe by Faith. It shows how the heart can be hardened when we allow the mind take control.

43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

In Luke 23:40, it does say that one of the thieves repented.

45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, [c] lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). [d] 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." 48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

This is one of those "uh oh" moments for some. **50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.**

((Earthquake , lights out and bang))

((51 At)) that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split⁵² and the tombs broke **((open.))**

(Move to verse 54)

54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Picturing this entire even is kind of like watching the news. It's like seeing how an innocent person gets pushed to the ground, beaten and kicked by a group of thugs. Except this is 100 times worse. There's nothing anyone could do, just watch. As a believer in Christ, this really hurts inside.

Thankfully, "It's finished!" No more beatings, no more hitting, no more thorns, no more spitting or hurling insults. IT'S DONE!!!!

Between now and Sunday, think about all the different people at Jesus' crucifixion. They didn't have the bible like we have today. We know that Jesus' was resurrected and He went back to heaven. We also know the remainder of the story and know the man Joseph buried Him. We know Christ came back for 40 days to prove to His disciple's that what He promised, was true. Because of the bible, we have the whole story. We have evidence to use for FAITH.

If you were Mary or Joseph, what would you be feeling? If you were an apostle, what would be going through your mind? What about Pilate and Herod? What about Pilates wife? Try and place yourself in the shoes of those who were kicking Jesus or spitting at Him. How would they be feeling?

Another commentary that I read said this; Until Jesus' death, Jesus was sinless and He never knew sin. But because of us, He had to take on all of our sins. He has to wear our sin and know what sin feels like because of us.

Let's go back to Jesus' prayer in John 17,

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. **2** For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. **3** Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. **4** I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. **5** And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Good Friday brings the end of all Christ's suffering. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God. Jesus' death makes our sin "PAID IN FULL". Instead of asking "WHO IS THIS JESUS", my new question is; "WHO AM I?" Am I a forgiven soul? Am I thankful for the MERCY of God? Am I really grateful for the amount of GRACE that is given to me every day. God so loved the world that He gave His only son so that anyone who believes, confesses His name for the forgiveness of sin and is baptized shall inherit heaven. It's not by works that were saved. It's by the blood of Christ. It's only by FAITH.

I love picturing the words of Colossians 3,

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

(Move down to verse 12)

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Asking the question "WHO AM I" ties together with the question "WHO IS THIS JESUS". Jesus is now in the tomb and on SUNDAY is when Christ will prove God's promise to us. "HEAVEN IS REAL".

Let's leave today with Col 3;14-17 in our hearts

14, and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16** Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Let's PRAY