

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

'Church at Home' - Good Friday 10th April 2020

Call to Worship – Hebrews 4:15-16

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer

Almighty God,
look graciously, we pray, on your family
for whom our Lord Jesus Christ
was willing to be betrayed
and given up into the hands of sinners
and suffer death upon the cross.
Assist us mercifully with your help,
O Lord God of our salvation,
that we may enter with joy
upon the contemplation of those mighty acts,
whereby you have given us life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen

Reading John 19:28-37

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

Silence

Pause for a moment to wait on God and be still.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Reflection

There is a word that we don't use in church very much anymore. Yet it is word that is used all though out the Bible. It summarises the writing of the Old Testament prophets, it was the foundation of the preaching of John the Baptist, it was at the heart of the message of Jesus, and was the application to the first sermon preached by the Spirit filled apostles on the day of Pentecost.

It is the word *repent*.

'Repent' simply means to turn around. It is used in the Bible to describe the act of turning away from sin and moving towards God. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ tell us that when we come to God and repent of our sin he will forgive us and bless us with eternal life! So why don't we like talking about it? Maybe, it's because we don't like talking about sin. Maybe, it's because we don't want to admit our failures and mistakes. Maybe it's because we don't want to confess our lack of love for God and for our neighbour.

Today is Good Friday, and we are here to reflect on the death of Jesus Christ. When we look at the cross, we see two things very clearly; our sin, and God's love. The Apostle Peter explains the meaning of Good Friday like this, "*Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God*" (1 Peter 3:18)

Jesus lived an innocent and godly life, he was righteous and perfect. So his suffering was not a result of his own sin. His suffering, his pain, his anguish, was a result of our sin. When we look at the cross we need to understand that should have been us... it should have been me. The shame, the wrath, the separation from God that Christ endured is the punishment that is deserved for my sin, and for your sin, and the for the sins of the whole world.

“Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God”

Our sin is great, but the love of God is greater. The cross shows us the weight of our sin, so that it can remove it away from us as far as the East is from the West. The death of Jesus was to bring you into the eternal love of the Father.

Today is the day of repentance. Today is the day to confess our sins and to receive forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ. Today is the day to turn away from our sin, and be brought into the loving presence of God.

A Prayer of Repentance – from Psalm 51

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.*

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*

*Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.*

*Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

*Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

*Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*

*You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

*My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.*

Prayer

Holy God,
you have opened my ears to hear your Word
and my lips to proclaim your truth:
open my eyes this day to see in the cross
the revelation of your love;
through Jesus the crucified,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, be honour and praise, now and forever.
Amen.