

Sermon - April 14, 2022 Maundy Thursday

Sermon- The Darkest Day

In this night of darkness, there is a picture of God's judgment against sin that becomes bright and clear. The amazing thing here is that it isn't coming on sinful, wicked rebellious people...it's coming on God's only begotten Son.

God's wrath is righteous, and we deserve it. But Jesus takes it instead. Let me try to give you a mental picture of what's happening here. God's wrath... His anger and fury against all our sin is coming down from heaven.

But Jesus; willingly goes to the cross and is lifted up, so that He absorbs it before it comes to us. That's the idea that Luke is trying to get across here. Luke is telling us right here, this is what the cross is for.. this is what the cross does... this is what Jesus was doing as He was hanging up there.

He was taking the punishment for our sins, dying in our place, absorbing the just and righteous wrath of our Holy God.

So Jesus takes our place... but that's not all. In verse 45 he tells us that the curtain in the temple was torn in two. This is significant!

You see; in the Temple there was what was called the "Holy Place" and only those who were in covenant relationship with God could go there, then there was what was called the Holy of Holies... and it was blocked off by this huge curtain.

And in the Holy of Holies was the presence and glory and majesty of God. And the Holy of Holies could only be accessed by the High Priest as he went in there to make sacrifices for the sins of the people of God. But that was only after he had purified himself.

But this curtain being torn, from top to bottom was God's way of showing us that Jesus' death has opened the way up to God.

The death of Jesus makes it possible for us to approach God now. That's what Hebrews 10:19 – 22 says: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

The death of Jesus was the beginning of the restoration and reconciliation of all things back to God... Do you remember.. way back in Genesis we learned that God would come to Adam and Eve and He would walk with them, and fellowship with them.

But then they rebelled against God, and that fellowship, and relationship, and friendship was broken, and they were cast out of the Garden. But through His death, Jesus has opened the way back into the presence and fellowship with God.

So Luke has told us about the judgment of God, coming on Jesus for the sins of man... and Jesus paid for our sins, and by His death, Jesus has opened the way up for man to again approach God,

Then Luke tells us something really interesting. Verse 46... He tells us that Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit."

Look at the words of Jesus from the cross. He goes from, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." To, "Today you will be with me in Paradise" and He says that to the thief next to Him. Then He says, "Behold your son, behold your mother" To John. And then, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

That's when the sins of the world were being laid upon Him... Then He said, "I thirst." And then finally, "It is finished," meaning that He had accomplished the work He was sent to do, and then He said, "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit".

As Christians we need to grasp this... when we look at the cross, how can we keep quiet? How can this not change everything? I've never understood how a Christian cannot tell others about the Christ he serves.

In Verse 48 – it says the crowds... the crowds returned to their homes, beating their breasts... This is basically the Jewish way of mourning... It's almost like they're saying "Oh my, what have we done here?" It's a sense of guilt and shame, and conviction taking place.

It's the feeling that each and every one of us should have when we come to truly understand that it should've been us hanging on that cross.

That's what Luke is saying here... Jesus was innocent. This isn't what He deserved. What we see take place on the cross is the punishment we owed. It was the punishment for OUR sin.

But he's also saying, "Look at how God has dealt with our sin. He didn't marginalize it. He can't ignore it. It has to be punished, but rather than pouring it out on us, instead Jesus says 'I'll take it for them Father. I'll bear your wrath and judgment in their place.'"

And in doing that, Jesus makes it possible for God to exert justice. And with His justice being satisfied and our sins being forgiven, that curtain that separated us from God has been torn in two, and we can come to our heavenly Father as His children.

It's not in trying harder, or trying to be good enough, or in trying to make up for what we've done. Jesus already did all that. He's already paid for it. IT IS FINISHED...IT IS ACCOMPLISHED! With that in mind, let us humbly come to the table He has laid out before us! Amen!