

## GOOD FRIDAY

April 7, 2023

7:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Falls Church, VA

Good Friday continues the three-day observance (Triduum) of Christ's Passover and marks the day of his crucifixion. It is a time of repentance of sin, focus on the cross, and restrained joy and praise for our redemption. In keeping with this character, elaborate words of praise are omitted and the altar remains bare, having been stripped on Maundy Thursday.

This year we read the Passion Account from St. Matthew. Connections between the reading and this year's Lenten theme – Chronicles of the King – will be made in the hymns and a short homily. Our worship will reflect both the sorrow of Christ's painful sacrifice and the triumph of his accomplished mission.

*+ The congregation and pastors enter in silence +*

*OPENING VERSE (Stand)*

P: O Lord, open my lips,

**C: and my mouth will declare your praise.**

P: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

**C: make haste to help me, O Lord.**

**Praise to you, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation**

*RESPONSORY*

P: We have an advocate with the Father; Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

**C: He was delivered up to death; He was delivered for the sins of the people.**

P: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is put away.

**C: He was delivered up to death; He was delivered for the sins of the people.**

P: We have an advocate with the Father; Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

**C: He was delivered up to death; He was delivered for the sins of the people.**

- 1 Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle;  
Sing the ending of the fray.  
Now above the cross, the trophy,  
Sound the loud triumphant lay;  
Tell how Christ, the world's redeemer,  
As a victim won the day.
- 2 Tell how, when at length the fullness  
Of the appointed time was come,  
He, the Word, was born of woman,  
Left for us His Father's home,  
Blazed the path of true obedience,  
Shone as light amidst the gloom.
- 3 Thus, with thirty years accomplished,  
He went forth from Nazareth,  
Destined, dedicated, willing,  
Did His work, and met His death;  
Like a lamb He humbly yielded  
On the cross His dying breath.
- 4 Faithful cross, true sign of triumph,  
Be for all the noblest tree;  
None in foliage, none in blossom,  
None in fruit thine equal be;  
Symbol of the world's redemption,  
For the weight that hung on thee!
- 5 Unto God be praise and glory;  
To the Father and the Son,  
To the eternal Spirit honor  
Now and evermore be done;  
Praise and glory in the highest  
While the timeless ages run.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY*

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. Almighty God,

**C: graciously behold this Your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men to suffer death upon the cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*FIRST READING (Be seated)*

2 Chronicles 33:1–13

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down, and he erected altars to the Baals, and made Asherahs, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall my name be forever." And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. And the carved image of the idol that he had made he set in the house of God, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever, and I will no more remove the foot of Israel from the land that I appointed for your fathers, if only they will be careful to do all that I have commanded them, all the law, the statutes, and the rules given through Moses." Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.

The LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no attention. Therefore the LORD brought upon them the

commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who captured Manasseh with hooks and bound him with chains of bronze and brought him to Babylon. And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. He prayed to him, and God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*ANTHEM Jubilation Choir*

*Call to Remembrance*

Setting: Richard Farrant

Call to remembrance, O Lord  
Thy tender mercies  
And Thy loving kindness  
Which hath been ever of old  
O remember not the sins and offences of my youth:  
But according to Thy mercy  
Think Thou on me, O Lord  
For Thy goodness

*SECOND READING*

Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. . . .

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HOMILY

Dear friends in Christ,

Normally I don't preach a sermon on Good Friday. The Passion story, the other readings, and the liturgy for the day speak clearly enough on their own. But this year I substituted a reading about yet another of the kings of ancient Judah, in keeping with this year's Lenten theme. And I'd like to say a few words about this.

The Passion reading portion I just read concludes with Jesus preparing to meet his betrayer. The betrayer is Judas, one of his own disciples. And this can remind us that God was betrayed many times by his own kings – the ones whom he had placed on Judah's throne.

One of those kings was Manasseh. Manasseh was probably the worst king Judah ever had. His many evil deeds were recounted in that reading I substituted, from Second Chronicles.

As was usually the case with Judah's bad kings, Manasseh's evil deeds led to a decline of the nation. Judah's power and influence had been waning over the past decades already, but his reign increased that decline greatly.

Things got so bad, that at some point near the end of his reign the King of Assyria – that great power to the north and east – came and forced Manasseh to appear at its court in Babylon.

Manasseh feared for his life. And in his fear, he turned to the God whom he had betrayed. "He prayed to him," says the scripture. "And God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom."

Evil king Manasseh was forgiven by the Lord. And this can remind us of one of Good Friday's most important lessons: God will forgive even the greatest of sinners if they turn to him in repentance.

Great evil was directed against Jesus when he was betrayed, arrested, tried and sentenced. He was innocent, and yet condemned.

But Jesus went willingly to the cross to pay for that sin.

“With the Lord there is plentiful redemption,” says the psalm (130). Good Friday shows us the depth of God’s love.

Christ Jesus died for sinners. All of them. Even the worst. Whenever we might think our sins disqualify us from salvation, we have only to remember that God is always ready to take us back. His love for us is that great. God wants the wicked to turn from their evil ways and live.

God heard the confession of evil King Manasseh, and he will certainly hear ours as well.

And God would have heard the confession of poor, troubled Judas also. But Judas, as we’ll hear, gave in to despair instead.

Manasseh’s repentance saved his soul. The writer of Chronicles says: “Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.”

However, his repentance didn’t save his nation. His evil deeds as king had placed the nation on a downward path so severe that righting the ship would no longer be possible.

Interestingly, the book of Second Kings, which tells the same history as the book of Second Chronicles, does not include a reference to Manasseh’s repentance. That writer may have thought it was unimportant in the scheme of things. Or perhaps Manasseh resumed his evil ways once he returned home, and the writer didn’t want the story of his repentance to change his overall image.

Whatever the case, Manasseh’s confession is still well-attested by its inclusion in another source. Included in the Biblical canon by many churches and respected by ours as part of the collection known as the Apocrypha, is a one-chapter writing called “The Prayer of Manasseh.” This prayer is a heartfelt and sorrowful expression of repentance, by that same king, which is very similar in style and content to Psalm fifty-one – the great penitential psalm of King David. Manasseh’s confession is certainly shown here as sincere. And we have no reason to think otherwise.

Perhaps this confession is also meant to remind us that God is ultimately more concerned about souls than he is about nations. Nations rise and fall. Nations, at their core, are really just collections of souls anyway.

God wants people to respect one another as precious souls in his sight. And God wants people to endure through this life and make it, with purified souls, to the next. Jesus our good king serves toward both of these goals.

In tonight's Passion Reading, there are plenty of statements which speak to the furthering of these. So listen for them. Listen to what Christ emphasizes. And notice what he downplays. Think about his actions. Think about his words.

And notice, too, the reactions of others in the story. Notice their times of weakness. Notice their times of misunderstanding. Notice their times of learning and realization.

Jesus the good and innocent king gets crucified. There is sadness in this of course.

But even more, there is purpose. Jesus goes willingly to the cross. And there he accomplishes our salvation.

On Sunday we will celebrate that salvation. We'll raise our voices in joy and triumph.

But tonight, we sing different songs. And we listen. And give thanks.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

*HYMN #451*

*Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted*

- 1 Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,  
See Him dying on the tree!  
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected;  
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!  
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,  
David's Son, yet David's Lord;  
Proofs I see sufficient of it:  
'Tis the true and faithful Word.**

- 2 Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,  
Was there ever grief like His?  
Friends through fear His cause disowning,  
Foes insulting His distress;  
Many hands were raised to wound Him,  
None would intervene to save;  
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him  
Was the stroke that justice gave.
- 3 Ye who think of sin but lightly  
Nor suppose the evil great  
Here may view its nature rightly,  
Here its guilt may estimate.  
Mark the sacrifice appointed,  
See who bears the awful load;  
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed,  
Son of Man and Son of God.
- 4 Here we have a firm foundation,  
Here the refuge of the lost:  
Christ, the Rock of our salvation,  
Is the name of which we boast;  
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,  
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!  
None shall ever be confounded  
Who on Him their hope have built.

*THE BIDDING PRAYER (kneel)*

P: Let us pray for the whole Christian Church ...  
*Silent prayer, then petition by the pastor.*

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us pray for all the ministers of the Word...

P: Let us pray for our catechumens...

P: Let us pray for all in authority...

P: Let us pray our Lord God Almighty that He would deliver the world ...



P: Let us pray for all who are outside the Church...

P: Let us pray for peace...

P: Let us pray for our enemies...

P: Let us pray for the fruits of the earth...

P: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,  
trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*HYMN #455 Sts. 1, 3-5 The Royal Banners Forward Go*

- 1 The royal banners forward go;  
The cross shows forth redemption's flow,  
Where He, by whom our flesh was made,  
Our ransom in His flesh has paid:
- 3 Fulfilled is all that David told  
In sure prophetic song of old,  
That God the nations' king should be  
And reign in triumph from the tree,**
- 4 On whose hard arms, so widely flung,  
The weight of this world's ransom hung,  
The price of humankind to pay  
And spoil the spoiler of his prey.
- 5 O tree of beauty, tree most fair,  
Ordained those holy limbs to bear:  
Gone is thy shame, each crimsoned bough  
Proclaims the King of Glory now.**

*Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus.*

*PASSION READING*

Matthew 26:47-68

*PROPHECY*

Isaiah 52:13-15

- 1 O sacred Head, now wounded,  
With grief and shame weighed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded  
With thorns, Thine only crown.  
O sacred Head, what glory,  
What bliss, till now was Thine!  
Yet, though despised and gory,  
I joy to call Thee mine.**

*Peter denies Jesus.*

PASSION READING

Matthew 26:69-75

PROPHECY

Isaiah 53:1-3

- 2 How pale Thou art with anguish,  
With sore abuse and scorn!  
How doth Thy face now languish  
That once was bright as morn!  
Grim death, with cruel rigor,  
Hath robbed Thee of Thy life;  
Thus Thou hast lost Thy vigor,  
Thy strength, in this sad strife.**

*Jesus delivered to Pilate.*

PASSION READING

Matthew 27:1-14

PROPHECY

Isaiah 53:4-6

- 3** What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered  
Was all for sinners' gain;  
Mine, mine was the transgression,  
But Thine the deadly pain.  
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!  
'Tis I deserve Thy place;  
Look on me with Thy favor,  
And grant to me Thy grace.

*The crowd chooses Barabbas.*

PASSION READING

Matthew 27:15-26

PROPHECY

Isaiah 53:7-9

- 4** My Shepherd, now receive me;  
My Guardian, own me Thine.  
Great blessings Thou didst give me,  
O Source of gifts divine.  
Thy lips have often fed me  
With words of truth and love;  
Thy Spirit oft hath led me  
To heav'nly joys above.

*Jesus is mocked and crucified.*

PASSION READING

Matthew 27:27-44

PROPHECY

Isaiah 53:10-11

- 5** What language shall I borrow  
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,  
For this Thy dying sorrow,  
Thy pity without end?  
O make me Thine forever!  
And should I fainting be,  
Lord, let me never, never,  
Outlive my love for Thee.

*The Death of Jesus.*

*PASSION READING*

Matthew 27:45-56

*PROPHECY*

Isaiah 53:12

*HYMN #450*

*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

**7 Be Thou my consolation,  
My shield, when I must die;  
Remind me of Thy passion  
When my last hour draws nigh.  
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee,  
Upon Thy cross shall dwell,  
My heart by faith enfold Thee.  
Who dieth thus dies well.**

*Jesus is buried.*

*PASSION READING*

Matthew 27:57-66

*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  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

+ We leave in silence +

Those serving: Greeter: Bob Juenger

Reader: Melissa Hecht

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