

Cumnor Parish Good Friday service, 2020.

We will be reflecting together on four particular scenes recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, seeing how each gospel writer has something unique to tell us about Jesus' crucifixion.

An opening prayer:

Eternal God, in the cross of Jesus, we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love: in humble hope and fear may we place at his feet all that we have and all that we are, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Reading 1: Mark 14:42-52

⁴³ Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' ⁴⁵ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. ⁴⁶ The men seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷ Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁴⁸ 'Am I leading a rebellion,' said Jesus, 'that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹ Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.' ⁵⁰ Then everyone deserted him and fled.

⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, ⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

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Was the young man Mark himself? Mark brings out how Jesus was let down and abandoned by everyone, including his closest friends. And finally he was cut off from God himself, crying out: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He was taking our sins and the judgment we deserve.

We give thanks, and pray for those who are feeling lonely and desolate at the moment.

Reading 2: Matthew, 27:22-26.

‘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!’

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

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

Who was guilty for Jesus’ death? Pilate, Judas, the Jewish leaders and crowd? Yes, but also all of us human beings because of our sinfulness and God-less ness. As the old hymns put it: he died for me, who caused His pain, who Him to death pursued. Alas my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee! ‘Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.

Peter broke down and wept after his denials. Let us confess our sins..... The traditional confession offers no ‘ifs and buts’, no excuses or shifting blame:

Almighty God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
maker of all things, judge
of all men:

We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins
and wickedness,
which we from time to time most grievously have committed,
by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty,
provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us.
We do earnestly repent,
and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings;
the remembrance of them is grievous unto us,
the burden of them is intolerable.
Have mercy upon us,
have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

The Lord died that we might be forgiven, and so we pray

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.
Amen.

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Hymn

There is a green hill far away,
outside a city wall,
where the dear Lord was crucified,
who died to save us all.

2 We may not know, we cannot tell,
what pains he had to bear;
but we believe it was for us
he hung and suffered there.

3 He died that we might be forgiv'n,
he died to make us good,
that we might go at last to heav'n,
saved by his precious blood.

4 There was no other good enough
to pay the price of sin;
he only could unlock the gate
of heav'n, and let us in.

5 O dearly, dearly has he loved,
and we must love him too,
and trust in his redeeming blood,
and try his works to do.

Reading 3: Luke chapter 23:32-43

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!'

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence?' ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.'

⁴² Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'

⁴³ Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

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Two extraordinary pictures: first, Jesus praying for those who were killing him – he died that they and we might be forgiven. Second, Jesus promising the man being crucified alongside him: Today you will be with me in paradise. That's why Jesus died: he died that we might be forgiven...that we might go at last to heaven.

We give thanks, and pray for those facing death at the moment. 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom'.

Reading 4: John 19:28-30

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.' ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

What was finished? Jesus' life and suffering, yes. But God's work of love: John 3:16: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. Jesus 'loved them and us to the end'. Love's work was completed in the cross, victorious over evil.

Hymn:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it Lord that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God.
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That we an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

We say the Lord's Prayer.

We say together

Jesus, Saviour of the world, come to us in your mercy: we look to you to save and help us.

2 By your cross and your life laid down, you set your people free: we look to you to save and help us.

3 When they were ready to perish, you saved your disciples: we look to you to come to our help.

4 In the greatness of your mercy, loose us from our chains, forgive the sins of all your people.

5 Make yourself known as our Saviour and mighty deliverer; save and help us that we may praise you.

6 Come now and dwell with us, Lord Christ Jesus: hear our prayer and be with us always.

7 And when you come in your glory: make us to be one with you and to share the life of your kingdom

LET US GO IN PEACE. WE MEET AGAIN ON EASTER DAY AT 10.30.

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