

## **Welcome – 30 March - Good Friday '18 B**

Good morning...welcome to Living Water Fellowship as we worship on this day we call *Good* Friday. It is *good* because today the God who created us for his love & life sacrifices His Son Jesus for us so that our sin & death might no longer separate us from Him & so that God's original intention for us would be made real...his image in us restored, his presence with us assured, his purpose through us fulfilled.

Throughout this season of Lent we have heard the words of Isaiah 53...

*He was despised & rejected — a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.*

*He was despised, & we did not care.*

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;*

*it was our sorrows that weighed him down.*

*We thought his troubles were a punishment from God,*

*a punishment for his own sins!*

*But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.*

*He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.*

*All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.*

*We have left God's paths to follow our own.*

*Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.*

Today...that promise comes to pass as Jesus is tried, convicted, tortured, crucified & buried...for you/us/all. What began in the smell & sweat & blood & travail of Jesus' birth in a stable, concludes here in the fury & frenzy & sweat & blood & agony on a cross.

But this was the plan all along. To save a sin-broken creation God in Jesus by death destroys death & offers life to the full to all who trust in him...Listen today for the sound of your salvation...the sound of Easter as Jesus goes to his death for you.

Everything you need for worship is at your disposal...we will be together for morning tea after worship...so please stay to share in the community God builds by His Son our Saviour.

Good Friday '18 B – 30 March 2018 – Making Sense of Easter: The Sounds of Easter

Mark 14:26 - 15:47 & Isaiah 53:1-6

And then there was silence...you'll hear it soon enough...the final words, *"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"* a last gasp...maybe *It is finished* or *Father I give my spirit into your hands...* but from that moment...silence. Oh...surely some final mockery from the religious bigwigs *"See...we told you so."* A last jeer from the mob, *"Some Messiah you are."* Racking sobs from the women & self-recrimination from the 11...who ran, hid, denied, stood by. Then silence.

When he was born the angels stormed out of heaven to sing & rejoice before shepherds...Heaven's chorus thundered through the night skies. The shepherds upon finding the baby & bewildered family could not contain their praise all the way through the streets of Bethlehem back to their flocks. Simeon & Anna with their voices echoing off the Temple walls praised God & sang their thanksgivings for this child. Then John the Baptist declared his coming & shouted for all to hear. The heavenly voice not once but twice exclaimed *"This is my Beloved Son in Him I am well pleased...He brings me great joy."* Then it was Jesus' turn...

Jesus preached to the crowds, called his disciples, commanded the wind & waves, rebuked & cast out demons, debated & baffled the religious hierarchy, blessed children, summoned the dead to life, spoke healing to the sick & broken. Jesus taught with authority & instructed his followers. Then the mob brayed for his blood. They conspired & plotted & schemed & lied. But he who poured his life & his word into those closest to him...in the last hours of his life...at the very end – silence.

This was not some horrible mistake – gross injustice – grotesque blunder...Jesus' life is not ripped away as in some awful accident, nor is it torn from him as in some senseless tragedy. The Bible writers as one declare that Jesus laid down his own life: no one took it from him. Biblical scholar JC Ryle writes, He did not die because he could not help it; he did not suffer because he could not escape. Pilate's army could not have taken him, had he not been willing to be taken. They could not have hurt a hair of his head, if he had not given them permission.

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down.* The Bible & our own experience testify to the pain & weight & brokenness we endure in a sinful world...& in our sinful selves...Jesus came to lift that burden brought about by our sin & the heartache of living in a sinful world. He carried our weakness – bore our sorrow – took on our brokenness – Surely that also includes the discord in your family, the loss of your job, the death of the one you love, deteriorating health & the pain of your past.

In Christ we do not have some far-off God, but in him we see God who draws near to us, who comes to us, who enters our world to be one of us, that he might carry our weakness & sorrows for us. In Jesus God promises - Your pain will not have the last word - Your sorrows will not last forever – Your sin does not define you – Evil does not have a hold on you...Jesus has carried all that & they are no longer your burden...they are on the cross with Jesus for you.

*He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.* Only God as we know him in Jesus bears wounds. Only God as we know him in Jesus bleeds red like we do. But that blood drowns our sin & restores us as God's children. Those wounds bring peace with God & hope in a messed up world. In those wounds in that blood lie hope & peace, restoration & joy, forgiveness & salvation, life & love without end... *"Even before he made the world, God loved us & chose us in Christ to be holy & without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ."* Eph 1:4-5

From his first stirrings in Mary's womb we have the miracle of Immanuel – Jesus/God w/ us. Tonight we have the miracle of God in Jesus silent before his accusers, silent as he dies, & silent in the tomb. That's the very place you & I will also be silent...the "last enemy" will silence us one & all...But if Jesus joins us even there...in the silence of the grave...Then this was who Jesus had always promised he would be. He was silent. He suffered. He died. Jesus steadfastly refused to manipulate the event. Jesus resolutely refused to pull any heavenly strings. Jesus unwaveringly refused to overpower the soldiers, or negotiate with Pilate, or trick the crowd or his disciples into acting any differently. Jesus chose the silence.

Jesus chose the silence. He chose to suffer. He chose to endure the worst humankind could imagine so that in the worst you or I might ever experience we would know his presence. He chose to die so that we would experience his dying breath of forgiveness washing over us. He chose the silence of death so that we would experience his life-giving power lifting our hearts from despair. He chose the silence of death so that we would experience his love comforting our pains, healing our hurts, bringing us new life.

With every joint stretched beyond its limits & every agony felt in full, God in Jesus declares that you/I/all need no longer live in fear of death or the pain of this life because in its depths God joins us to bring life in its fullness to us as a gift. *"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?...Then Jesus uttered another loud cry & breathed his last."* And then there was silence...the sound of your salvation.