

WELCOME 15th April 2022 – Good Friday '22 C

Luke 22:39-23:56

(today's theme slide – verses over the top)

Today was never in doubt...It was inevitable...We should have known from the moment God asked those 3 horrible penetrating questions: *"Who told you you were naked?" "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" "What have you done?"* and then delivered the final crushing blow...*"For you are dust & to dust you shall return."*...This day has always been coming...God knew from forever...we should have known too...

There is no other day like today...when the One who fashioned the universe hangs dead at the hands of his rebellious creation.

There is no other moment like this one...when human agony is felt in full in the heavens.

There is no other grief like the Father's who stands silent as his only beloved Son is brutally killed by those whom he came to save.

To save a sin-broken creation God joined the human race. There was no other way to free us from sin death & the devil. No other way to recapture rebellious human hearts for the Father's love.

There is no other king who would die for his people and no other love that can restore our place in the Father's house as his dearly loved children...and there is no other death that forgives sin & defeats death...but Jesus' does all that and more...

In the battle for human devotion affection obedience life...It was an UnConventional Plan of Sacrifice that the Father fashioned & the Son suffered as the only solution to that which would destroy us forever...A plan of sacrifice formulated, enacted & executed in love for you & all creation.

Do please stay with us for morning tea after worship...to find strength & encouragement among those gathered by Christ today...and to reflect on the sacrifice made for you...

OPENING DECLARATION ON THE CROSS...

GOOD FRIDAY '22 C – UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE: PLAN OF SACRIFICE

I get to Good Friday & part of me asks the same question every year: If that happened to Jesus...If God's one & only Son can be handed over to abuse torture & gruesome death...If the heavens remain silent while the beloved Son of God w/ whom God is well-pleased is killed...If evil can dance while Love Incarnate is executed – slaughtered. **What** hope is there for you & me? Our failures & fractured lives? What hope is there for our griefs, for our agonies, for our suffering? If that happened to Jesus...What is life worth...What is life for...if the best can be cut down by the worst? If the epitome of the good true beautiful & faithful can be resolutely maliciously wrecked by evil...destroyed while the world looks on & celebrates? There are only two possibilities...two possible answers...Shakespeare & the 21st century have one answer...Macbeth A5S5... None...there is none...

Life's but a walking shadow a poor player
that struts & frets his hour upon the stage,
& then is heard no more. It is a tale
told by an idiot, full of sound & fury, signifying nothing.

Our lives are here for our "hour" & then "heard no more"... "sound & fury" w/o meaning value or worth... w/o lasting importance. We're here. Then we're not. If that's true...

Then in our brief "hour upon the stage" our job is to maximize pleasure/minimize pain Get as much as we can for ourselves. Find that which makes us happiest richest fulfilled & do that thing. We are the final deciders for our existence. We choose & do. We surround ourselves w/ people who add value to us or they're not invited. We live for an audience of one...me...

I know people who live just like that. Some of them profess faith in Jesus but their lives are infinite strutting & fretting...afraid of being "heard no more" or "running out" scared of the next bad thing...busy being busy...rats on the little wheel pursuing every fleeting enjoyment w/ no moral centre except their own sense of good-for-me – no anchor for today or dream bigger than their own desires for tomorrow. You'll hear that in a minute..."So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself - & us, too, while you're at it!" Do something Jesus ^{b/4} my hour ticks to 0! Jesus if you can't make something happen right when I need it...then what good are you?

There is another answer...you'll **hear this** too..."Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" Trust...faith...that in every circumstance greatest joys or soul-wrenching agony God has his hands on you & will not let slip. Trust...faith...dependence that in this moment God is at work for a greater good than you can imagine or see. Trust...faith...confidence assurance that what God has planned will always draw

you deeper into his love for you...his delight in your existence...his joy-abundant hope-filled future.

The psalmist writes...

*Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom & die.
The wind blows, & we are gone - as though we had never been here.
But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear him.
His salvation extends to the children's children
of those who are faithful to his covenant...Ps 103:15-18*

*For you will not leave my soul among the dead
or allow your holy one to rot in the grave.
You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence
and the pleasures of living with you forever. Ps 16:10-11*

What hope is there for you & me? Our failures & fractured lives? What hope is there for our griefs, for our agonies, for our suffering? There are only two possibilities...two possible answers...There is none or there is Jesus...

True to his promise...according to God's plan of sacrifice set in motion before the first glimmer of light broke the darkness of our pre-formed world...in the greatest war ever waged, the battle for every human heart...God's strategy never faltered shifted altered or changed. His plan always involved a cross...this day belongs to God, so that we might belong to God. The last word belongs to God so that that word would be life...once – for all – forever. This sacrifice ends all sacrifices.

Tonight...we cling in trust & faith – dependence confidence & assurance with the one who said "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom," & then heard the **reply**..."I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."