

WELCOME – 18TH MARCH 2025 - GOOD FRIDAY '25 C

Luke 22:39-23:56

Welcome as we worship on this day we call *Good Friday*.

It is *GOOD* because today God who created us for love & life in his presence sacrifices His Son Jesus for us so that our sin & death might no longer separate us from God & so that God's original intention for us would be made real...his image in us restored, his presence w/ us assured, his purpose through us completed.

This week began w/ Jesus surrounded by adoring crowds shouting "*Hosanna!*" & singing praise to God. Today those shouts of joy become cries of "*Crucify Him!*" Jesus stands before the mob not a hero, but a condemned man. He is "*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" who hangs dead on a cross & then lies sealed in the tomb. Paul would say of this moment...

*When he appeared in human form,
he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross. – Php 2:8*

On Good Friday, we come face to face with the fulfillment of Isaiah's promise, "*He was wounded for our sins, & crushed for our transgressions; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, & by His wounds we are healed.*" Jesus dies w/ the words "*Father! entrust my spirit into your hands.*" Christ's obedience is your triumph. Our forgiveness & salvation are won once & forever in his death. A victory assured by his rising on Easter.

Everything you need for worship is at your disposal...we'll share hot cross buns following worship...so please stay to be part of the community God builds by His Son our Saviour.

THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL... to the service order...

Prayers – should they be needed

For the Lord God is our sun & our shield...our light & our salvation. He gives us grace & glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.

Let us bring before our Lord Jesus Christ the faces we know well, those we know a little, those upon whom we have passed hasty judgement, and those faces to whom we cannot put a name. And let us seek God's blessing on all. Silence will follow each petition for you to be before God our Father

The kindly faces who have loved and nurtured us; family, friends, neighbours and workmates, those on earth and those in heaven.

The faces of opponents who have mocked us or shunned us, abused us or betrayed us, exploited or ignored us.

The TV faces of hungry children overseas, or street kids in our cities, or indigenous children living in squalor.

The faces of our politicians, Local, State and Federal, Government and Opposition, minor parties and independents.

The glossy magazine faces of sporting idols and film stars, royalty and fashion models, and the newspaper faces of those who have fallen into public shame.

The faces of those whom we have ignored or injured, or who have been the target of our superficial judgement or gossip.

The faces of those within this church who have been an inspiration to us, and those who we should know better & listen to more, but don't.

Loving God, these are all your children, cherished with a priceless love. Through each of them, and through your whole human family, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Then indeed we shall be blest beyond anything we can as yet see or imagine.

We pray for people who suffer pain, or struggle with traumas of the body & mind, our griefs of the heart...for those who this day are broken by yet more terror...who recover from wounds are grieving loved ones killed or who stand to protect freedom & further justice...

...let your light shine into these lives Lord...Bring swiftly the day when all nations bow before you alone, all sin and idolatry is destroyed & only your face shines into our hearts.

Holy God, by the light which can never be smothered, by the light which is sufficient for fools like us, by the light which bursts free from deepest tombs, guide our feet in the way of life everlasting. Whatever is for our good grant to us from your abundance & whatever would harm us...defend us from those things. Thwart the enemies of your church with your mighty power...those who would sow strife or dissension...bring before your throne of judgment...Send your Spirit & your angels to sift our hearts so that nothing is left but pure devotion to you...we pray Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

GOOD FRIDAY '25 C – UNFILTERED OBEDIENCE

Of all of the words you hear today...remember these: **"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."**

Today...more than @ any other point in his 3 yr public ministry...we see the Father's will to save...his desire to reclaim his lost human creation...his intent to make our lives flourish in his love clearly through the obedience of His only Son Jesus Christ.

What Jesus suffered...The pain – brutality – horror - shame of the cross was so the Father would have his way/will accomplished for you. Jesus died for you. It is easy to get lost in the specifics of the drama: betrayal, denial, abandonment, falsely accused, convicted in a kangaroo court, beaten until his skin was shredded, mocked, humiliated, crowned w/ thorns, forced to carry his own cross, & then publicly crucified, the most brutal form of execution ever invented...& miss the point: It was all in accord w/ the Father's will that our sin be forgiven...our rebellion smothered in peace...our death overwhelmed by life...

This was not a horrible mistake – gross injustice – grotesque blunder...it was for you. Jesus' life is not ripped away as in some terrible accident, nor is it torn from him as in some senseless tragedy. Rather, he commends his Spirit to the Father, giving his life of his own accord. His final breath announces once & for all that his life's purpose/mission has been accomplished in the only possible way...dying for you in obedience to the Father. 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. In obedience to the Father.

I do not seek My own will, but only the will of Him who sent Me. – Jn 5:30

I will do what the Father requires of me,
so that the world will know that I love the Father. – Jn 14:31

I can't escape the old promise...Is 53:3-6

He was despised & rejected — a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.
We turned our backs on him & looked the other way. 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.

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 the burden brought about by our sin & the heartache of living amidst the sin that surrounds us. He carried our weakness – bore our sorrow – took on our brokenness – Surely that also includes the discord in your family, the struggle of your job, the death of the one you love, deteriorating health & the pain of your past, fears for what might lie ahead. All that was for you in obedience to the Father.

We do not have some far-off God...In Christ, God draws near to us, comes to us, 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... Death cannot contain you. Jesus has carried all that for you. Those are no longer your burden...they are on the cross w/ Jesus in obedience to the Father.

Only God as we know him in Jesus bears wounds. Only God as we know him in Jesus knows the colour of his own blood. But that blood drowns our sin & restores us as God's children. Those wounds bring peace w/ God & hope in a messed up world. In those wounds in that blood for you lie hope & peace, restoration & joy, forgiveness & salvation, life & love w/out end...That's for you in obedience to the Father.

Jesus had promised this would be his journey...this ugliness...brutality...suffering... loneliness/desertion/betrayal/abandonment. But this sacrifice – this death was how God chose to bring us home to him forever. **When** we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time & died for us sinners...God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. Rom 5:6 & 8

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Cor. 5:21

"If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?" Rom. 8:31-32

"This is real love — not that we loved God, but that he loved us & sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." 1 John 4:10

The last word belongs to Jesus: **"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."** Amen