

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

April 20, 2014

Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!

Prelude

Worship Theme

Christ is the Resurrection

John 11:21-26: "Martha therefore said to Jesus, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother shall rise again.' Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross Ps. 50:1-6

+We Adore Him

Hymn #277, "Christ The Lord Is Risen Today"

We Confess Our Sin

O almighty God, heavenly Father, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus; we acknowledge that we are unworthy of Your redeeming grace. We have not believed Your promises, nor trusted in our living Lord. Through worldliness of spirit, our eyes have been darkened so that we have not discerned His presence with us. Through disappointment of mind and dejection of spirit, our hearts have not burned within us as we heard His Word. So often we have not trusted in His redeeming power; therefore, we have been overcome by evil. We have forgotten the good news of His victory over sin and death, and have not understood how we may experience Your peace.

But now in repentance, we come to You asking for full forgiveness. By Your mercy grant us remission of all our sins, and restore to us the joy of true salvation. And Lord, let the one who does not know You savingly today, behold his need for the Savior. We pray all this through Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. Amen.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #252, "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication Ps. 50:14-15

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #689, "Be Still, My Soul"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship Ps. 50:23

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #12, "Exalt The Lord"

Psalms 135:1-7, 21

God Blesses us in the Benediction

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

The Powerful Message of Easter: Restored Fellowship

Matthew 27:45-56

Study Notes for April 20, 2014

I. Introduction

A Misunderstood Savior: Jesus Christ

Why did Christ come to this earth? And why was He crucified? What message should we derive from His death- from His cross work? This morning we are going to look at the Cross of Christ and there discern the Powerful Message of Easter.

II. The Powerful Message of Easter: A Message of Restored Fellowship, Mt. 27:45-56.

1. Christ's Death, v. 50.

The emphasis here is that Christ did NOT die on account of crucifixion; rather He *GAVE* up His life. And to see this, you need to understand a little about Roman Crucifixion...

Medical Doctor, Truman Davis, describing a death by crucifixion, wrote, "At this point another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs but cannot be exhaled." ("The Crucifixion of Jesus; The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View," *Arizona Medicine*, vol. 22, Mar. 1965, pp. 183-7)

This process could take up to two to three days (no wonder this form of execution was horrific even to the Romans)!!! That is why when the Sabbath was approaching the chief priests requested that the criminal's legs be broken (John 19:31)...

All of this is to say that the person who died on a Roman cross, died of a slow- two to three day- grueling death as he suffocated on account of exhaustion!

And yet, the Gospel's record of Christ's death shows a different kind of death- an unexpected death. He died in a matter of hours! From this we conclude not that Christ was weak, but that Christ's life was not taken; it was given! That's the emphasis of this verse! Notice v. 50...

2. The Result of Christ's Death, v. 51a.

In the Temple, between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, hung a curtain/a veil- a huge woven garment (35 ft. tall). The purpose of this curtain was to separate the Holy Place (into which the priests went daily to perform the divine worship) from the Holy of Holies where God dwelt in His symbolic presence (cf. Ex. 26:31-33). And thus the veil served to protect God's people from their God (cf. Ex. 33:21)!

It was this veil- this holy tool that was used to separate and protect God's people from the holiness of their God- that was torn in two *from top to bottom* at the death of Christ! Consider the expression...

All of this raises a very important question: why was the veil torn? What significance did this have? The answer to this is best understood when we look at...

3. The Significance of Christ's Death, v. 50.

This verse is the key in understanding the significance of the torn veil and the death of Christ- which from the outside looking in, doesn't appear to be much. However, while Matthew doesn't record what Christ said here when He "cried out again with a loud voice," John does in John 19:29-30...

Note the final words of Christ, "It is finished!"

When Christ said, "It is finished!" the implication is that some debt had been paid! What was the debt? The Apostle Paul understood it (Colossians 2:13-14)...

So why was the veil torn? What did this signify? By rending the Temple veil, God was saying, "*In the death of My son, Jesus Christ, there is total access into My holy presence. He has paid the full price of sin for everyone who trusts in Him, and I now throw open My holy presence to all who will come in His name.*" Yet, isn't that reading a little too much into this passage? Absolutely Not!...

We were created to fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8)...

Because of our sin/rebellion, God drove man out of the Garden of Eden and placed Cherubim at the entrance to block the way (Gen. 3:24)...

After the flood, the Garden of Eden was taken from this earth and replaced with a tabernacle/temple- that now became the place of God's dwelling on this earth. And in replacing the Garden of Eden with the Tabernacle/Temple, God once again stationed the cherubim to guard the way of fellowship with God (Ex. 36:35)...

Do you understand therefore the Powerful Message of Easter? When Christ died on the cross and thus paid for our sins, He decommissioned the Cherubim by ripping the veil! Now the way of fellowship is open! We do not need to wait until Heaven to fellowship with God, we can walk with Him now!

Something to Think About

1. What have we done in response to the decommissioning of the Cherubim? We frequently rebuild what was once destroyed!...

Eph. 5:18

So let me ask you: what is needed for God to accept you? What must you do in order to enter into God's presence?

2. We confess today that we do not need to do a thing in order for God to receive us- that is what Christ did at the cross!

J. C. Ryle said, referencing the cross of Christ, "The true High Priest had at length appeared; the true Lamb of God had been slain; the true mercy-seat was at length revealed. The symbols and shadows were no longer wanted. May we all remember this! To set up an altar, a sacrifice and a priesthood now is to light a candle at noon-day." (Commentary on *Matthew*, pg. 284)